



Round-Penning with God

By Jason Heath

When my wife and I started Haven Acres, we knew very little about horses. Now, after completing our third year of programming, we still have much to learn, but we have gained some experience and spiritual insight from being around and dealing with the horses in our herd. We are always looking for ways to relay spiritual messages to the kids while they are at Haven Acres. Our trips to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch in Bend, Oregon have provided us with ideas for sharing the hope we have in Jesus through analogies of real life ranch experiences and spiritual matters. It's basically a modern day parable. Jesus spoke in lots of parables, using familiar, every day situations to explain spiritual truths. This works at Haven Acres as well.

Deuteronomy

33:26 "There is no one like the God of Israel. He rides across the heavens to help you, across the skies in majestic splendor."

One example that hit home for me was taught by Troy Meeder, one of the founders of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch. It deals with round-penning. Round-penning is a fundamental exercise that you use to build trust and respect with a horse. The basic principles of round-penning are as follows: you stand in the middle of the round pen while the horse moves along the rail at differing speeds depending on the instructions they receive from you. The goal is to control the speed and direction of the horse in order to establish leadership so that the horse learns to trust and submit to you. After working with the horse for a period of time, you invite them into the middle. At that time, the horse will probably be breathing hard and will be anxious to rest and catch their breath. The horse must decide whether or not they want to join you. The only way for the horse to find rest is to choose to yield to you and come to the center. This is called "hooking up." After the horse catches their breath, the last part of the "hook-up" involves the horse following you as you walk around without a lead rope or any other tools to guide the horse. They follow you because they trust that you will ensure their safety and will keep them from danger.

The spiritual application of this exercise changed the way I viewed God.

Picture yourself as the horse, running around the round pen with God in the middle watching everything you do. **God is inviting you to join Him so that He can take on the weight of your burdens**, but many times you choose to keep running in circles instead of coming to the middle and finding refuge and rest. For example, if there is a financial crisis, you tell God, "I got this! I'll just work a few extra hours." If you're having health issues, you forget to pray about it and just decide to go to the Dr. and take some medicine. If you're having trouble in a relationship, you try to fix it on your own. You end up making excuses. While you're being stubborn, the whole time God is inviting you to the center, willing to heal your sicknesses, bind up your wounds, bless your finances, protect you from harm, and restore your relationships. Like the horse, **you have a choice to make**. You have to come to the middle to experience the safety, comfort and peace that God freely offers to you. If you submit to God and trust His direction, He will lead you. **Even if He changes your course, you can trust His divine leadership.**

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When I teach young men to do this exercise with their horse, many times it brings a tear to my eye because I see the young man growing in his self-esteem, leadership skills and confidence as he leads an animal 10 times his size to trust and follow him. As I share the spiritual application of this exercise, I hope and pray that these boys will submit their lives to God and put their full trust in Him.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Musings of a Mentor

By Mary Lubinski



When I was first asked to be a mentor at Haven Acres, I was a bit apprehensive. I love horses, but I didn't have any previous horse training. Nevertheless, I do love people, and I especially enjoy getting to know and encourage young people. After much prayer, I knew I was supposed to be a mentor.

I learned a lot about horses, but I came to realize that **the horses are only a means to develop a very special relationship with the person you mentor.** The participants really love the horse they work with each week; they form a special bond. I was very blessed to mentor two lovely young ladies which I grew to love and looked forward to seeing each week.

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Musings of a Mentor - continued



While at Haven Acres, I discovered that I wasn't just there to minister to others; God had in His perfect plan that I would receive ministry as well. **Mentoring has been healing for me.** In 2013, my 21 year old son, Jay, went to heaven after a 9 ½ month battle with brain cancer. Even though this has been the most difficult trial my and I have ever had to walk through, we did not walk this journey alone. Many people have stood alongside us, providing the encouragement we needed. We know Jay is



Jay Lubinski
(Dec. 17, 1991 –
July 9, 2013)

with our Lord and Savior, and that is the hope we hold on to.

John 10:10 (AMP) says, "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]." Working with kids at Haven Acres is a way to share the hope I have received, but it also helps me through the healing process. Mentoring isn't a one way relationship; we receive as much as we give. Praise the Lord for Haven Acres.



A Sad Goodbye

By Jenifer Heath

One of the hardest aspects of running a ranch ministry, at least in my mind, is making tough decisions like when to put a horse down. We have quite a few donated horses, and since many of them are older, we are unfortunately faced with this decision more often than we'd like.

It's hard to say "goodbye" to an old friend, a loyal and hard-working member of the ranch family. It's harder still to watch the kids grieve the loss of a great equine companion, a patient and reliable instructor, a horse so eager and willing to do his job. Araby James was that type of a horse! Graciously donated by Sawtooth Mountain Stables in Grand Marais, MN over 3 years ago when we were in the very beginning stages, he has been our teacher, our trustworthy "go-to" gelding that anyone can ride. Countless kids, mentors and volunteers have learned horsemanship from this amazing, 30 year old Arab. We were hoping for several more years with Araby, but unfortunately he became ill over the past few months and was no longer safe to be ridden, forcing us to say a sad "goodbye". And, so he was laid to rest on November 6, 2015. Though we grieve, we are thankful for and hold on tightly to all of the special memories he afforded us at Haven Acres.

