



SHEPARD MEADOWS THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER FALL / WINTER NEWSLETTER

Volume III, Issue 5 – February 2021

HERD UPDATE – WELCOME LITTLE MOON!

On November 27th, our new miniature horse, Moon arrived. He came to us from 13 Hands Equine Rescue in NY, and we couldn't be happier to help provide him with his forever home. He is a dark bay with a white crescent shape on his forehead. He is 39" tall with a fabulous winter coat. He has settled in nicely and he is so much fun to work with, especially for our smaller participants, or for those who are beginning to work with horses and find their large size somewhat intimidating.

PROGRAM UPDATE

The 2021 program schedule has been set! We have started the year off great, with a record number of participants in our first winter session of the year. We will hold another 5-week, unmounted horsemanship session, beginning February 15th. Bring a friend or family member and try something new this year! Participants learn a variety of horse handling skills and how to care and communicate with our horses. Our mounted 8-week spring program begins April 5th. You can find the calendar on our website for all of this year's program dates.



Moon and Emily

Shepard Meadows is so grateful to have been awarded a grant this winter through the CDBG CARES Act to provide financial aid to Bristol residents - in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant allows members of the community an equine experience to promote self-care in a difficult time. Reach out to Emily to schedule your session today at program@shepardmeadows.org.





FACILITY UPDATE

We are thrilled to have construction on our covered arena completed in record time. The structure was without sides for several years which meant that the wind and rain came blowing right in, but not anymore! It looks absolutely beautiful on the hillside and we look forward to being able to ride through all four seasons. We will be acclimating the horses to the new indoor over the next few weeks so that we are fully ready and prepared for the spring riding session! Thank you, Borghesi Building-Engineering, for working with us on this project.



OUTDOOR RING LIGHTING PROJECT

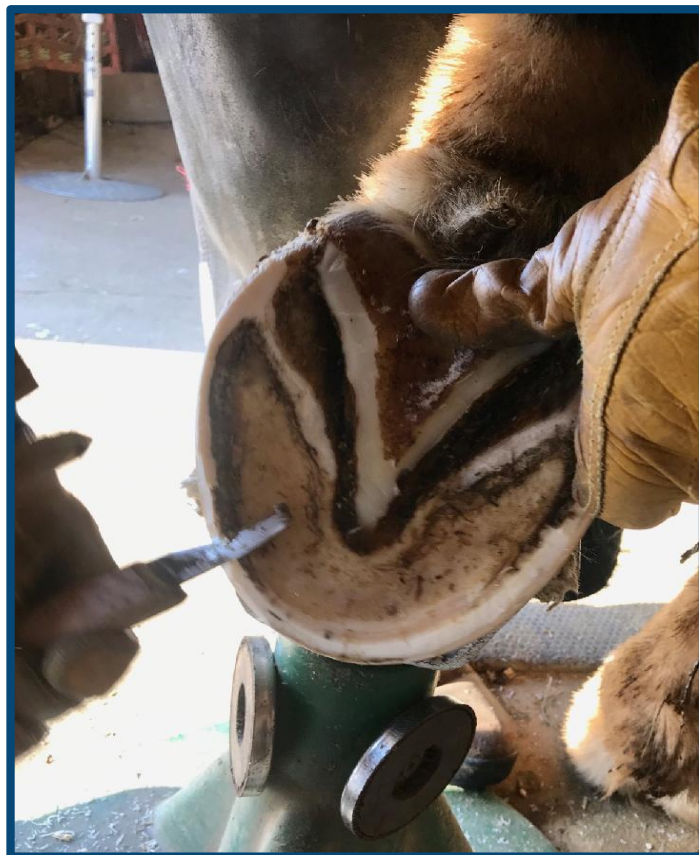
Our outdoor ring has new lighting thanks to the City of Bristol, Comcast and the Neighborhood Assistance Act. The project involved trenching from the indoor arena to the outdoor ring and three sides around. The lighting is top of the line and energy conserving. This project was important for safety during the fall and winter months and includes lighting on our pathways so that we can get back and for the to the arena more easily.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that horses' hooves are made from the same protein as our fingernails and hair? That protein is Keratin. Keratin has a low moisture content, making it very hard and durable. It is not painful for horses to have their hooves trimmed or shod, just like it's not painful when you clip your nails or get a haircut.

The keratin acts like a barrier to protect the inner hoof. The barrier is called the hoof wall, it's the outermost layer of the hoof. The hoof wall is the part of the hoof that is visible when the horse is standing. It has an important job to protect all of the inner, living parts, containing soft tissues and bones. A horse's hoof is relative to the size of the horse and they continue to grow in size until the horse is about six years old. The hoof wall is continuously growing and grows about 6-9mm each month, and a horse grows a new hoof every 9 to 12 months!

In the wild, horses travel many miles a day over many different surfaces that naturally wears down their hooves. Domesticated horses have their feet trimmed every six to eight weeks. When a horse is shod, the nails come up through the hoof wall. Since the hoof wall does not contain nerves or blood vessels it is a pain free experience to be trimmed or shod. A healthy hoof is crucial for a horse's wellbeing. The hoof gives your horse traction, supports its weight, absorbs the shock of each step, and pumps blood up through your horse's legs.



Moses' Hoof



Larry and Jenny Gonzalez

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

It seems so long ago now, but our first ever Farmyard Party was fabulous! We made just over \$17,000 to support the center's operations. Chair of the event, Jenny Gonzalez (spouse to Board Vice President, Larry Gonzalez, featured left) organized everything from the band to the bistro boxes, the silent auction and decorations.

Everyone who attended the socially distanced event, capped at 100 enjoyed every minute. Several guests even rode their first horse!

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2ND ANNUAL FARMYARD PARTY – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Our volunteer team is small but mighty! We have had several new volunteers join us, and applications keep coming in. Our long-term volunteers continue to be our backbone, and some of our newer volunteers are now joining this group: always willing to come in for that extra need. We could never do all that we do without our volunteers! We just totaled the volunteer hours for 2020 and these awesome people have logged in some 3,000 hours.

When we realize most of these hours were served during the pandemic, which included a couple months of shut down and several more months of necessarily limited programming, this number is truly amazing: way to go, Volunteers!

Some of the fall volunteer activities included high school Saturday workdays. Groups of about 6 students have been able to come together to rake leaves, pick up branches after windstorms, clean up the old hay around feeders and around the barn, and always rock and pinecone picking from paths and in the arena. Spring riding begins in late March, so for all those that prefer to help with lessons as a leader or side walker, we will be in touch. We were also able to offer gifts of unmounted lessons to many of our volunteers this winter and that has been a wonderful experience for all involved.

Volunteer orientations and trainings continue as needed and on an individual basis due to COVID. Hopefully, as the pandemic lifts, we will all be vaccinated, and we can get back to a new normal. But we will never forget 2020!

FUN FACT

There are 10 muscles in a horse's ear — compared to three in a human's — which control movement. That is why a horse can turn each ear in a separate direction to listen and communicate.



Elmer & His Ears

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GRANTORS!

Shepard Meadows is grateful to our corporate and foundation grantors for their generous support to our programs and projects!

- Main Street Community Foundation, COVID-19 Response Fund and the Pat & Bob Wollenberg Charitable Fund, Operating Support
- Main Street Community Foundation, Men & Boys' Fund, Equine-Assisted Services
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- Sky Bright Foundation, Operating Support
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- 2020 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act and Comcast Corporation, Outdoor Lighting
- Loeb Foundation, Equine Supplies
- American Quarter Horse Association, Education and Training
- Torrington Savings Foundation, Youth-at-Risk Programs