



Staying Connected



Fall 2009

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Horse Tails by Fleet

Let me introduce myself; my name is Fleet. I work in the equine assisted psychotherapy program. Asia requested my help with this newsletter. It really takes a lot out of the older members of our herd when they lose their friends. I wanted to share some good news. As some of you may remember, we had a new mare come to live with us—her name is Te. When she batted her big blue eyes at me, I knew I had found my life partner. I just needed to convince her! I strutted my stuff every chance I got and offered to fight any other male who looked at her, but I think it was the softer side of me that won her over. We fell in love. Romance was in the air and we lived in the moment until Te announced to me, "We're pregnant!" At first I was thrilled, my first foal, but as reality set in, I almost panicked. What would people say? We weren't married. Could I support a family? I'm a stallion of honor and I have been raised to do the right thing, plus I love her, so I asked her to marry me.

We had a small wedding with just family and a few friends. We agreed that in this current economy it was foolish to spend a lot of money, since our job security is based on the goodwill of you supporters. I wish you could have been there though. Maybe some would say the timing isn't very good to bring a new life into the world, but I think we need to have something to look forward to. We both love our clients and feel we are so blessed to live here at Connections. I thank all of you for your support and in lieu of any wedding gifts, Te and I would like donations be made to the program. Te is telling me I need to work on getting a camera set up in the barn so everyone can watch the birth in February. I reply "Yes, Dear." Boy, has my life changed!



Asia



Tinker



Horse Tails by Asia

Hi, Asia here. I have a lot to catch you up on, so I've asked Fleet to help me out. All of us horses, the staff, clients and volunteers here are grieving the loss of our beloved friend Tinker who has passed away. Tinker was born on April 30, 1978. He was 31 years old when he passed away. He was my friend; we older guys have a lot in common. Tinker had an interesting life—he had worked in a dude string, at the race track, on ranches, even been a barrel racer. His owner Walt decided he would rather donate him to Connections than sell him into an unknown future at his age. Tinker taught me you are never too old to learn or to change. He was a very shy horse, but when he came to Connections he really blossomed. We were told he never made friends with other horses and was losing weight because he wouldn't stand up for himself at feed time. I became his first friend; I felt honored. One day I watched him pin his ears at Sunny and saw the shocked look on his face when Sunny moved away. He was respected! What a new experience for Tinker. As time passed Tinker and Sunny became friends too. Sunny taught the old man to play the neener-neener game. This is a game horses play by standing nose to nose nipping at each other. He began to ask Sunny and me to participate in mutual grooming. We call it "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." We were so surprised; he had never been comfortable if we stood too close to him, let alone touched him!

I watched people try to pet him or kiss him on the nose, but he would have none of it. Ever the gentleman, he was not rude but would gently pull away and keep his distance. He would do his job with patient dedication and dependability but wanted nothing to do with the touchy, feely stuff. I explained it was called loving, and it felt good to give it and receive it. Just when I was ready to give up, we had the field trip we told you about in the last newsletter and magic happened. A group of children was brought to a stall to meet Tinker. The gate was opened so they could see him better. To our surprise Tinker, instead of hiding with his head in the corner, turned around slowly, stretched out his head and neck, and actually began to touch the children in his stall. If a child was fearful in any way, Tinker would just stand and look at that child. He understood fear. After this session, we all noticed a change in Tinker. He sought out affection and would stoically allow himself to be hugged and even kissed on the nose. Tinker retired two months before he passed away. He is buried under his favorite shade tree. He was in his twenties when he came to live at Connections, and he touched the lives of so many who worked with him and rode him. His gift to all of us was to teach us that you are never too old to learn new things if you are given the chance to age with dignity. I know Tinker would want me to express his gratitude to those of you who support this program for making his last years so fulfilling and filled with love. He never wanted for anything, thanks to you. I'm glad Fleet has agreed to help me out with this newsletter. This has been hard for me to write. I'm ready for a nap.

Wedding pictures



Message from the Director

I wish to express our gratitude to all of you who have continued to support this program with your donations, good thoughts and prayers.

Without you, we would have not have made it through these tenuous financial times. Our program is ten years old and we are still growing. The horses have taken up a lot of this newsletter, as well they should periodically. Without them, this wonderful work would not exist. In these uncertain times, our horses remind me to live in the moment and be dedicated to the things in which I believe. Unlike some of you who support this program from afar, there are those of us who get to see the results of this work weekly and know that we are making a difference. It seems we hear a lot about what individuals are against. Connections is about focusing on what we are for and working together to make it happen.

We urgently need you to step up once again and help us continue. This is a tough time of year for us--insurance premiums are due, which we have had to finance and pay monthly premiums, which costs us more in the long run than when we've been able to pay the full premiums in better years, in addition to our accountant's fees for the annual tax return; and obviously the feeding, shoeing, and paying the people who care for the horses continue on.

Connections is about getting back to wholesome values and character building. The lessons here are real. Every day the horses are cared for. Volunteers show up to groom, shovel poop, walk with clients in all sorts of weather, help raise money, make repairs, do secretarial work, laugh a lot, and grieve with our clients when we watch a beloved horse pass away. We need your help to continue. Winston Churchill once said, "You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give."

Thank you for believing in the worth of this program.

