

The HAVEN ACRES HERALD

Healing Hearts and Homes through
Horses and the Love of Jesus

Visit Us
On the
Web!



SUMMER 2018

Fixed On Jesus

by Holly Graffunder

Doc came to us this spring, walking down the trailer of the ramp as a tall, 16-hand bay gelding. But he didn't calmly walk down the ramp, he anxiously pushed past. With his head high and nostrils flared, this big, powerful horse danced a full circle around his handler, fearfully looking this way and that. Eyes wide, lips tight, ears erect, muscles tense--all the textbook signs of fear. He looked nervous and antsy, and he was looking everywhere but at his handler. Too worried about the new surroundings to pay any attention and listen to her at all as she tried to guide him down the ramp to his new home.

He had come from a trail riding company who said he was a great kids horse. Unfortunately, they could no longer keep him since he had developed heaves, which is like equine asthma. They didn't have the means to care for him and the manager was excited for him to go to a good home where he would be well cared for.

A few days after Doc came, I started working with him by simply throwing his lead rope over his back in a rhythm, an exercise we do when we're first starting to build a relationship with a horse. The

goal is for the horse to stand still and relaxed while you're doing it. Throw it up, land on his back, pull it off. Throw it up, land on his back, pull it off. But instantly Doc started to nervously dance around. Throw it up, land on his back, pull it off. Dance around, try to pull away, flinch at every motion. Eyes wide, head up, muscles tense . . . just at the rope gently landing on his back.

If Doc would just focus on me and trust me he wouldn't have to get so worked up about this rope. He doesn't need to be afraid that I would hurt him. Just because the rope is new and different doesn't need to mean it's scary.

If only he would keep his eyes fixed on me, his heart trusting me, and his head focused on me, he could relax about this little rope.

If only we would keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our hearts trusting in Him, and our heads focused on Him, we could relax about all those things in our lives that worry us.

If we would just focus on Jesus we wouldn't have to get so worked up about the things in our lives that change or seem like they might hurt us. We don't need to be afraid of God putting us through anything that isn't for our good.

“But seek first his
kingdom and his
righteousness, and all
these things will be
given to you as well.”
Matthew 6:33 NIV



Photo by: Amy Fauske

Holly Graffunder works to gain Doc's trust as she tosses the lead rope over his back.

Just because something is new and different doesn't need to mean it's scary.

A horse's God-given instinct is to run and then think. It keeps them alive in the wild. So they naturally have a deep fear of the unknown. But it's an amazing thing to behold a horse and rider that have built so much trust that the horse will do anything that she's asked to do. That horse has her attention fixed on her handler, never wavering, always focused. Ready to go through gunfire, down steep hills, or over huge hurdles. She keeps her focus on her rider, listening for every cue from his hands, more than listening to the unknown. It doesn't matter what the unknown looks like: that horse knows she needs to keep her attention on her rider rather than let fear seep in. It's all about where the focus is. Focus shows that a horse trusts her rider.

When we have unknowns in our lives, our natural tendency is to look everywhere but God. We look to other people, to our abilities, or just get paralyzed looking at the circumstance itself. We are running late for something important, and do we trust God in His sovereignty? No, we worry about how it's going to totally ruin something. We know we need to confront a friend or family member about something and worry, worry, worry, rather than trusting God to work through the situation.

And we end up looking like Doc. Tense and jumpy because we're looking at the circumstance rather than looking at Jesus. If we would only look at Jesus--and that takes really hard work most of the time--we would find rest. We can bring so much delight to God, like a horse who wholly trusts in her rider. Trusting equals rest: peace. Peace is the absence of fear, anxiety, and stress. Peace is wholeness, fullness, contentment, tranquility, safety, and security. It's what we all want! And Jesus gives it to us when we trust Him and His promises.

When we trust Jesus, who is the rider in our lives, we rest knowing that everything He brings us through is for our good. Instead of anxiety about the illness, we can have peace knowing God will work it out for our good. Instead of fear when we are going into a new situation (job, college, state), we can walk confidently knowing that God is with us. Instead of stress about getting all the daily things done that we need to do, we can rest in the fact that God is already on the other side and knows we'll be ok.



