



40 Years of Changing Lives

Bits & Paces

Winter 2018/2019



Carriage driving empowers our students

(Cover story page 3)

Students reign at fall horse show

Photos and cover photo by Frank Gwartz

Scores of riders demonstrated their accomplishments with our horses at our fall horse show in October. As families, friends, instructors, volunteers and the community gathered together, you saw smiles, cheers and hugs in celebration. Congratulations riders!



Carriage driving empowers our students

Photo by Creed Woodka

Our Carriage Driving Program gives our students the opportunity to enjoy a partnership with a horse in a unique way. It is an experience that our certified driving instructors love to share. Driving a carriage requires communication through your reins, whip and voice to guide the horse.

The benefits to the driver are: empowerment, knowing you are working together with a horse; improved core and neck strength as you rock with the motion of the carriage; experiencing thrill and joy, as you move on with the horse; and for those who use a wheelchair, the opportunity to sit up high and see the world through a different perspective while they enjoy nature on a trail ride.

We have nearly 100 students who carriage drive annually. Some take lessons weekly, others come with groups for eight-week sessions. Participants include veterans, seniors, summer campers and those who use wheelchairs.

Lauren Simak, a nationally certified driving instructor and head of our Carriage Driving Program said the group from Our Lady of Wayside which came recently, couldn't be happier with their experience. "The smiles of these students are contagious when they are driving a carriage. They look so happy," she said. Some of these students have severe

cognitive delays and do not drive cars, so having the opportunity to get into a carriage and "drive" for the first time is exhilarating and empowering.

But offering this experience requires a great deal of preparation and training. We have five certified instructors and six able-bodied whip volunteers who sit beside the student in the carriage and have undergone significant training to ensure control. Fieldstone Farm is fortunate to have four carriages accessible to wheelchairs, five highly trained horses, two large arenas for indoor and outdoor driving, and a one-mile trail on the back of our 45-acre property.

Alison "Sunny" Jones and driving instructor Debbie Gadus helped to develop the carriage driving program in 1997, when there were very few programs in the country. Debbie uses a wheelchair herself and has a great passion for sharing the freedom and exhilaration of driving with others. Thanks to their pioneering spirit, our carriage driving program has given thousands of our students an incredible opportunity to feel the power of the horse for more than 20 years.



Arrow overcomes challenge and inspires us all



Photo by Frank Gwirtz

Every day we see our therapy horses help students overcome challenges and reach goals they never thought possible. It is humbling to watch these four-legged creatures impact the lives of so many. But sometimes, the roles are reversed, and it is us who step in and help our horses to heal. That is the story of our beloved Arrow.

Last winter, when our Equine Director Jinene Studzinski was checking in on the horses as she does every night, she noticed a blue haze in Arrow's eye which had not been there that morning. She knew it wasn't right and called the vet right away.

The next morning, Dr. Sasha Hill, an eye specialist, in consultation with Dr. Peggy Cummings, an authority on equine eyes, diagnosed Arrow with glaucoma. Arrow was admitted to the equine hospital for treatment and observation. He came back to the farm a week later, and Jinene and her team cared for him for months. At first it was drops four times a day and hand walking. Then drops two times a day and a protective mask. The barn team was extremely attentive and Arrow came to rely on their affection and help.

While the medication worked for some time, the eye began to deteriorate and Arrow began to show signs of discomfort. Both eye specialists recommended surgery to remove his eye. While he would lose his sight in his left eye, it would take away the pain and allow him to get back to his life as a therapy horse.

The surgery was a success and once healed, he was back to work. "I am so happy for him," says Jinene. "It is amazing how he has adjusted and adapted. It is so rewarding to see him back doing his job working with our students."

A few weeks ago when The School of One's freshman high school class from Cleveland came for a two-day session to help them cope with adapting to a new school, one of our instructors introduced them to Arrow and explained how he lost his eye. One student said when she saw how Arrow had adjusted to his situation, she realized that it was possible to overcome her challenge of adjusting to her new school and finding new friends. She thought, if he can do it, so could she.

Arrow's story inspires many of our students. "It is important for our students to see that they aren't the only ones with challenges – even horses have them," says Jinene. "He's a wonderful therapy horse."

While Arrow is back working as a therapy horse, the bonds he formed with the barn team and Jinene are very deep. While they claim not to have favorites among the herd, the connection they developed caring for Arrow will always be with them. You will see the barn staff give an extra nod, an extra hello or pat to the horse they helped to heal.

