

The Prairie Post



A publication of Blazing Prairie Stars, Inc., Maple Park, IL, provider of therapy in the natural environment, and Hoofbeats & Heartbeats, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.



*Blazing Prairie Stars, Inc. derives its name from the blazing prairie star, a prairie flower that is indigenous to Kane County. Also known as *Liatris pycnostachya*, this lovely lavender flower is differently developing; it opens from the top down instead of from the bottom up.*



A message from the president

Dear Friends and Neighbors...

Yeah for Spring! Everything is waking up (including me). It is time to get out and share the sunshine and spring breezes with friends. This morning we opened the gates and watched the horses run in the pastures, hopping and tossing their heads with their friends. They run in groups together. The brothers Ike and Mike with leader Midnight see how fast they can run. The two appaloosa “adolescents” Louie and Diamond see how high they can jump. Marcus and Buddy play-chase Lilly along the fence line, since Lilly is young Marcus’s mother and Buddy’s friend from his childhood farm. They separate and then come together in play, eventually settling down to some tender new grass. They are all so aware of one another. Each herd is separated by fences and has its own personality, much like classrooms in an elementary



“A friend is a single soul dwelling in two bodies.” —Aristotle

Look inside this issue to learn the meaning of friendship at Blazing Prairie Stars!

some of the many friendships and unique relationships that have developed here at Blazing Prairie Stars. Come and join us soon.

school on the playground.
This newsletter will focus on

Warmly,
Cathy Raack



Remembering our friend, Bob Fallert

Our friend and former volunteer Bob Fallert suffered a stroke and passed away December 17th, 2006. He was making his morning coffee on his farm in Kuttawa, KY, when it happened.

Bob started volunteering for BPS in 2002. He had over 50 years of horse riding and training experience. He understood horses and their healing capabilities. Due to spinal meningitis and a prior stroke, Bob taught himself to walk again on two separate occasions. He said horses had been very therapeutic to him.

Everyone who met Bob knew he was an amazing person. He was featured in our volunteer newsletter, The Hitching Post, for his work in the

Peace Corps. Bob worked with the Brazilian government to map the Amazon Basin. Volunteers in the Peace Corps are usually stationed in groups, but due to his academic background, he was sent on this mission alone. Bob actually holds the record for being the single most isolated Peace Corps volunteer ever. He had many interesting stories of the jungle and its animals.

Bob had a great love for horses. He owned a horse named Traveler, formerly a Hippo horse at BPS.

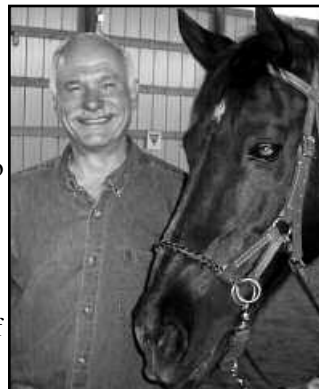
and his wife Caryl moved to Kentucky to a beautiful farm on the Cumberland River. His wife, a fabric artist, opened a studio near Paducah. Bob sent us letters and pictures telling us how much he loved the farm and the beautiful landscape. We are thankful for our time with him and thankful that he was able to pass on in a place that he loved so much. His ashes were scattered over his farm.

In his honor, his wife Caryl has so graciously asked if anyone would like to do something on Bob's behalf. Please make a contribution to one of his favorite organizations, The Nature Conservancy:

www.nature.org/joinanddonate/donate/

Or www.blazingprairiestars.com

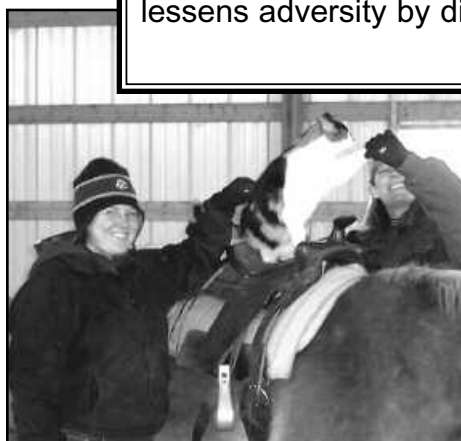
We'd like to thank Caryl for such a wonderful gift.



Quarterly Quote

Friendship makes prosperity more shining and lessens adversity by dividing and sharing it.

— Cicero



Above: Dora the cat takes a ride on Chaves, assisted by Lesley and Sharon. Later, Dora relaxes in the hay with her feline friend, Stosh. Cover photo: Lilly and Nikki groom each other.