Happy Trails,
Andrea Baldwin

Wish list:

- Rope halters & 12' lead ropes (yacht rope)
Brands we prefer & sources for them:
 - Local: Cornville Mercantile
 - Pat Parelli: www.parelli.com
 - Double Diamond Halter Co.: ph: (406) 582-0706 or www.doublediamondhalters.com
- Paper towels
- Western neoprene girths (contact us for sizes)
- Cases of water for clients and volunteers
- Sand footing for the arena



THANK YOU!

**To the following businesses & individuals for your much needed support
(received since Jan 1, 2009):**

Al & Caroline Abbott	eScrip program (deposits)	Connie Koff	Dan & Mardee Sprayberry
Al & Lorrie Adeler	Judith Evans	Pat Kramer	Jo Stone-Carmen
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Andrea Baldwin	Lara Fletcher	Sue B. Lewis	Ed & Jane Ulery
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June Barnett	GoodSearch program (deposits)	Foundation	
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Bob & Ellie Cocozella	Gerry Kleinfelt	Adele Seronde	
		Simmee & Richard Silton	

It's always risky to thank individual donors for their support because there's the chance that we've missed someone.

Here's hoping that we haven't missed you! If we have overlooked naming you for your contribution, we sincerely apologize and thank you for your generosity.

Thanks to all volunteers (including ones not listed above). We couldn't do it without you!

Hearts and Hands and Hooves

by Tracey K. Scott

(Dedicated to the memory of Tinker)

Hearts and hands and hooves that hanker
change a mind and reconsider
this one's hardly over the hill
a different kind of riding thrill

Both sides are often counted out
this quiet match of man and mount
What first would seem an awkward pairing
Quickly find in silent sharing

Not so soon put out to pasture
More to offer even after
years of service on the range
Now to make a healing change

Purpose for the aged steed
Comfort for the soul in need
A worthwhile cause, you can assure
By giving to, will yet endure.

For those who lives are not like ours
Challenges that stretch one's powers
Body and Spirit, Mind and Soul
Fragments longing to be whole

Contributions large or small
Money or material
Give a homeless horse a stall
Give of your time, you make the call

They may not tower on the screen
or make the cowboy fashion scene
These riders levy few demands
It's they who need a helping hand.

The good will be beyond your measure
Not just horse and rider treasure
Your spirit there for every ride
Saddle sore but satisfied.

Help Connections Raise Funds by Shopping

Here are three ways you can help the herd at Connections raise money when you use your credit or debit cards and grocery store loyalty cards.



For Arizona residents, Bashas' will donate 1% of the total sales linked to Connections, up to a \$2,500 donation. The current program runs from Sept. 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010 ; so please activate our group ID this year. Ask a Bashas' cashier to link to our ID # 29197 to your Bashas' shoppers card. It only has to be activated once to last during the program time of that year.

Go online to www.escrip.com and click on Members/Supporters and sign up using our group number of 500004295. Register any of your credit/debit cards and loyalty cards. Participating merchants will make contributions to your chosen group based on purchases made when you use the card(s) you have registered. You can track online how much your shopping has earned for Connections.

Raise money for Connections by searching the Internet or shopping online using www.goodsearch.com – powered by Yahoo! Just go to <http://www.goodsearch.com> and enter Connections Equine Therapy Program as the charity you want to support.

Donations and Riding Scholarships

Very few of our riders – about 25% can participate without financial assistance through a full or partial scholarship. Whether it is clients with physical and cognitive challenges or clients with emotional and behavioral challenges, their ability to contribute to the cost of their sessions only creates about 25% of the income needed to fund Connections. Contributions generate the majority of the funds necessary to keep our program going.

Our clients need your help!

You can help by making a donation or establishing a Named Scholarship Fund in your name, your family's name or in memory of a loved one. This can be a great gift you give to a loved one instead of more "stuff."

Donation/Scholarship Form

Name: _____	* I would like to donate: \$ _____
Address: _____	* I would like to adopt _____
City, State, Zip _____	for _____ months at a cost of
Phone: _____	\$100 per month (choose from Asia,
E-mail: _____	Miss Te, Peli, Lily, & Nickie)
	* I would like to start a scholarship:
	Name: _____
	\$_____ (Silver \$200, Gold \$500,
	Platinum \$1,000, Diamond \$5,000)

Mail to: Connections, 11585 E. Purple Sage Road, Cornville, AZ 86325
Please enclose check for amount due. Money sent is tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

It takes many hearts, hands and hooves to keep this program growing!

CONNECTIONS
11585 E. Purple Sage Rd.
Cornville, AZ 86325
www.ConnectionsAZ.com



Did you know ...

- 22,474 volunteer hours have been logged at Connections since its inception 10 years ago
- 6,329 client hours served since inception
- See our video at www.youtube.com under the name "Connections Summer 2009: Equine Assisted Therapy"
- Become a friend and follow our activities through Facebook online under the group named "Connections Equine Therapy"
- Seven horses are part of Connections now (Asia, Nickie and Sunny are geldings; Fleet is a stallion; Te, Peli and Lily are mares)
- Asia is the oldest horse at Connections – age 24 and a diabetic

Becoming a Volunteer

We could not operate without the dedicated help of our faithful volunteers. Please consider helping by BECOMING A VOLUNTEER. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the program. There are many areas in which volunteers can find a way to share their talents or learn new ones. Areas of opportunity are:

- * Leaders
- * Sidewalkers
- * Horse Care
- * Special Maintenance
- * Gatekeepers
- * Riding Team
- * Volunteer Coordinator
- * and MUCH MORE

WARNING: Volunteer Service at Connections may become addictively enjoyable. You could find yourself spending more time with us than you anticipated.