

The Healing Herd

A newsletter made for participants, volunteers, and friends of
Horses Help SWI

Staff Welcome Message

As the seasons change, we're taking a moment to reflect on everything that's been happening around the barn, and what a season it's been! From our Equine Assisted Learning sessions to the incredible progress we've seen in both horses and participants, this has truly been a time of growth and connection.

Our herd has been learning and adapting right alongside us, and we're especially proud of how our team handled the recent pigeon fever cases with care, teamwork, and diligence. Every volunteer, staff member, and participant played a role in keeping our horses healthy and our barn community strong.

This season also brought new learning opportunities – from deepening our positive reinforcement work to preparing horses like Romeo for off-site adventures. The energy, dedication, and compassion that fill this place every day continue to amaze me.

As we head into the next season, I'm so grateful for our Horses Help family. Thank you for showing up with open hearts, steady hands, and a shared belief in the healing power of horses. We couldn't do this without you.

With gratitude,
Kori Nelson
Executive Director, Horses Help SWI

EQUINE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



ROMEO

Romeo has truly come out of his shell this summer during our Equine Assisted Learning sessions. He's been an incredible teacher for our participants by helping them build confidence, strengthen their horsemanship skills, and deepen their connection with horses.

With the trust and patience of our staff and volunteers, Romeo has made huge strides in loading onto trailers and ramps and is laying a strong foundation for future off-site work. He's always the first to greet you at the gate, eager to engage, and loves every bit of attention from his visitors.

What We've Been Up To

It's been an exciting season of growth and change here at Horses Help! We've welcomed new staff members to the team, each bringing fresh energy, skills, and ideas to help us continue growing our programs and caring for our herd.



We've also been shifting our focus toward positive reinforcement and energy-based work with our horses – deepening the connection, trust, and communication between horses and humans. This approach has already created some beautiful breakthroughs, helping our herd feel more relaxed, confident, and engaged in their work.

In addition, we're actively training new horse leaders and sidewalkers to support our sessions and ensure our riders and horses have the best possible experience. If you're interested in joining one of these trainings, please reach out to Jess for more information!

It's been a season full of learning, teamwork, and heart and we can't wait to see where this new chapter takes us.

Volunteer Spotlight: Will M.

Will has been part of the Horses Help SWI family since spring of 2023, and he's truly become a jack-of-all-trades and master of tons around the ranch. From horse leading and cart driving to maintenance projects and events, there's not much Will doesn't lend a hand with!

His journey started when he met Kori on a snowy day in front of the ranch, and the rest is history. He was excited to find a therapeutic riding facility close to home where he could give back, and we're so grateful he did.

“My favorite part of volunteering at Horses Help is helping the horses, clients and staff.”



When he's not at the ranch, Will enjoys building and fixing things – skills that come in handy here all the time!

We're so thankful for Will's hard work, dedication, and good humor. Horses Help SWI wouldn't be the same without him!

Health & Safety Update

We want to keep our Horses Help community informed about the recent pigeon fever cases at the barn. For those who may not know, pigeon fever is a bacterial infection that can cause abscesses in horses. While it's not usually serious in healthy horses, it can spread through contaminated equipment or flies, so we're taking careful precautions to keep everyone safe.

Our team is monitoring the herd twice daily, including temperature checks and visual health assessments. We've also set up sanitization stations throughout the barn and are maintaining strict hygiene protocols during sessions.

Staff Announcements

We're so excited to welcome Debbie and Jess permanently to the Horses Help SWI family!

Debbie brings her expertise in energy work and positive reinforcement, helping our horses and participants build trust and connection. Jess, our new Volunteer Coordinator, is supporting horse leaders and sidewalkers as they grow in skill and confidence and brings her experience in education and community engagement.

We're also thrilled to announce updated roles for our team: Andrea is now Lead Instructor & Horses Help Ambassador, overseeing session communication and scheduling with families and focusing on our riders' experience, and Ashley steps into Barn Manager and Staff Horse Lead, leading day-to-day horse care and barn operations.

Together, this amazing team is helping Horses Help continue to grow, learn, and connect — for both horses and humans!

Positive Reinforcement Corner

We've been continuing to grow our understanding and practice of positive reinforcement and energy work with our horses. These approaches focus on building trust, clear communication, and mutual respect — helping our horses feel safe, confident, and empowered to make choices.

Through positive reinforcement, we reward desired behaviors to encourage learning in a way that's engaging and stress-free for the horse. Energy work adds another layer, helping us tune in to our horses' emotional and physical states and connect with them on a deeper level.

Together, these methods create calmer, happier horses and more mindful handlers.

If you'd like to learn more or have questions about how to incorporate these practices, chat with Debbie, she's always happy to share her knowledge and experience!



What's Ahead

Fall Fling Open House Saturday, November 22 | 1-3 PM

Join us for an afternoon at the ranch! Meet the horses, visit with staff, and enjoy treats and fun. Donations welcome via cash or PayPal.



Volunteer Trainings

Sidewalker Training

1-2 PM - trained in 1 session!

Horse Leader Training

2:30-4 PM - attend all 4 sessions to complete training



Training Dates:

- Sunday November 16th
- Sunday December 14th
- Sunday January 18th
- Sunday February 15th



Interested in training? Contact Jess at
jtodd@horseshelpswi.org



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