



Bits & Paces

Winter 2021

Pure
Joy!



Read it again!

Reading out loud can be intimidating. But sharing a book with a curious, non-judgmental furry friend, as it turns out, is a lot of fun. Fieldstone Farm has teamed up with the Bainbridge Branch of the Geauga County Library to introduce Horse Tales, a new program to help young readers improve their skills. Children spend 15 minutes reading one of their favorite books out loud to one of the 40 horses in the barn.

“It is one of our most popular programs. Everyone loves reading to the horses,” says Mary Balog of the Bainbridge Branch. “We have done reading with dogs too but there is something very unique about reading to a horse and many of these kids have never seen a horse up close. It is a great partnership with Fieldstone Farm. The kids really benefit.”

Fieldstone and the library kicked off the program in June and it has been running every month since. To date, 128 reading sessions have been logged.

To sign up for the next reading session, please go to the Geauga County library website. For questions, call Mary Balog at the library, (440) 543-5611.



Photo by Katy Flint.



Photo by Katy Flint.



Photo by Molly Johnson.



Photo by Molly Johnson.

Building a Reservoir of Positive Experiences

As Thunder drops his head for a quick bite of grass, My'Ona starts to laugh. At that moment, all the uncertainty in her life is forgotten. It's just about being a kid holding onto a cute, hungry, little teddy bear of a horse.

My'Ona is 14 years old and one of dozens of foster kids who come to Fieldstone Farm each year to find comfort, joy and a respite from the everyday struggles of an unpredictable home life. Positive experiences with horses and the people at Fieldstone Farm help to build a reservoir of affirmations from which she and other foster kids can draw on during difficult times.

"Riding or leading a horse around the arena gives our students confidence and empowers them to know they will accomplish other milestones throughout their life" says Aviva Vincent, instructor, social worker and Director of Program Quality at Fieldstone.

For Liam, also a foster child, meeting a horse for the first time is intimidating. As the horse reaches his head toward him, Liam backs away unsure of what the horse is going to do.



Liam smiles as he makes a new friend in Thunder.



My'Ona and Liam smile with their caregiver, Karen.

“These types of positive experiences build resiliency.”

Karen Carter, CEO of Fostering Hope

Photos and cover by Frank Gwartz.

“He just wants to say hi,” says one of the instructors. Liam, who is six, is a little leery. When he sees other children having fun walking their horse around the arena, Liam builds up the courage to take one step closer and eventually reaches out his hand to pet the horse. The instructor applauds his bravery and asks if he would like to lead the horse around the arena. Liam hesitates. The instructor offers to walk with him and the horse together. Liam nods and off they go around the arena.

As they round a turn you can see Liam’s posture change, his chest expands and he starts walking with more confidence. By the time they have finished the loop, Liam is ready to lead the horse himself. The once reluctant participant cracks a little smile as he proudly walks the horse around the arena. It is as if he has grown an inch in the hour in which he has been at the farm. And his caregivers, who have brought him, are beaming at the transformation.

“These types of positive experiences build resiliency,” says Karen Carter, CEO of Fostering Hope, one of the groups that brings foster kids to the farm to help enrich their lives in a safe and accepting place.

“The animals have a very calming presence. They are non-judgmental. And the adults are kind and reassuring. The children leave feeling connected knowing they accomplished something special and had a good time,” Karen says emphasizing that the partnership with Fieldstone has had a significant impact on the children.

Fieldstone Farm works with hundreds of foster kids from organizations throughout the region including Fostering Hope, Beechbrook, Bellefaire, Pressley Ridge and Caley Home, among others. Riding and interacting with horses helps them gain confidence, strength and greater independence.

“Our goal is to provide a memorable experience for these kids,” says Aviva, “One they can come back to every year.”



My'Ona smiles as Liam feeds Thunder a little treat.

Welcome to the newest members of the herd

We have five new horses at the farm and all are settling in very nicely. Read on to get to know a little about each one. For more detailed information, visit our website: [fieldstonefarm.org/meet our horses](http://fieldstonefarm.org/meet-our-horses).



Photo by Elizabeth Krouse.

Bert

One of the new favorites in the barn is Bert, a sturdy liver chestnut Quarter Horse gelding. At 14.3 hands tall, he is short enough not to intimidate the smaller riders, but strong enough to carry a small adult. Bert was donated in August by Wendy Bishop after Bert's owner, Michael Bishop, passed away. Bert spent most of his life with Michael riding Western, trail riding and team penning, and navigating ranch trail obstacle courses. Bert came to Fieldstone with his pasture mate CJ.



Photo by Ryals Photo.