We will never forget you, Araby James! Thank you for serving the kids at Haven Acres so faithfully!

Second Annual Round-UP

The Round-up has become a highlight of our summer, a time for the kids to proudly display their new-found skills and families to connect with one another in a peaceful environment not so far from home. On August 29th, parents, friends, and extended family witnessed nearly 30 participants demonstrating some of the skills they had learned throughout their weeks during Haven Acres summer programming. The kids rode their mount through 3 different patterns: key hole, pole weaving and pennant race. Later on, they were able to join in the cup game. The goal of the cup game was to see who could ride different directions and various speeds with a cup of water in one hand and still have the most water remaining in their cup when time was called.



Some of our volunteer crew with the beautiful sign created by Vas



Readying Haven Acres for the Round-up

Kids were given a certificate of accomplishment from their mentor upon completion of the activities. We had a bake sale and t-shirts for sale as well as free sandwiches provided by Shawn Mims, General Manager of Arbys in Shakopee. We're appreciative of all who participated this year and are grateful that the event raised nearly \$700. We thank all of the volunteers who came out for a work day preceding this event, working in the flower gardens, doing various clean up jobs, setting up tables and readying our property for the special day. Also, we'd like to extend a special thank you to Vas Zimmerman for making the beautiful sign for Haven Acres. What a talent God has given you, and we are honored that you would choose to use it to create such a special gift for us!



Comments from the Kids

By Kadaire Kane

Haven Acres has meant so much to me. Getting to know the staff, kids and horses has been such a privilege. I couldn't be more thankful for being here. I've learned so much: how to saddle a horse, how to round pen a horse without touching them and how horses communicate with their ears. There's so much to learn, and everyone at Haven Acres is so nice and helpful. **This has been the best experience for me.** I really suggest that kids who love horses come here, and if you're a beginner like me you'll learn so much. God is amazing.



A Parent's Perspective

By Lili Karadza

One definition of the word haven is "a place of refuge or rest." Haven Acres lives up to its name. It is truly a place for children and parents to find rest. The beauty of the property and the wonderful horses make it a place to easily connect with our Creator. Our lives are so busy with work and school activities, and it



sometimes makes us lose contact with what really matters. Connecting with God's creation centers us and refreshes our souls. "Let the heavens be glad and the Earth rejoice; let the sea and what fills it resound: let the plains be joyful and all that is in them. Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice" (Psalm 96: 11-12). The trees at Haven Acres are always rejoicing. The horses rejoice too when they see my daughter coming with her treats at the end of a session. She loves each and every horse. **As a parent, it gives me great satisfaction to see my child interacting with the horses. I can see how she relaxes and lets the stresses of her day melt away.** She is one to quickly bond with animals. Haven Acres is amazing because it gives my daughter an opportunity to learn about horse grooming and how to ride. It provides for her a haven.

I am so grateful to all the faith-filled men and women who volunteer to be mentors. They selflessly give of their time to provide a safe environment for the children to build self-confidence. According to Proverbs 17: 22, "A cheerful heart is good medicine." The mentors always have a cheerful attitude and are ready to help in any way. They are living their faith.





Team Work Pays Off

Thank you to the volunteers from Life Church in Cannon Falls and other local volunteers that came out in October in order to build a much needed horse shelter. In addition to individual donations, special contributions were made by the Daniel Robert Pastirik Memorial Fund and the Skeeter Hubbell Foundation to help fund this project. We cannot express how grateful we are for everyone that chooses to partner with us in these God-sized endeavors. If you'd like to partner with us as we complete this shelter, feel free to donate online via PayPal @ www.havenacresmn.org.

Breaking News!!!

The outdoor arena has been completed! We are incredibly grateful for several donors that came forward so that we were able to build a riding area which is much safer for both our kids and our horses. Several of the kids in Fall Sessions were able to ride in this arena and were thrilled! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Welcome "Fix"

We had the privilege of welcoming a very special addition to our herd this November. "Fix" is a 19 year old retired roping horse that has won many awards including Minnesota Rodeo Association Horse of the Year. He has a very kind eye and is extremely well mannered and gentle. He seems very glad to have a lot of attention and a new job. We are excited to see him do great things at Haven Acres! Much thanks to the wonderful people at Summer Run Arena for donating this amazing gelding! If you would like to sponsor "Fix" or any of our other horses, feel free to contact



us @ info@havenacresmn.org. A full monthly horse sponsorship is just \$150. Full or partial sponsorships are welcome.

As 2015 winds down, please consider Haven Acres in your year-end giving. Visit us online at www.havenacresmn.org or give as you shop online through AmazonSmile. Thank you!



Jason and Jenifer Heath
Co-Founders



Haven Acres

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