Heartfelt Thanks



**Prairie Fest 2006
... Another Success!**

While a change in our newsletter schedule has delayed our expression of thanks, it has not, by any measure, diminished it! The October 2006 Prairie Fest fundraiser was once again a successful event. Attendance was down because of other conflicting events but the generosity of those attending and that of others who sent in donations was moving! A net income of \$9,500 was realized and these funds are already being put to use providing therapy for kids in financial need.

Prairie Fest would not be the success it has been without the hard work and dedication of so many individuals and businesses. Every contribution, no matter how small or how large, was an important factor in making things happen. We wish we had the space to thank each of you individually. Please know that your efforts truly are recognized and are so greatly appreciated, not only by Hoofbeats & Heartbeats but by the children you have in turn assisted.



Hoofbeats & Heartbeats would like to recognize the following for their contributions over the past few months. Their gift allows us to give to others.

The Branstad Family
Richard & Karen Herreid
The Juszczak Family
Bonnie and David Phillips
Katelin Keup
The LeGrand Family
Molly LeGrand
Curtis & Erlyne Whiteman

Rosemarie Frey & Clarence Holloway
Kaneville General Store
Geneva Community Chest
Sharing The Blue
... and the numerous individuals who contributed in memory of their friend, and ours, Bob Fallert.



Trevor & friends

by Cathy Raack, M.A., CCC-SLP/L

Trevor gets a big grin on his face when Rana the cockatoo calls out an enthusiastic “Hi” every time he enters the ancillary building of the Blazing Prairie Stars (BPS) barn. Rana is one of Trevor’s many friends at the barn, and one who has had a big impact on his progress. Both human and animal friends join in making Trevor’s therapy sessions successful and fun.

Trevor is a happy young man who has been receiving physical therapy at BPS for the last three years. He has had to learn to walk several times due to multiple surgeries, but he has worked hard. According to his mom, Trevor has remained very motivated by his horse Midnight, another animal friend at the barn. “Trevor has done very well here,” she says. “He loves animals. The horse has been a huge motivator. My husband and I are thrilled. We could not have asked for better care.”

Trevor’s physical therapist, Cheryl Krafft-Mealle, says that including the horse as a treatment strategy has been very effective for Trevor. It has improved his foot and leg strength as well as his ambulation.

Trevor is now being discharged from physical therapy, but he will continue coming to the barn as he begins therapeutic riding lessons. The staff (and animals) at BPS are all very happy that Trevor will still be a frequent visitor to the barn.

Trevor’s therapy team, volunteers Anita Andrews and Linda Kelley, have also been very devoted to Trevor and have enjoyed working with him every Monday. Linda Kelley notes that “Trevor knows all about cars and he always has a lot to share about many things.” Anita says that she has enjoyed listening to him talk because he remembers all the details. Anita also smiles as she says that Trevor fondly calls his horse, Midnight “Middy, My sweet sweet Mid Mid Middy”.

Midnight and Rana help keep Trevor motivated as he works on his physical therapy exercises. Rana makes the mood light and humorous, even though the exercises have been difficult. Trevor counts his steps out loud for Rana as he takes



Top: Trevor smiles as he rides Midnight, with Linda (from left), Anita, and PT Cheryl Krafft-Mealle.



Left: Sharon Weimer, barn manager, holds Trevor’s buddy Rana. Below: Trevor always enjoys giving Midnight his treat. Linda and Anita look on.



them, and Rana whistles and sways at each number. Every time Cheryl brings out the “Skip-It,” that toy that attaches a ball and string to the ankle, Rana hoots wildly with laughter. Before long, everyone is laughing.

As Trevor begins his new journey in the BPS therapeutic riding program, these same friends, and some new ones, will be cheering him on and motivating him to achieve new skills.

What is hippotherapy?



The movement of the horse can be a very effective treatment component in physical, occupational, and speech therapy. The horse’s movement impacts the entire neurophysiology of the rider. *Hippotherapy* is a term to describe the activity of including the horse’s movement in therapy as a treatment

strategy.

Licensed therapists choose a specific horse per the client’s needs based on the type of movement the horse delivers to its rider. The child rides in various positions as guided by the therapist. Positions may include side sitting, riding backwards, prone over

barrel, prone over rump, hands and knees, kneeling, etc. During these positions, activities are practiced to further facilitate goals. Hippotherapy improves tone, strength, endurance, sensory integration, normalized attention, vocalization, information processing, organization, and much more. Come and see for yourself.



Summer Programs '07

Spring's here and summer's not far behind! Blazing Prairie Stars and sister company Community Therapy Services in St. Charles have lots in store for those summer months. Check out all the exciting opportunities that we've planned for your children, and be sure to call us early — slots fill up quickly for summer programs.

