

The HAVEN ACRES HERALD

*Healing Hearts and Homes through
Horses and the Love of Jesus*

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FALL 2018

It's All About Love

by Jenifer Heath

I've been learning some things about my relationship with God from observing Jubilee and Liberty interact with their handlers.

The first three years of the fillies' lives were devoid of human interaction or touch. Fear was their only frame of reference. From the time they were born, they were in an area with much larger and more aggressive horses. They had to fight for every ounce of hay and each sip of water. They were bullied and battered, but they survived.

When they came to Haven Acres in January 2018 at three years of age, they were suddenly exposed to love and the gentle touch that accompanies a healthy relationship with humans. They were also introduced to new rules, boundaries, and guidelines.

I entered their stalls two or three times daily to feed and care for them for over a week before Liberty would allow me to physically touch her. Yet we continued to gently pursue them in an attempt to gain their trust and respect. Persistence paid off, and over the course of 10 months, they have grown to love affection and touch despite their fears.

As I watched Holly ride Liberty yesterday, the filly began by holding her head high. There was worry in her eyes, and she

had quick, knee-jerk reactions to every subtle movement Holly made. Though Liberty's default is fear, she eventually pushed through it and tried her best to follow her trusted leader's instructions. Silly as it may seem, Holly has discovered that it helps to verbally reassure Liberty as she rides. So as she rode, I could hear her gentle encouragement, "Good girl! You are really listening. I know it's scary, but you're doing a great job." Over the next 30 minutes, a transformation took place. Liberty totally relaxed and started enjoying the ride rather than stressing out about every task she was asked to perform. When Holly felt like she was listening carefully and was much more calm and quiet, then Holly dismounted, giving her a little reward for her good work.

After the ride, Holly intentionally spent some time just petting Liberty, rubbing her face, around her eyes, and all over her neck. Within seconds, Liberty was willingly giving her face to Holly and nuzzling her nose into the palm of Holly's hand. She has learned that our touch is something she wants, maybe even craves.

As I observed this process, I was struck with a spiritual parallel.

All 17 horses at Haven Acres receive love and attention, however, many of them just seem to tolerate it.

"There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us."

I John 4:18-19



Photo by: Amy Fauske

It's All About Love - *continued*

They know the “right” thing to do when someone approaches them. They are to stand still, not pulling away or walking off when their human leader shows them affection. Yet that kind of response is one born more out of obligation, a dutiful affection of sorts. The fillies, on the other hand, seem to respond more out of love, respect, and relationship with their handler. They are “tuned in” when we’re around. They want to know what we’re doing and are willing and ready to respond to our instructions. There’s an anticipation, almost an excitement in their demeanor because they have experienced the benefits of human relationship.

This led me to ponder my own spirituality. I’ve been raised in a Christian atmosphere my whole life, and at times I definitely take it for granted. I don’t necessarily appreciate the relationship I’m privileged to have with the Creator of the Universe. I find myself going through the motions, doing the “right” things, but if I’m honest, sometimes it is out of habit or duty. My main motivation isn’t always love for my Father. So, I’m really not much different than the Pharisees we read about in the New Testament. They prayed. They fasted. They were at the temple every day. But Jesus called them “hypocrites” and “white washed tombs,” having an “appearance” of holiness but in all reality rotten and dead on the inside. They were bound up in religion when Jesus had come to offer them freedom through relationship.

God’s plan has always been a loving relationship with His children. Unfortunately, we are the ones that mess it up. We taint the fellowship with our hollow attempts at good works, a “righteousness” that is based on our own good deeds which in the end only measure up to “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6). God created us with the ability to choose Him or choose our own way. He wants us to desire relationship with Him not because it’s the right thing to do but because we love Him and have an appreciation for all He has done for us.

