

NEWSLETTER

SPRING / SUMMER



3RD ANNUAL FARMYARD PARTY A SUCCESS

Wow! Our third annual farmyard party was a doozie! We raised over \$55,000 to benefit our programs, horses, and facility. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, representing 20% of the revenue we need to raise yearly.

Thank you to our event sponsors: By Carrier, The Barnes Group, Thomaston Savings Bank, Industrial Strength LLC, McPhee Gives Back, Torrington Savings Bank, Cravings an American Eatery, The Oakbridge Group, The Petit Family Foundation, and Capital Securities Management.

We are grateful to all the businesses that donated to our silent auction and to those who purchased ads in our beautiful program.

A huge thank you to Kim Rencurrel for all her work to organize the event. Kim does everything from A to Z to help us with the event, including preparing the auction items and working with volunteers. We couldn't do it without her.

Did you know that each of our horses can be sponsored annually for \$2,500? Sponsors are recognized on the mantle inside the farmhouse, on our website, and soon on each stall. At this year's Farmyard Party, four horses were sponsored, including George, Lola, Tonka, and Moses. All ten of our horses are now sponsored!

We have two goats in need of sponsors: two for the price of one! Let us know if you are interested in sponsoring Molly and Clara!



SUMMER FUN

This summer we created a summer enrichment program for Bristol Public Schools Extended Year Students. We provided service to 30 young people who spent part of their time on vocational work and an equal amount of time on horsemanship.

They worked very hard and accomplished a great deal to help us with our facility. What a fabulous group! We are planning on continuing the program through the school year with several students. Pictured above are students preparing our sensory trail.



POLO DAY

On July 23 Shepard Meadows was a featured guest at the Farmington Polo Club. We had a complimentary booth to share information about our programs; we also led the half time divot stomping!

We are grateful for the support of the Farmington Polo Club, this is now the second year that we have participated!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

In April, the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH, Intl.), Region One Conference took place at Shepard Meadows in Bristol with over 100 attendees over the course of three days both at the farm and at the Doubletree Hotel. Region One covers the New England States and the Provinces of Southeastern Canada.

Shepard Meadows hosted a full-day clinic with Tim Hayes, author of Riding Home, The Power of Horses to Heal, including both hands-on horsemanship and auditing. The clinic drew visitors from around Connecticut and New York. It was an amazing day of learning centered on natural horsemanship.





OUR NEW BARN & LEARNING CENTER

We are over the moon to begin construction on our new barn and learning center this fall. The new 14-stall barn with hayloft, wash stall, and learning center will be located between the indoor and outdoor riding arenas.

It is going to be beautiful and with it, we will be able to accommodate more participants and small groups.

Carrier is our contractor (and our Farmyard Party Event Sponsor). We have two stalls remaining for naming and sponsorship at \$7,500 each, and the main aisle and haylofts are \$100,000 and \$50,000 respectively. Thank you to the City of Bristol and the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding of \$250,000 to aid this project. The center will surely be a hub of activity for our community.



VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We're on the search for volunteers to help with the following activities:

- Spreadsheets and databases
- Morning Chores
- Exercise riders and skilled horse people for spring 2023 programs

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

We've added three new board members to the organization!

Please join us in welcoming Bryan Cassidy, Vice-President of Security at Torrington Savings Bank and a Bristol resident, Amanda Malkowski, our Parent Representative and a resident of Farmington, and Mark Davison, a U.S. Marine Veteran, SMEC volunteer, and resident of Cheshire.

The board also elected a new cabinet including President, Larry Gonzalez, Esq., Vice-President, P. Pearl O'Rourke, M.D., Treasurer, Brett Kroh, and Secretary, Kim Lebron.

COMMUNITY DAYS

Organizations often spend their community days helping us around the farm! Pictured is Torrington Savings Bank who helped us get the farm in tip-top shape for our Farmyard Party. They mowed, mulched, weed whacked, painted, and gardened their way through the day! We are beyond grateful for our partners. Email Sister Ann, our Volunteer Coordinator if you are interested in participating. It's great to spend a day outside at the farm!