Sensory All Stars

Exploring nature = discovering me!

What could be a better sensory experience than our own Blazing Prairie Stars therapy barn? The sensory butterfly garden, the animals, and the great outdoors make an ideal sensory camp location. An occupational therapist facilitates this group, designing nature-based activities with a sensory twist. Children are grouped according to age and individual needs. Campers meet for 2 hours per week for 4 weeks, or in a camp format, four 2-hour classes in one week. Maximum child /staff ratio: 4:1

For ages 4-6

Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:30 AM
(6/12, 6/13, 6/14, 6/15)
Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:30 AM
(6/19, 6/20, 6/21, 6/22)
Fridays 9:30 - 11:30 AM
(7/13, 7/20, 7/27, 8/3)

For ages 7-9

Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:30 PM
(6/12, 6/13, 6/14, 6/15)
Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:30 PM
(6/19, 6/20, 6/21, 6/22)
Fridays 9:30 - 11:30 AM
(7/13, 7/20, 7/27, 8/3)

\$248 per session, plus a \$25 intake fee



Andrew chats with his friend Rana.

Motor Mouths

Miniature donkeys, butterfly gardens, and fun on the farm make learning new speech and language skills fun! This group is for children ages 3 to 5 who have delays in speech development or are difficult to understand. The speech therapist who leads the group has developed kid-friendly activities that promote sound awareness and speech production. This class meets 90 minutes per week for 4 weeks, or in a camp format, four 90-minute days in one week. Maximum child/staff ratio: 4:1.

Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:00 AM
(6/12, 6/13, 6/14, 6/15)
Tue - Fri 9:30 - 11:00 AM
(6/19, 6/20, 6/21, 6/22)
Fridays 9:30 - 11:00 AM
(6/8, 6/15, 6/22, 6/29)
Fridays 9:30 - 11:00 AM
(7/13, 7/20, 7/27, 8/3)

\$272.00 per session
or SAVE 10% when you sign up for 2 sessions

Super Sibs

Super Sibs is a program for children who have a sibling with a disability. Because this group is sponsored by Hoofbeats & Heartbeats, it is offered to families for only \$10.00 per session. In ground-based activities with horses, participants learn about their own special families, exploring issues related to self-esteem, empathy, and expressing needs. This 8-week program is facilitated by a licensed family therapist and a horse professional. Children are grouped by age.

Call for info on times and dates

Lessons in Life

What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?

—George Eliot

Therapeutic Riding Camp

Learn to ride this summer! Or build on horsemanship skills you already have! This unique camp will explore a different aspect of the horse each day. Riders will learn about grooming, bathing, and tacking a horse, ground exercises, western and English riding, mounted games, and carriage driving. Groups are small (3-4 students) and based on the individual camper's current riding level. Camps are open to riders of all abilities and skill levels. Horse leaders and sidewalkers will be available when needed. All classes are taught by a NARHA registered instructor. Riders must be at least 6 years of age and under 125 lbs. Contact Lesley Kerns at 630-365-5550 if you have questions or want to reserve your child's spot this summer.

One-hour sessions, two days per week
(Tuesdays & Thursdays)
for two to three weeks



Connor and Red Dog enjoy each other's company.





Emma Miles, Callie Poole, and Sara Palagi display awards at last year's horse show. This summer will mark Callie and Sara's 5th year riding at BPS. Emma's been riding here for over three years. Over the years, the girls have become friends.

Annual Horse Show
 The day of our annual horse show is one that all of our riders look forward to! Participants in the therapeutic riding and hippotherapy programs work hard on their skills and get to show them off on this very special day. Watch for more information on the date of the 2007 Star Riders Horse Show!

Call for information
(630) 365-5550

(Ask us about scholarships through HBHB.)

Friendship Connection

This motivating and effective group will help young people of all ages master the art of social skills. Participants learn to establish and maintain positive relationships, collaborate and problem solve with others, and build greater self-awareness and social understanding. A licensed family therapist and a horse professional lead this group. Horses and the dynamics of the herd assist in the exciting learning process. Groups are formed by age and skill level.

Thursdays 4:15 - 5:15 PM (boys 9-11)
 Thursdays 5:30 - 6:30 PM (boys 6-8)
 Thursdays 6:30 - 7:30 PM (boys 12-15)
 Fridays 4:30 - 5:30 PM (girls 6-9)

Reining in Grief

Hurting, Healing & Horses

Blazing Prairie Stars is frequently the location of this program for children ages 6 to 12 who have lost a loved one. The GTO (Good time Out/Grief Time Out) is made possible through donations from Hoofbeats & Heartbeats and the Conley Outreach Good Grief Fund. Family therapists and horse professionals provide activities with horses that focus on the healing process.