And when Arrow hears Jinene's truck pull into the lot, her quick step come down the aisle, or her gentle greeting, "Hi Row," he looks toward her with the gratitude of a healed patient.

(Left) Equine Director Jinene Studzinski stands with her pal, Arrow.

Thank you Victory Society

We are grateful to all who have named Fieldstone Farm in their wills, bequests, insurance policies, IRAs or other forms of planned giving. Below is a list of these generous donors.

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Welcome to our newest members of the herd

Photos first two columns by Frank Gwartz and third column by Tammie Packer



▲ **Rico**, a 15.1-hand chestnut Quarter horse gelding, joined the herd in July. His registered name is Breakin' My Heart, which describes just what a sweetheart he is! Donated by **Brandi Robison**, Rico is an easy-going guy born in 1995 with loads of experience in lessons and horse shows. Not too big for kids and not too small for the average adult, he fits in at the farm perfectly.



▲ **Blue**, is one of the cutest and most personable little Paso Fino Quarter horses you will meet. He has a very unique color, bay roan, which stands out. Donated by **Dianne Gotschall** in July, Blue was born in 1997 and has tons of experience, including shows, trail rides, participating in Rich Bradshaw's obstacle course challenges and even some cow sorting. At 14-hands tall he is a great size for many different riders and is becoming a favorite to all who meet him.



▲ **Austin**, whose registered name is "Girls Love This Boy!", is quite the looker with lots of color and personality. Austin was donated by the **Thurman Family**, who also donated Ty several years ago. A 16-hand, Sorrel Tobiano Paint gelding, Austin is pretty flashy. Very experienced in English and Western, Austin loves to be groomed and has wonderful ground manners.



▲ **Pilot**, whose show name is aptly Frequent Flyer, is a 15.1-hand registered chestnut Quarter horse born in 1994. He was donated by **David Garratt**, in memory of his wife Brooke, in May. Pilot enjoyed trail rides with Brooke and competing in shows in his younger days. Pilot is a mellow fellow and already is a favorite in the barn.



▲ A handsome 15-hand, dark chocolate palomino gelding, **Nugget** was donated to the farm by **Michelle and Kasey Fyffe** in August. Nugget is a Quarter horse and loves to be groomed and participate in all the ring activities. He is a versatile addition to our program with his medium size and wonderful temperament.



▲ **Butterscotch**, named for his cool champagne color, is a registered Kentucky Mountain Horse. He is fine-boned, about 14 hands tall and has very keen, sweet eyes. **Dennis Smolinski** donated him in memory of his wife, who was devoted to Butterscotch, whose registered name is Ivory's Angel Butter. Born in 2006, we hope to have Butterscotch in the barn for a long time.

Chefs Unbridled raises \$290,000

Photos by Lynne Netschke

A sell-out crowd of 600 gathered under a huge tent at our annual Chefs Unbridled fundraiser in September on the grounds of the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club in Gates Mills raising \$290,000 for Fieldstone Farm and our programs. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supported this major fundraiser. Thank you all!

The evening was dedicated to our 1,300 students who work with our horses at the farm to achieve a wide range of personal goals. A big shout out goes to our sponsors including **The Crowley Family, The Kuhn Family Foundation, Davis Auto Group, The Harrington Family Foundation, The Robert Kaplan Family Foundation, The Wolf Family Foundation, Parker Hannifin Corp. Instrumentation Group** and Chefs **Scott Kuhn** and **Chris Hodgson**, who led a team of Cleveland's all-star chefs with delicious culinary creations for all to enjoy.

Next year's Chefs Unbridled is slated for Sept. 7, and will be at the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club grounds in Gates Mills once again. Save the date!



Thank you donors

We are grateful for your generous support. Without your funding we would not be able to serve those with special needs and challenges. Thank you all for making this possible. To view a full list of our donors, please go to our website at www.fieldstonefarmtrc.com.

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Horse wish list

- Corn brooms
- High Country insulated buckets
- Himalayan Rock Salt with the rope
- Plug-in style stock tank heaters
- Pull-on Bell Boots – medium and large
- Plastic replacement pick heads
- Large push brooms
- Elastic leg straps
- Salt blocks – small – 4 lbs. block size
- Muck buckets
- Plastic grain shovels

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Maintenance wish list

- 10W 30 oil
- Garden hose
- Plastic tarps
- Shop towels
- 60/100 watt replacement energy saver light bulbs
- 50' extension cord



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Photo by John Rolf

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Mission:

Fieldstone Farm engages the therapeutic power of our horses to discover and nurture the special abilities of individuals, families and communities.

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