Let me encourage all of us to do some soul searching in this area. When you pray, read the Bible, give tithes or offerings, or even sing a worship song, are you just “following the rules” like a Pharisee? Or are these things simply a demonstration or result of your intimate relationship with your Heavenly Father? Is it all about love? ■



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Photo by: Jenifer Heath

2018 Round-Up

The 2018 Round-Up was a HUGE success! We are so grateful for all of the volunteers and parents that solicited and donated items for the silent auction, volunteered their time, worked with the horses, and supported the kids! Approximately 300 people were in attendance, and over \$4,000 was raised to benefit Haven Acres. The addition of carnival games and pony rides made it a fun time for all! To top it off, the participants did an AMAZING job at showing everyone how much they've learned this year!

Special thanks to the following organizations and individuals for donating items to make this day so amazing:

- *Chuck and Dons of Northfield
- *Science Museum of Minnesota
- *The Bourbon Butcher
- *Three Rivers Park District
- *The Minnesota Twins
- *Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
- *Wendy's in Lakeville
- *Cub Foods in Lakeville
- *Green Mill in Lakeville
- *Theresa's Mexican Restaurant in Lakeville
- *LifeForce Family Chiropractic
- *Pro Tech Automotive in Apple Valley
- *Papa Murphy's Pizza in Lakeville
- *Coles Salon
- *Culvers in Lakeville
- *Coborns
- *Buffalo Wild Wings in Lakeville
- *Farmington Gymnastics and Cheer
- *Love the Look
- *Casey's General Store
- *Learning RX
- *HyVee in Jordan
- *Rademachers in Jordan
- *Beau Monde Salon
- *Be-You-ti-ful Salon
- *Minnesota Wild Hockey Club
- *Chick-fil-A in Apple Valley
- *Renee Skidmore
- *Wayde and Katie Lofton
- *Scott and Stacy Moening
- *Shannon Ballis
- *Jason and Jenifer Heath
- *Marti and Mari-Kae Schouweiler
- *Kim Mielke
- *Ron and Fran Moening
- *Aleena Rooyakker
- *Tom and Tina Graffunder
- *Mary Woodley
- *Stephanie Witzel
- *Eddie and Keeli Zambrano
- *Holly Graffunder
- *Jeff and Martha Deyo
- *Barb Poush
- *Nancy Amerman
- *Greg and Jessica Zuspann
- *Dennis and Becky Garrett
- *Nikki Zupke
- *Mike and Mary Lubinski
- *Juliann Alfieri
- *Aurie Phillips
- *Marilyn Vickers
- *Michele Hoaglund

*Thank you for making the 2018 Round-Up
A Success!*





Comments from the Kids

Dear Haven Acres,

Thank you for letting me go this year, I loved it. I love that I got to spend time with the horses, Jessica and most of all Beau. Even though he was sometimes stubborn and ate a lot of grass, he was great. He made me feel happy. I loved doing the chores, they are so much fun. I especially love the bible lessons, they taught me things I sometimes don't always recognize or they remind me of how special God is. This was so special for me, for so long I have waited to be with horses again. I have waited at least two years to go horseback riding. Thank you for this great opportunity. It's hard to find a great ranch like yours. My most favorite part of all was riding bare back on Beau. Thank you Haven Acres, I hope I can go next year. God Bless Haven Acres!

Love,
Mary-Clare



Haven Acres

**2820 245th St E
Hampton, MN 55031**

Email: info@havenacresmn.org

Website: www.havenacresmn.org

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Two Simple Ways You Can Help!

Giving Tuesday...

November 27, 2018 is **GIVING TUESDAY!!!** Facebook is waiving their online giving fee and matching donations made to non-profits for a total of up to \$7M. Last year we were blown away by God's goodness and your generosity when over \$6,000 was raised! You can either start your own FB fundraising campaign for Haven Acres or simply donate to the Haven Acres FB fundraiser. Only donations made on 11/27/18 will be eligible for the match.

Amazon Smile...

Believe it or not, Christmas is just around the corner! As you begin your online Christmas shopping, designate Haven Acres as your non-profit through **Amazon Smile**. You can purchase the same things you'd normally buy, and Haven Acres will receive .05% of each item purchased at smile.amazon.com. We greatly appreciate every bit of support we receive.