

# Nickers & News



Happy Holidays  
and a Joyous  
New Year too !!



## Upcoming Events

JAN 10, 2015	Annual Board Planning Retreat
FEB 14, 2015	Volunteer Info. & Orientation Meeting
MAR 15, 2015	Spring Session Classes Begin
MAY 16, 2015	Spring Session Classes End (Make-ups the following week)
May 16, 2015	Volunteer Appreciation Picnic (at Las Praderas)

## Notes from the Hayloft...

**“Wow !!”** That’s just the only way to describe Free Rein’s 2014 (the Year of the Horse in the Chinese Calendar) - as hard as it is to believe that we’re wrapping up another year already. Here’s a recap.

- ☑ Served more than 100 individuals in 2014 (63 in the fall session alone)... 20% more than in any year since our founding in 2000. We couldn’t have done this without our volunteers, so please give yourself a well-deserved pat on the back if you are among our “herd” of dedicated, hard-working volunteers.
- ☑ Ended the year in a better financial position than we have in quite some time, thanks to our many generous donors who allow us make a real, positive impact in so many peoples’ lives.
- ☑ Much-increased public awareness and positive feelings for what we do and, more importantly, who we serve.
- ☑ Well-positioned to have an even better year in 2015, with a motivated and hard-working board and staff.

SO, again and always, A BIG THANK YOU  
to our board, staff, volunteers, & donors!

On a sadder note, we noted the passing of several good friends during the year, including Celeste Dulin, who helped produce Free Rein’s wonderful video. She was a great lady and will be particularly missed.

Doug Poad (Chair of the Board)

## Fun Horse Facts

The average horse weighs about 1,000 lbs. Its brain is the size of a baked potato but its heart weighs 9-10 pounds... no wonder they can show so us much love without even thinking.



## Free Rein's 'Mane Event' Fall Gala was a Huge Success



We had a packed house at Connestee Falls' Overlook Clubhouse on Friday, October 17th for our annual "Mane Event." By all accounts, everyone had a great time while attending the most successful gala in Free Rein's history. Donna Hunter and her gala team put together a great event and we'd

like to thank her and our 100+ guests for making it successful. Duke and Bird, our auctioneers for the evening, brought an incredible amount of "infectious energy" to the room. One highlight of the evening was the introduction of our new "spokes-

horses," Lois & Clark." If you missed the video, you can see it and some pictures of them on our Facebook page.



Geraldine Dinkins put things in clear perspective with some very moving comments about what her son Gus, and her family, get out of his participation in Free Rein's programs. Connestee Fall's kitchen crew provided some great food again. The Moonshine Babies brought it all home with a selection of their popular tunes. An interesting array of silent & live auction items generated a lot of interest from our

guests and, by the end of the evening, we raised more than \$30,000 dollars - more than doubling the results of our best gala event before this year. We received very positive feedback on the event from our guests, with one of them even saying that, "it was the most enjoyable fund raising event they had attended in many, many years." Please check out the list of sponsors for this year's event on our website and help us thank them, too.



## Meet one of our Volunteers (by Doug Poad)

**Janet Pierce, who most definitely gets her boots muddy... and enjoys doing so.**

Janet found Free Rein at our White Squirrel Festival booth two years ago. She's always loved horses, but was never able to have one of her own. Now, she says, "I 'have' 15 of my own and it is a joy to be around them." She feels like Free Rein's horses are partly 'hers' because, in addition to working with our students in classes as a horse leader (as in this picture) she also comes to the barn almost every day to feed the horses, clean their stalls, and lavish them with her personal love and attention.



Janet has also enjoyed being a Free Rein ambassador at several of our festival and horse show booths and has helped recruit several new volunteers with her stories about what she gets out of helping in so many ways. She claims that, "I've made some good friends which are a treasure to me. I've been amazed at the difference Free Rein has made in so many lives. I remember one little girl who is autistic and on her first day screamed and fought everyone! Each time she came she was a little calmer and by lesson four she rode the entire lesson without any "meltdowns." WOW what a transformation, her mom said she plays "free rein" at home with her toys. She is now excited to be with us and even gives hugs, even to me her horse leader. OH, what a blessing it was to witness such a change in on little girl's life."

One thing that Janet has said is on her "bucket list" is riding horses. As part of her volunteer efforts she gets to ride some of our horses in order to exercise them and keep them in tip-top condition for our classes.