CJ

CJ, a 14.2-hand chestnut Quarter Horse gelding, was also donated by Wendy Bishop. CJ and Bert went on a lot of trail rides and participated in team penning and ranch obstacle courses together. Born in 2003, CJ is super social and has a lot of new friends including Pilgrim. CJ is doing great in our riding program and he is also one of our horses designated for round pen activities where he can bond one-on-one with our students.



Photo by Ryals Photo.

Skip

Welcome Skip, a handsome palomino Quarter Horse born in 2000. He was accepted into the riding program in October and donated by Mitchel Schneider. He has just about done everything, having been ridden both English and Western, and also having participated in lessons and spent many miles on the trails. At 15.1-hands tall, he is small enough for the younger riders but solid enough for the adult riders.



Photo by Ryals Photo.

Duke

Born in 2005, Duke is one the cutest and sweetest Haflinger-cross horses you will ever meet! He is a bay, 14.1-hand guy, who will be part of both our riding and driving programs. Duke was an Amish-owned horse and often drove families around town. As he got older, the road to town was a little long so he came to Fieldstone for some lighter work. Our students are already falling in love with him and we know that he is going to be the perfect therapy horse.



Photo by Ryals Photo.

Ranger

Ranger joined the riding and driving program in October. We are delighted to have this versatile, solid, laid-back guy at the farm. He stands 16.1 hands and is a great size for our larger riders. He is a very unique cross: a Suffolk Punch and a Quarter Horse. Born in 2007, Ranger has great manners, enjoys grooming and loves all of the activities around the farm.

Students strut their stuff at annual horse show



Longtime student Vince Gwartz concentrates as he directs Mitch around the ring demonstrating his control of the horse and carriage and ultimately winning a red ribbon. Vince's father, Frank, who is a professional photographer and takes many pictures for Fieldstone Farm, captured this beautiful image of his son.

Families, friends, volunteers and instructors gathered to cheer on 48 of our students as they demonstrated their skills on horseback and behind the carriage at our annual horse show. This October tradition is one that all look forward to as they watch their loved ones proudly display all that they have learned in lessons over the past year.



Wayne looking ahead and preparing for his class on Romeo. Photo by Terry Mulligan.



Alex (left) and Amelia, two of our Summer Camp assistants, smile with Willy, one of our rock star horses for our Mobile Mini Program. Photo by Elizabeth Krouse.



Iris gives Sundance a hug after having a great ride at Summer Camp. Photo by Elizabeth Krouse.



Darlene, a Navy veteran, stands with her favorite horse, Smoke, during a session with our Veterans Program. Photo by Frank Gwartz.



*Helena walks with Fax before her lesson in the outdoor arena.
Photo by Frank Gwartz.*



Instructor Tonya helps her Summer Camp student, Ava, gather her tack for Sundance. Photo by Betsy Ortner.



Jane, our board president, stands with Jake as he gets ready for a carriage driving lesson. Photo by Elizabeth Krouse.



Ellen, one of our music therapists from Groovy Garfoose, plays guitar for Smoke before one of our riding and music therapy classes. Photo by Tammie Packer.

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.

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Moving ahead in a pandemic

The coronavirus has had a dramatic impact on Fieldstone Farm, as well as many of our organizational partners. Today, we are grateful that 75 percent of our students are back working with our horses. We expect that as vaccinations for children become more available, our participation levels will continue to climb to typical levels. For those who are unable to return in person, we stay connected through the telehealth services we offer, as well as virtual lessons and programming. We have seen an increase in students with anxiety and depression, as the pandemic impacted so many with feelings of isolation and despair. Our horses have helped many regain confidence, manage stress and improve strength and overall emotional health.

We look forward to getting back to full operation as soon as safely possible but with the current participation levels and the inability to safely host our annual fundraising event this year once again, we appreciate you considering a year-end gift. Our hope is that donors like all of you will help us continue to serve the needs of the community. Thank you for your consideration!



QR Code

Scan the QR code here to donate
 or visit, fieldstonefarm.org/donate.

Save Sept. 10 for our ever-popular Chefs Unbridled event

Mark your calendars, for our annual fundraising event and celebration on September 10, 2022. After taking a two-year hiatus because of the pandemic, you will not want to miss out on this one-of-a-kind outdoor tasting dinner under the stars and the largest tent you have ever seen. Once again Cleveland top Chefs, Scott Kuhn and Chris Hodgson, will lead an all-star team sure to serve up some culinary delights. Don't miss out!



Chef Chris Hodgson.
 Photo by Lynne Netschke.



Frankie enjoys turnout. Photo by Tammie Packer.

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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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fieldstonefarm.org
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