



# Staying Connected



Winter 2008

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## A Volunteer's Journal by Lisa A. Ferguson

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, Connections **finally** was able to start sessions again with clients after the quarantine (that began in the spring) ended without any concerns and the weather cooled. It was scheduled to be my first time volunteering as a sidewalker.

Friday, Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>: I attended the volunteer training for a few hours. The training was good and not overwhelming in terms of content. However, I became somewhat nervous about remembering what I would need to do and wondered if I would know how to relate well to people with disabilities.

Wednesday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>: All the volunteers arrived early. Jordan, the instructor, held a quick meeting with us since she would be leading the class. I then checked the schedule and saw that I would be helping out with two classes that day. I noticed that there are between three and four clients in a class at a time (which usually means three volunteers per horse – one leader and two sidewalkers). My leader (the one who leads the horse in the session and oversees the sidewalkers assigned) helped guide me to groom and tack our horse for the first class. Then the leader took the horse into the arena to warm up. As a "newbie," I was amazed to see how excited the clients were about riding again. Next, I helped my client put her helmet on and get on her horse using the ramp. Then we walked into the arena.

During the class, different activities were done to make it fun and focus on learning as well. This included guiding their horses around barrels, stopping on a bridge and in a box, keeping rings on their feet (to ensure they keep their toes up and heels down!!!) and doing specific arm movements while riding.

As time passed, I really started to feel comfortable doing what needs to be done. It also helped to know that Jordan provides any guidance needed to the volunteers during class. It was an enjoyable class for me as well. I really liked knowing that I was making a difference in the lives of others. And the best reward was the big smiles, hugs and/or handshakes from the clients afterward.

Note: we need more volunteers, please help. ☺ No prior horse experience is necessary. Come join us in the great outdoors, get some exercise and make a positive difference in the world!!!

## *Happy Holidays!!!*



### **Herd Happenings**

Hi, it's me, Asia (pictured above on the left). Wow! A lot has been going on here at Connections. Remember, I think I told you in the last newsletter that we might be getting some mares in our all-boy herd? Well, yahoo, the ladies have arrived! It's really funny to see all of us guys parading around in front of them, sucking our bellies up and flexing our muscles. The new ladies in our herd are Miss Te, a beautiful paint mare with stunning blue eyes, and the longest white eyelashes you've ever seen; Miss Lily, a black, sultry temptress who is a registered Missouri Fox Trotter—boy, can she shake it when she moves; and Miss Peli, a stunningly gorgeous, burgundy-copper, Quarter horse mare with a big boooty and the most soulful deer eyes you have ever looked into. Miss Peli is on loan from her owner, Kedzi Morgan, to help us out. I've known Peli since she was a little girl of two years old and, boy, has she matured into quite a woman. It's really nice to have some female energy back in our herd. And being the Romeo that I am, I'm in love with a different one every day.

I really need a favor. My buddy T.C. (pictured above on the right all dressed up for the holidays), who has worked in this program, has been told by the vet that he can no longer do therapeutic riding and he needs to retire. He asked me to tell you that he feels he could give little children pony rides, but real riding with adult riders aggravates the problem in his front feet. He's only 13 years old, and he would be willing to be turned out on pasture or do any kind of babysitting. He doesn't want to stand in our pastures wishing he could be chosen to go work in sessions and get all of the attention. He's a real suck up to people—no offense, T.C. If you could help me help T.C. find a retirement home, I would be forever grateful.

### **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.

## Field trip pictures



## Message from the Director

It's been an amazing year filled with a lot of surprises! It's never easy or predictable when working with special needs clients, weather, and animals, but the joy of the work makes it all worthwhile.

Since our last newsletter we have provided field trips for school children to help them understand individuals with special needs. They were very interested to learn how therapeutic riding helps our clients.

We have expanded our Equine Assisted Mental Health program. In addition to our ongoing addictions program, we are working with juveniles who are on probation.

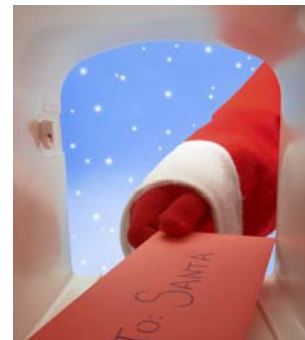
Our board of directors have really worked hard this year raising the most money in our history through fundraisers such as Tex-Mex Night, a garage sale, (I think we all bought each others stuff!) and Italian Night. Even though the fundraising has been so successful, we continue to carefully watch our spending. Thus, we made a decision to not print the newsletter in color (since the color printing is no longer being donated).

In the times we are living in, I feel many of us are experiencing a lot of anxiety, but when I see the faces of our clients and experience their ability to trust and have faith in what tomorrow will bring, they are my role models. I hope all of you loyal supporters will continue to be there for this program. I believe "where there is a will there's a way, and all things are working for our good" I hope you will have a Holiday Season filled with joy and abundance.

