

NICK & BEAU



I will never forget the day that Jenifer and Holly brought Beau to our home to meet Nick. With COVID restrictions in place, Haven Acres wasn't open to the public, so they started taking horses to meet kids at their homes one at a time. When our special day arrived, I came home from work and followed their truck and trailer into our residential development. I was overcome with goosebumps of excitement and began to cry with joy, thankful to God for bringing the Heath's into our lives. This day was going to have a **positive impact on the life of our son!** It takes a lot to make Nick smile, but as I took pictures of him with Jenifer, Holly, and Beau, a HUGE smile spread across his face from ear to ear, showing how happy he truly was.

As a parent, I knew the **mentorship program at Haven Acres** would be an excellent opportunity for Nick to have something of his very own. He is the youngest of four children and is not into sports and activities like his brother and sisters. He is quite a homebody. Nick also has learning disabilities and a low self-esteem. At 13 years old, he is already 6' 2" and 185 pounds. As a result, he often times experiences teasing from other kids.

When Haven Acres opened again, Tuesday's quickly became Nick's favorite day of the week because he knew he was going to the ranch. He enjoyed getting to know his horse, Beau, and since he desires to become a farmer someday, he thoroughly appreciated learning about life on a farm. Terry ended up being the perfect mentor for Nick since he also wanted to be a farmer when he was growing up. Now he is **more determined to accomplish** his future goal of having a farm of his own when he grows up.

Nick also liked learning about the horses and how to take care of them. Riding Beau and doing daily chores were highlights of his sessions. Nick learned how to responsibly care for a horse, how to **build trust** - in the horse and in himself - and how to **overcome his fear** of working with a large animal and trying something new that's out of his comfort zone.

Benefits of Nick's sessions at Haven Acres last summer include: a change in his demeanor and a **sense of confidence** we hadn't seen before. He began to stand up tall and was no longer slouching, he spoke more, no longer keeping things bottled up inside. He became more open to chore requests at home without arguing, and he even started participating in activities with other kids even though it was uncomfortable at times.

To illustrate his new-found confidence, Nick agreed to bowl in the Haven Acres Bowling for Bucks fundraiser in the fall. Nick had not been bowling since he was about 5 years old. He didn't know how to hold the bowling ball or roll it down the alley. Having Jason come over and give him direction was awesome. Jason's kind and gentle nature made Nick feel at ease. Nick was, again, open to **trying something new** and not being afraid of possibly failing. When he had a turn where he didn't hit any pins, he would laugh rather than getting frustrated, angry, and shutting down. He **stood tall and proud** at how well he did!

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“The King will reply,
‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least
of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

– Matthew 25:40



Photo by Pam Heikkila

Cracklin' Jac Dunnit

We have many remarkable horses out at Haven Acres, but sometimes we are given a **rare jewel** that really stands out. Jac was one of those horses.

Jac was the one horse we could put *anyone* on and not have to worry. He helped us train some amazing but timid mentors when no other horse could have. **He obeyed and instilled confidence** in fearful participants. Other horses won't listen if you don't have the tenacity to follow through with your cues, so they can take advantage of a new rider. But not Jac. Jac would take instruction from even the smallest kids—and they grew and blossomed working with him. You would see them asking him to trot or spin or lunge, and he did what they asked—even if they were clumsy and unclear with their cue! He made them look good, and they would just *beam*. Jac instilled confidence that couldn't be developed anywhere else but with him.

If any horse deserved to go to heaven to be the royal mount for our King of Kings, it was Jac. But he did get to. Every time that Jac worked with one of our precious kids or teenagers who has been bullied, disregarded, or hurt, he was serving our King. Matthew 25:40 says, “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” **Jac had the honor of being the mount for King Jesus** every time someone who the world considers the “least of these” got on his strong back. We'll always be grateful for the **immeasurable gift** he was to Haven Acres!

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Here's what Nick has to say about Haven Acres:

Some things I like about Haven Acres is being out in the country riding Beau and **I like playing all the games** - especially the squirt gun game! I also love that Beau is a really good and friendly horse. I like that he loves getting hugs. My favorite thing about going to Haven Acres is being able to help out and do chores on the farm. **Everyone at Haven Acres is super nice.**

A great big thank you to Jenifer, Jason, and all the mentors for what you do for everyone. You are all a true **blessing from God!**

– The Trombley's



Haven Acres

2820 245th St E • Hampton, MN 55031

WWW.HAVENACRESMN.ORG • Email: info@havenacresmn.org

REGISTRATION:

Registration for summer sessions is OPEN March 1st to the 31st! Visit havenacresmn.org/registration for the application and more information.

VOLUNTEERS:

We are looking for summer volunteers! It takes all ages, experience levels, and personalities for Haven Acres to operate as the Body of Christ. If you have a heart for God and kids navigating tough challenges, visit havenacresmn.org/volunteer.