## Meet one of our Riders (by Joyse Witheridge)

### Avrey Tody, Age 5

Free Rein is a family destination for Mary & Damian Tody and their three children, who travel from Hendersonville to the Free Rein stable once a week during every available session. The most excited member of the family is usually Avrey (shown at right with Lois & Clark, Free Rein's "spokes-horses").



Avrey was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, a disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture at the age of one. Riding a horse has been a wonderful gift to Avrey and the Todys. Mary says that his gross motor skills have improved markedly. He sits up straight with little support now and his self esteem has blossomed.

He just completed his fifth session at Free Rein. He was three when he started riding Lacy. But when Cloud was introduced to him later there was an instant connection. But as Avrey has grown the fit between horse and rider has changed. He has graduated to Kasey is she is now his ride of choice. "She has a smooth gate and the fit is terrific", says Mary.

"We love it there and the Free Rein family is part of our family. While Avrey rides, Damian serves as a side walker and our other two children always feed the other horses carrots and treats," says Mary. She quickly says that if there were year round sessions they would be there sharing the joy of her son's improvements with his instructor Christina, horse leader Porsha, and side walker Andy. It is a fabulous family affair for them which will continue.

## Meet one of our Horses (by Laurie LeDuc)



Barn Name: Hallelujah

Nickname: Lou

Registered Name: Like a Rock

Breed: Morgan

Color: Chestnut

Age: 17

Height: 14.3 HH

Sex: Mare

Favorite Song: "Like a Rock" by Bob Seger and The Silver Bullet Band

Favorite Treat: Apple Carrot Muffins - Yum!

Lou's Quote: "Like a rock, I stood proud and I stood tall." - Bob Seger

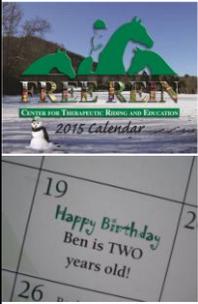


It's very appropriate to introduce you to Ms. Hallelujah (aka Lou) during this festive Holiday season!

We welcome Lou to her first season at Free Rein. After working as a trail and wagon train horse in Tennessee, she is happy to be back in Brevard. Morgans are a stout breed with great endurance & strength, and personalities to match. Lou is a particularly engaging and inquisitive mare, as you can see here.

This kind and loving mare is built like a tank, solid and strong. She is a boss-lady, alpha-type mare. Lou adores the kids and is always willing to work with them. As a matter of fact, she simply loves folks of all ages. She is quick to let out a welcoming nicker or whinny when she recognizes a friend. In her spare time she also works as a show horse. Why not contact Free Rein and arrange to meet this lovely mare? She would be glad to see you, especially if you bring along a carrot or two!

## Free Rein Calendar



Our 2015 fund raising calendar is here. They make great gifts, so get yours now. They are available for \$15 each in the office and at several of the month sponsors. If you “bought” a day, we’ll track you down & get your free calendar to you... and our thanks for doing so. If you didn’t, there’s always next year.

## Lois & Clark’s Debut



Two board members have been making “Therapy Horse” sock puppets for a couple of years now. They became very popular, so they created Lois & Clark - two special “spokes-horses.” They have already visited the Grand Canyon, Iceland, and some local businesses. Look for them in and around Brevard and the surrounding area soon.

## Covered Arena Update

Our plans to make Free Rein “rain free” are still active, but the construction phase will not start until the fall of 2015 at the earliest. In the meantime, we are still raising money and refining our plans and actions aimed at making it a reality.

We’ve raised more than \$80,000 so far and want to raise at least \$400,000 more. EVERY dollar donated to the “Raise the Roof” Campaign will benefit Free Rein in 3 ways for 30 years:



1. Provide a covered arena for Free Rein’s long-term use,
2. Eliminate our monthly lease payments, and
3. Build an endowment to provide long-term stability.

If you want to help, please contact Doug Poad at [freereincenter@gmail.com](mailto:freereincenter@gmail.com) or call the office. Donations to this campaign are tax deductible, to the extent permitted by tax law and individuals’ tax situation.

Please enjoy this Free Rein newsletter packed with fun and interesting news and information about Horses Helping Humans Heal

Contact us at 828.883.3375 / [www.freereincenter.com](http://www.freereincenter.com)



Click on the “Like” image at left and “like” us on Facebook to stay current about what’s going at Free Rein and Lois & Clark.

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Free Rein Center, P.O. Box 1325, Brevard, NC 28712

Free Rein is a qualified 501(c)(3) public charity. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by current law.



More pictures of Lois & Clark and The Mane Event Gala