Sunday, April 22 1:30 - 3:30 PM

*** denotes sessions held at Community Therapy Services**

Hippotherapy

Hippotherapy incorporates the use of the horse as a treatment strategy in physical, occupational, or speech therapy. Specific individual goals are addressed by licensed and uniquely trained therapy staff. Private sessions are offered during the following times:

Mondays 9:00 AM - 7:30 PM
 Wednesdays 2:15 - 7:30 PM

*Together in Music

Learning through music is fun! A board-certified music therapist and developmental therapist crafts activities that will delight your child and address social, language, and motor skills. Singing, dancing, stories, and puppet play encourage listening, attention, and following directions. This class meets for 60 minutes per week for 4 weeks. Children are grouped by age and ability. Maximum child/staff ratio: 3:1

Wednesdays 9:00 - 10:00 AM (ages 3-5)
 Wednesdays 10:30 - 11:30 AM (ages 3-5)
 Wednesdays 1:00 - 2:00 PM (ages 6-8)
 Session 1: June 6 through June 27
 Session 2: July 18 through August 8
 \$35 per one-hour class
 or SAVE \$20.00: prepay 4 classes for \$120

*Preschool Pals

Get ready for fun and learning with new pals! Each class is packed with games, music, crafts, snacks, and important preschool concepts. This class will help children prepare for kindergarten. A speech therapist and music therapist lead this class with activities that promote social skills, language, sound awareness, and reading readiness. This class meets for 60 minutes per week for 4 weeks. Maximum child/staff ratio: 3:1

Thursdays 12:30 - 1:30 PM
 Session 1: June 6 through June 27
 Session 2: July 18 through August 8
 \$55.00 per one-hour class
 or SAVE \$20.00: prepay 4 classes for \$200
Sign up for one or both sessions!

*Adaptive Music Lessons

Every child has special strengths and talents. Your child will feel successful as he or she learns to play an instrument under the instruction of a board-certified music therapist. Whether your child aspires to playing in the school band or just wishes to enjoy a new hobby, adaptive music lessons are a great confidence-builder. Lessons are available for piano, guitar, trumpet and other band instruments.

Various weekly time slots available.
 \$35.00 per half-hour lesson
 or SAVE \$30.00: prepay 6 lessons for \$180



Little Donkey Boys ... friends indeed!

This is a story of deep friendship and devotion. Our sweet little donkey boys came to live with us when Royal was only 4 months old and Blackfoot was about a year old. They came from the same farm and had already established a close relationship. It did make Blackfoot mad, though, when Royal looked for a place to nurse, since he had just been weaned. But Royal soon took on the role of younger buddy, and it was not long before the boys began to play all kinds of games together. They liked to “tip the trough” and take turns standing on it to see who could be the bigger donkey. They liked to take the down spouts off the barn and chase each other ... and the horses, too. They liked to chew on Sabrena’s long black tail. They like to try to open the gate,



and most of all they liked to tip the wheelbarrow when their human was busy filling it with poop. Their favorite game, however, has always been being brushed and led through obstacle courses by the little boys and girls who visit Blazing Prairie Stars.

very sick with a cancerous growth on his leg. He had to go to the hospital to have surgery. We all knew the boys could not be separated. So, when it was time, the vet, Dr. Margaret and her assistant lead Blackfoot and Royal together into the surgery room. She gave them both a sedative. Then the assistant led Royal to the stall while Dr. Margaret gave Blackfoot general anesthesia. The surgery was long and difficult as she had to remove tissue down to his bone.

Before awakening Blackfoot, they brought Royal back into the operating room. For the last several months, Royal has been with Blackfoot. During the first month of bandaging Blackfoot’s leg, he had to be blindfolded because he got so upset. Royal



No matter where you find Blackfoot and Royal, you always find them together. When you call their names, their ears prick up!

accompanied him to the bandaging and he leaned his body against

Lessons in life ...
All people really want is someone to listen.
— Hugh Elliott

Well this fall, little Blackfoot became

Blackfoot for support. Royal has been at Blackfoot’s side in the stall, resting day and night since the surgery. Soon Blackfoot will be healed enough to enjoy the sunshine and that will make Royal very happy, too.

Who knows what creative ideas the donkeys have come up with during this time together? Good friends can always make the best out of a difficult situation as long as they have each other.