GRANT UPDATE

\$2,500 | Equus Foundation – Guardian
\$10,000 | The Barnes Group
\$10,000 | American Legion Auxiliary Kiltonic Unit 72 – Equine Support for Veterans
\$250,000 | ARPA – Supporting Our Learning Center
\$8,500 | Community Development Block Grant – Programming for Bristol Residents
\$4,200 | Farmington Bank Community Foundation – Collaboration with Prudence Crandall
\$4,500 | Main Street Community Foundation – Veterans Programming
\$1,000 | Tom & Melanie Barnes Family Fund, Annual Appeal
\$600 | Bristol Rotary Club – Summer Employment



Pictured: Staff from Prudence Crandall are led through our Equine Experience Program.

FUN FACT

The United States has the highest horse population! In a recent study, it was estimated that there are over 10.2 million horses in the U.S. Mexico came in second place with 6.3 million.

SAVE THE DATE

Our Annual Holiday Open House is Sunday, December 4th from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM! Come tour the farm and meet the animals, have fun with farm-themed arts and crafts, and enjoy hot chocolate and cookies. Free to all!



**WE HAD A RECORD
SETTING YEAR WITH
OVER 2,000 HOURS OF
SERVICE IN 2022 –
THAT'S A LOT OF
HORSEPOWER! THANK
YOU, FRIENDS, FOR
YOUR SUPPORT!**



THERAPY HORSES - HOW A NEW HERD MEMBER JOINS THE TEAM

Shepard Meadows Equestrian Center is fortunate to have a herd of wonderful therapy horses. If you ever have ever walked around our courtyard, you will have noticed that our horses are all shapes and sizes. Part of being a therapeutic riding center and being able to serve a wide variety of participants means you need a diverse herd. Just like people, horses are all different.

Being a therapy horse is quite demanding, and not many horses can perform the work and be happy doing so. It is very important to us to respect their needs and preferences so that they are happy to work with us. All our program horses have come to us with different life experiences and prior jobs, and it is our job to make sure they will succeed in their next stage of life. Before we take in a new herd member a lot goes on behind the scenes!

Shepard Meadows staff is always on the lookout for our next potential herd member. We sometimes hear about horses through word of mouth (best way), rescues, or online sources. SMEC staff communicates with the owner/rescue via phone to discuss the prospective horse (or pony) and we have a series of questions and criteria we look for. Pictures and videos are always exchanged as well.

We'll then reach out to the horse's vet, farrier, trainer, or anyone who has been involved with the horse's life. It's important we gather as much information on the horse's history, temperament, experience, and health before moving forward.



Flip this page to learn what happens next...

HOW A NEW HERD MEMBER JOINS THE TEAM (CONTINUED)

If all conversations are hopeful, we will plan a trip out to visit the horse. At least two of the SMEC staff will make our way to the horse's location (sometimes a few hours away) and we will observe and work with the horse.

The number one trait we look for in a therapeutic riding horse is their temperament, that calm, safe demeanor. Most privately owned horses are not handled by many people; at a therapeutic riding center, we sometimes will have up to 5-8 people touching/handling a single horse a day. That's not easy! Not all horses will enjoy and tolerate so many different people.



Unfortunately, not many horses make it past this phase. As we are observing and riding the horse, we look at its confirmation, responses, sensitivities, willingness, movement, and soundness. It's quite complicated to get these to all match up.

Sometimes we'll visit for a second time, or we'll begin discussions on taking the horse on trial and/or purchasing/donating. It's important that all parties (especially the horse) are capable and a good fit for the farm. It's rare that therapeutic riding horses work for more than a year or two, so it is always an ongoing challenge to find suitable horses.

We are so appreciative and lucky to have a wonderful herd of horses that are stars at their job. Be sure to say thank you the next time you're here!

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM @SHEPARD_MEADOWS TO LEARN MORE!