

Photo by Brittany Toth



She Found Her Voice

Written by A Grateful Haven Acres Parent

My daughter, Jane, was so blessed to spend time at Haven Acres during the summer and fall programs in 2022. The shift and **literal transformation** within Jane was astounding and miraculous!

A little background – Jane is the 6th of 7 children and experienced complex, **ongoing trauma** from her abusive father. This was compounded by his use of Scripture to discipline and direct behavior, except his own. As time has progressed, more and more dark situations have come to light. The impact of trauma then nearly destroyed a sibling through repeated suicide attempts in 2019-2021.

At the time of Jane's arrival at Haven Acres, Jane was 12 and presented to new people as extremely quiet, rarely made eye contact, would speak in almost a whisper, and was hypervigilant. During basketball season 6 months prior, Jane would only sit by me and would wear noise canceling headphones just to get through her sibling's games. Jane had **little confidence** when not at home and **struggled to trust** others and herself.

But Jane literally blossomed in those 5 months! This was the only change made to her routine, so I attribute the dramatic transformation to the gift of working with her session horse Lucy, her mentors, and the **Lord directly using Haven Acres** in Jane's life. Lucy is a beautiful little black and white paint and is almost completely blind from recurrent eye infections. During their time together each week, Jane needed to speak up in order to really help direct Lucy and keep her safe. This was an essential key to building confidence and giving her a voice. Halfway through the summer, Jane's countenance began to brighten, and she began to talk about playing basketball in the fall. She began to have the ability to **verbally stand up for herself** in various situations and literally began to physically stand tall. By the end of her season at Haven Acres, Jane was speaking up and looked more relaxed. Situations that would cause trauma responses and activation either did not or the response was much less.

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“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” – Isaiah 43:19

Though still working through things as they come up, Jane is **focused on school** and this year joined the basketball team! Instead of sitting right by me, she's playing and sitting with her 11 new friends on the team. When all the buzzers go off and there are two dozen basketballs bouncing and coaches yelling (not hers!), Jane can cope to get through and **still enjoy herself**.

There is something very special about working with a horse. I can't describe it. I don't know enough about it, but I have seen it work wonders and miracles in Jane! I do believe the work that Haven Acres does is **blessed by God**, and I know it impacts those who are given the chance to work with these amazing horses! I am so thankful that Jane got this opportunity! It gives me great hope that her **future is bright**, and she will continue on her path to healing. I thank every donor who gives. Your contributions literally change the trajectory of lives and bring **healing and recovery**.

Thank you!

Note: Name and photos of the participant featured in this article have been changed for confidentiality purposes.

SAVE THE DATE!

Apr 18	Volunteer Training Begins
May 13	Spring Work Day
June 5	Summer Sessions Begin
June 23	Bowling for Bucks Fundraiser
July 17-21	Week Break
Sept 1	Last Day of Summer Sessions
Sept 9	Round-Up
Sept 12	First Day of Fall Sessions
Oct 7	Adoption Day
Oct 26	Last Day of Fall Sessions



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