Meara’s Garden is Springing to Life!

Some unseasonably warm weather has brought an early start to the growing season! We invite you to take a walk through Meara’s Garden and take note of the plants that are beginning to peak their heads out of the ground. They bring such promise of things yet to come!



The earlier change to Daylight Savings Time is also a bit deceiving to people. Yet this is Illinois and we all know what types of weather may still be in store for us! The planting of annuals will have to

wait until the end of May. Spring clean up has begun, though, with the cutting back of grasses and shrubs. Spreading the new mulch will follow.

Meara’s Garden, like all gardens, is continually changing. Please visit often to see what is new and enjoy a peaceful place in the country! If you have questions or suggestions, or would like to come and dig in the dirt, please give Janie Grillo a call at 630-584-5883. Everyone is welcome!

“Nobody sees a flower — really — it is so small — we haven’t time — and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time.” — Georgia O’Keeffe



Our volunteers are the Therapists of the Future

One of the wonderful gifts that horses offer children in therapy is the gift of inspiration. Since BPS opened, over 5 years ago, we have discovered another very special form of inspiration. The horses and clients have influenced

Lessons in Life
 All our dreams can come true -- if we have the courage to pursue them.
 — Walt Disney

many of our young volunteers to go to school for equine therapy-related careers.

Megan Long, a horse professional here at BPS, started as a volunteer in high school. She then completed an internship her senior year. Megan is now a senior at Northern Illinois University and will graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology. Megan plans to get her doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Merisa Doonan has followed in

Megan's footsteps. She started as a volunteer, completed an internship, and became a staff member while earning her NARHA certification. Merisa also attends NIU and is majoring in Deafness Rehabilitation. She plans to get her

Master's Degree in Occupational Therapy.

Jessica Goebert started volunteering in high school and now attends Bradley University in Peoria. Jessica did a college internship last summer and plans to

be a physical therapist.

Juliann Funk, a leader and sidewalker at BPS since high school, is going to Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. Juliann is majoring in Speech Pathology and is a sophomore this year.

We also have two new high school interns. **Brynn Ford** is a senior at Kaneville High School and interested in becoming a therapist. **Sam Luken** is a junior at Batavia High School and is interested in becoming an equine professional. We are so honored to know these talented young people. They are an inspiration to all of us!



Megan & Diamond



Jessica & Diamond



Merisa & Hannah



Sam & Zella



Juliann Funk



Brynn & Forrest

Fond Farewell and Welcome Aboard

Since 2003, Myra LeGrand has served as secretary of HBHB. Her kind and giving spirit has been a driving and sustaining force in all that HBHB has accomplished! Myra has resigned her position and has become a part time staff member at BPS. We wish her all the best and are happy that we'll still get to see her at the barn!

We're pleased to announce that the position of secretary has been filled! Jessica Zallis, a new volunteer at the barn, will also be volunteering as HBHB secretary! Jessica was an energetic help in preparations of Prairie Fest 2006. We're also happy to say that Linda Castle, who has been an incredibly valuable committee member for over a year, will be co-chairing HBHB fundraising! We are fortunate to have both of these ladies join us! HBHB is an active organization throughout the year. Our "To Do List" is handled by the current five board members, yet additional

helping hands would be so welcomed! If you can only give enough time to make a couple phone calls a month or have enough to jump in and co-chair fundraising, we would love to hear from you! There are numerous ways your assistance can be used. Please call Rosemarie Frey, 630-665-6749, or Janie Grillo, 630-584-5883, for more information.



Hoofbeats & Heartbeats Association is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization dedicated to raising funds for programs and scholarships for families in financial need. Meara's Garden and garden programs are also supported by HBHB. Please consider making a donation to HBHB for a special occasion, special person, or just because you and your family have been fortunate. Mail donations to:

Hoofbeats & Heartbeats • 47W635 Beith Road • Maple Park, IL 60151
THANK YOU!



Upcoming Events

Reining in Grief

For children ages 6 to 12 who have lost a loved one. Sponsored by Conley Outreach and HBHB.

Sunday, April 22 1:30 - 3:30 PM

Summer Programs

Sensory All Stars Motor Mouths
Super Sibs Preschool Pals
Hippotherapy Together in Music
Therapeutic Riding Camp
Friendship Connection
Adaptive Music Lessons

See pages 4 & 5 for details!

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"A friend is a person before whom I can think aloud." — Ralph Waldo Emerson

(Call 630-365-5550)

Visit us at

www.blazingprairiestars.com



"I have friends in overalls whose friendship I would not swap for the favor of the kings of the world."

— Thomas Edison

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