**“And let us run with endurance
the race God has set before us.
We do this by keeping our eyes on
Jesus, the champion who initiates
and perfects our faith...”
Hebrews 12:1b-2a NLT**



Photo by: Hannah Glidewell

From standing while a rope swings to resting while loved ones are hospitalized. From standing while bullets whiz past to resting in the midst of mental health struggles. No matter what the circumstance, we can have peace when we fix our eyes on Jesus. ■

***“Fix your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.”***

Comments from the Kids

Hi. I'm Jessica and I deal with anxiety. Haven Acres is a fun and helpful way to control your feelings. One thing I love most about Haven Acres is that people and horses are somewhat the same because God loves you and horses even if you have problems like me. I deal with anxiety and God loves me and like Trixie she may be small and she may be blind, but God still loves her. Now I know that I believe I can do stuff that may be scary but I know God is right there by me. ■

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” II Timothy 1:7

Photo by: Amy Fauske



Photo by: Sharon Meador

A Parent's Perspective

By Dan and Sharon Meador

Caden was diagnosed with Autism at two years old and is non-verbal. Inherent with Autism is the incredibly difficult task of trying to communicate with Caden or understand what he is trying to convey. He spends much of his time twirling ribbons in an effort to relieve himself of the anxiety induced by living in a world that he can't understand. He thrives in structured environments with clear direction.

Every Monday Caden attends Haven Acres for horseback riding. He starts his session by helping with chores such as picking up the strings from the hay bales or filling the animals' water troughs. At first he had a hard time following directions and keeping his helmet on, but after several weeks, he seems to better understand the routine. He's even started participating in grooming the horse. But the real magic seems to happen when he rides the horse. The calming effect that horseback riding has on him is truly amazing to witness. He goes from being fidgety or even agitated on the ground to being relaxed and quiet in the saddle. He looks peaceful.

The Haven Acres program has helped Caden with taking direction and interacting with people as well as animals. Another very surprising thing we have noticed since starting at Haven Acres is that he has begun to verbalize more things! Even his bus driver commented on this improvement. We are grateful to see Caden learning new tasks and hearing spiritual lessons at Haven Acres. ■



Photo by: Sharon Meador



Photo by: Amy Fauske

Welcome to the Ranch

Sundance

Sundance is a big, beautiful Quarter/Morgan cross gelding in his early twenties who LOVES people. He was generously donated to Haven Acres by the same amazing couple that donated Cowboy years ago. Though Sundance had not been ridden for several years, he seemed to pick up right where he left off. He is gentle and is extremely tolerant of all the stimulation at the ranch. Sundance loves all the attention he is getting from the kids, and since he is quite large, he's been a perfect addition for some of the older kids at Haven Acres. We're told he's also trained to pull a sleigh or a cart. Wouldn't that be fun?! ■

Buttercup

Buttercup was lovingly donated to Haven Acres by a wonderful family whose kids had grown up and weren't using her anymore. She is a gorgeous palomino mare in her mid-teens whom the kids affectionately refer to as the "Barbie horse." She has shown herself to be kind, patient, and willing to work with all kids but has particularly excelled with a couple of kids with Autism or Down syndrome. We are so grateful for the addition of Buttercup to our program! ■

Filly Update

We are thrilled to update you with the significant progress the fillies have made since their arrival to Haven Acres in January. After months of working with them, Jubilee and Liberty are now able to be tied, groomed, saddled, bridled, and are starting to be ridden. Jubilee even had her first hoof trim without sedation! Special thanks to Aly Kelly for assisting us with their training. We are so grateful for the opportunity to witness these young horses make the transition from wild, reactive, and untrusting to much more calm, responsive, and willing to trust. The generosity and contributions of many of you have made this possible! Thanks to some amazing friends of the ranch, Jubilee has a monthly sponsor. However, Liberty is still available for sponsorship. Many of our other amazing horses require medications or special feed in order to thrive and are in need of sponsors as well. Descriptions of all of our horses can be found on our website at www.havenacresmn.org. Feel free to

contact us if you are interested in the horse sponsorship program. A full monthly sponsorship is \$150/month and helps to cover the cost of feed, farrier, and vet care. Partial sponsorships are also available. Thank you so very much for supporting Haven Acres! ■



Photo by: Amy Fauske

Haven Acres Spring Work Day

We'd like to take a moment to thank the youth group from Celebration Church, Farmington High School Faith Club, and many other volunteers for joining us at the Spring Work Day at Haven Acres in May. With all of your help, we were able to accomplish quite a few big projects in just 3 hours: yard and barn clean-up, building a couple of new fences, roofing a storage shed, cleaning the horses' winter blankets and tack, making a bigger tack room and moving all of the equipment over to it, painting a bench swing, putting chicken wire around the trees in the goat pen, cutting down dead trees in the pasture and stacking the logs for firewood, plus all the regular daily animal chores. We cannot begin to express what it means to us that you devoted a Saturday morning to lighten our load. Thank you so very much! ■

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17



Photos by: Amy Fauske



Haven Acres

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

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BURNSVILLE, MN
PERMIT NO. 74

Email: info@havenacresmn.org

Website: www.havenacresmn.org

You're Invited!

**Haven Acres 5th Annual Round-Up
September 8th from 4-7pm**

Silent Auction | Pony Rides | Bake Sale | Food | Games

Everyone is invited! Come support the kids and teens as they showcase the horsemanship skills they have been learning all summer. Fun for the whole family!