*Andrea Baldwin*

## Wish list:

- New computers and monitors or gently used (newer than what we have)
- Manure cart - \$250
- Manure forks – plastic-headed ones
- Paper towels
- Neoprene western girths – contact for sizes
- Case of vet wrap
- Crusader fly mask with no ear covers (for Te's pink nose)



## THANK YOU!

To the following businesses & individuals for your much needed support  
(received since May 1, 2008):

Al & Caroline Abbot	Anne C. Cerutti	Peter & Joyce Lacombe	Adele Seronde
Al & Lorrie Adeler	Bob & Ellie Cocozella	Rex Lawman	Dan & Mardee Sprayberry
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June Barnett	Nadine Ferdenzi	Microsoft Matching Gifts	
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Simon & Janice Blom	Barbara & Jerry Hill	Gail Moore	Sandra & Mitt Winstead
Pat Breyfogle	Barbara & Franklin Hynes Goodsearch program (deposits)	Phoenix Cement	Lee & Pat Worthen
Ron H. Brownell	Gerry Kleinfelt	Betty Richardson	Donald & Jean Worfolk
Caballos Del Sol	Pat Kramer	James & Dixie Robeson	Alana Young
Camp Verde Cavalry	Connie Koff	Rotary Club of Sedona	
Camp Verde Library		Rio Verde Roverettes	

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!

### Italian Night picture



See more pictures at [www.connectionsaz.com!](http://www.connectionsaz.com!)



Best wishes to and your loved ones for 2009!!!

P.S. It is not too late to make donations you can deduct on your 2008 taxes.

### A Poem

by Tracey K. Scott

The paper's pricey, the ink ain't cheap  
Economy's trending downward steep  
Expanded prose not what I'm after  
This poem's short in length and stature

Shop those budget gifts and greetings  
As the market takes a beating  
You don't need to spend it all  
To spread the cheer and deck the halls

Save the cost of big and shiny  
Good things come in packages tiny  
A gift with heart and sincere thought  
Will trump expensive trinkets bought

I do not stress over money tight  
Instead I do up Christmas right  
By thinking thankful thoughts to start  
And stretch my meager means at Walmart

... that's not a plug ....

... Merry Christmas ...

### More on the Field Trip by Andrea Baldwin

The morning was beginning to warm; it promised to be a hot day. We were standing in the shade of the barn waiting for our first school field trip. This was a new program we are offering to schools in our area to educate children about people with disabilities and how therapeutic riding helps them. The Cornville-Oak Creek Elementary school is walking distance from our barn and as we stood waiting, a long line began to come down the drive, a never-ending line of 5 & 6 year olds. Had we lost our minds? Would they be interested? Could we keep the herd together or would they bolt and stampede? I told my racing thoughts to stop, and whoa! Look, these kids were lining up and being very attentive! Now was the time to hook them, Fleet the Dancing Horse performed his snappiest line dance. After the line dance, we asked if they knew anybody with a disability; quite a few hands went up in the air. Questions were asked: How did they get that way? Can they be fixed? We asked the kids: What do you think it feels like to have a disability? One little boy said it slowed you down. We talked about learning disabilities and how they could make it hard to read, do math, or sit still but, it didn't mean you weren't smart. Enough standing, "Walk On," everyone toured the barn, tried on helmets, sat in wheelchairs, and explored the ramp we use for mounting clients. Last on the tour was to meet a couple of our horses. I don't know why it is the case, but our senior horses are so drawn to children and other seniors like themselves. As the children began to meet Tinker and Asia, I felt a shift; I can't tell you what it was, but magic settled over the barn. I could feel the light flooding in the barn. Everywhere I looked I saw joy in little faces as hands felt warm fur and looked into welcoming eyes. It became unusually quiet; it felt like we were in church. The time had come for them to leave. Oddly enough I was nervous doing this for the first time with a large group, but I could have spent the whole day with them. I asked a group of the kids I was with: What is the difference between people with disabilities and people without disabilities? Someone in the group said "We're all the same only different". Then they were gone, out of the barn, down the drive like a line of baby ducks following their mommas. In today's world, children need to learn compassion, empathy, and the old fashioned ethic of standing up for those who can't stand up for themselves. I can't wait for our next field trip!

### 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  
\$100 per month (choose from Asia,  
Miss Te, Peli, Lily, Tinker, Sam & Nickie)  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ \* I would like to start a scholarship:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_ (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.  
Cottville, AZ 86325  
www.ConnectionsAZ.com



### Did you know ...

- 4178 hours were logged by volunteers in 2007
- 40 volunteers supported Connections in 2007
- 140 supporters attended the Italian Night fundraiser in November (the great cooking was done by a volunteer, Lorrie Adeler)

### Featured Connections Horse

Hi. My name is Miss Te, but everyone calls me Te. I'm a bay-and-white registered paint mare with sky blue eyes. I am a Pisces and am 7 years old. All the guy horses think I'm a hottie. I have been a career woman working as a show horse. I am thrilled to have my new career as a therapeutic riding horse. It's much less stressful and a lot more rewarding. I've had a little bit of a rough start in this herd making friends. The humans say it's because I'm mostly white, and in the wild I would attract predators. Get real—when's the last time any of us horses saw a real predator! But I guess old prejudices die hard. Being a sensitive, creative Pisces, I've found a solution—roll and stay dirty—so I don't stand out. I want to thank all of you who support this program for giving me the opportunity to do this work!