

Free Rein Center



Up-coming Events

- July 4** Fourth of July Festival
Downtown Brevard
- July 21** Makin' a Difference Monday
Oskar Blues - Brevard
- July 24-26** Blue Ridge Classic Horse
Show, WNC Ag Center
- September
12-13** Mountain Song Festival
Brevard Music Center
- September 8** Fall Session Classes Begin
- October 25** Oktoberfest
Downtown Brevard

Greetings, friends of Free Rein...

Welcome to our inaugural issue of Free Rein's quarterly newsletter. We have long dreamt of having a newsletter to share stories about our "equine therapists," volunteers, staff, and our student-riders. One of our many multi-talented volunteers has agreed to serve as the editor (THANKS, Joyse Witheridge!!) and you are reading the very first edition. Thanks to Donna Hunter for taking most of the pictures.

Most of us who support Free Rein with our time or treasure only see or hear pieces about what we do and how it helps people. This newsletter will provide opportunities for all who love and support Free Rein to hear about things they would not otherwise see or hear about. It includes a mix of what will be "standard features" (about our horses, students, and volunteers) and pieces about topics of specific interest. If you have ideas for content, or would like to submit something you've written, please let us know.

This issue does not have a name. We are "kicking around" a few titles and hope to settle on one for our next issue. If you have a good idea for a name that you'd like to "throw into the hat," send it to me at (dapoad@citcom.net). You'll get a free T-shirt if we pick yours.

Thanks... SO much... to our board, staff, volunteers, & donors!
Doug Poad (Chair of the Board)

Horse Fact of the Day!

A horse eats between 2-3.5% of its body weight each day in hay. They can eat about 20 to 35 pounds of hay each day. Less active horses can eat about 15 pounds **per day**



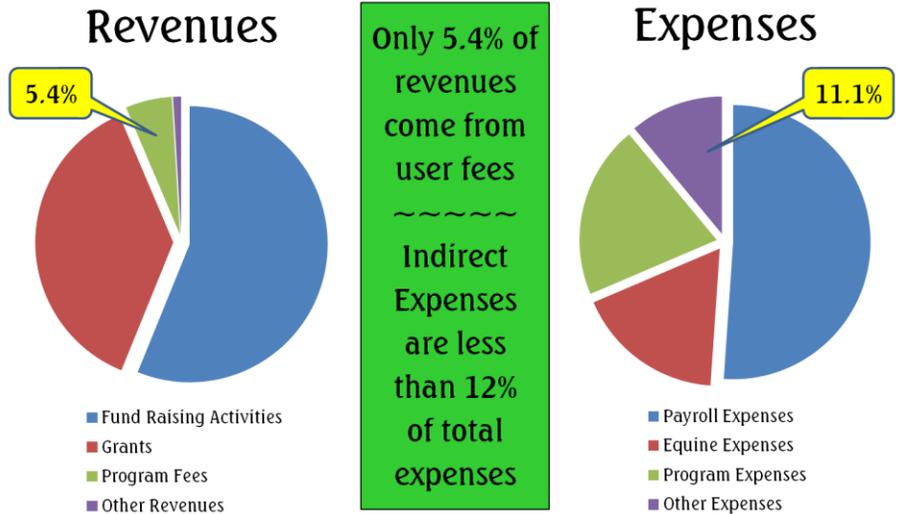
Free Rein Facts & Figures

Wondering about “the big picture?”

Here are some key pieces of the “information puzzle” about Free Rein.

Free Rein’s annual budget in 2013 was just about \$100,000. The chart at right shows that only about 5% of our revenues come from our student-riders’ user fees. We work hard to focus the resources provided by them and our generous donors on program-related expenses. We spent about 89% of revenues on program-related expenses in 2013 - a very good direct-indirect ratio.

Resources - the Ins and Outs



Meet one of our Volunteers (by Geraldine Dinkins)

Peg McGoldrick, A Fabulous Volunteer since 2000

Peg’s passion for horses has endured for more than eight decades. “I’m still riding and I love it” she says. When Free Rein took its first steps in 2000, Peg was among the very first to lead horses as children and young adults learned to overcome some limitations of their disabilities through time on horseback. Never shy of a sly, little trick, Peg



remembers one little boy, whom she mentored at Brevard Elementary School. Peg intervened with Free Rein to secure a spot for the little boy, which meant she would also be driving him to and from home to Free Rein. “He was a hellion on wheels, so I told him in the car that if he behaved like he did at school, the horse would bite him. Once I got him on that horse there was never a problem again.”

While her admittedly creative tactic worked with that boy, Peg is quick to add that she likes to leave the actual therapy instructions to the certified teachers – she tends to the horse and watches Free Rein’s small and big clients go through their individual transformations. She says she has seen first-hand what Free Rein can do for children who struggle in school and daily life. Her time as a volunteer at

Brevard Elementary helped her see that even more clearly. “In riding they can express themselves in ways they can nowhere else, not in school and not at home. They are in charge; they get to see what it is like to cooperate with another being.”

The plain truth is that Free Rein wouldn’t exist without their dedicated and hard-working volunteers - they are just that important. Peg says her time with Free Rein has its steady rewards and she has never regretted making the drive to the riding ring for her weekly volunteer duties. “To me it is not a really big commitment, it is just one more thing I do and like to do,” she says with another laugh. “I would say anyone who is thinking about volunteering should come and watch a lesson. There are so many ways to make a difference. It’s not hard and once you watch the children it comes easy.”

Meet one of our Riders (by Geraldine Dinkins)

Greyson Laughter, Age 4

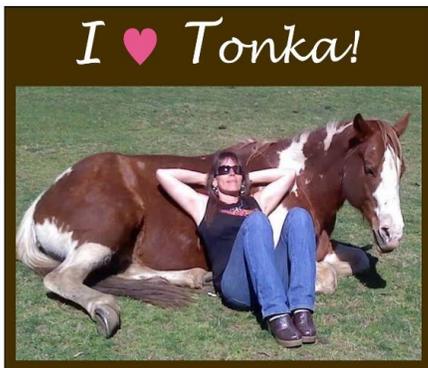
Greyson, a spunky, little boy with a shock of unruly, brown hair and big, expressive eyes, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) shortly after his second birthday. Though he does not speak and struggles with academic delays and neurological challenges, Greyson has come a long way in three 8-week sessions with his instructor, Mary Stoehr, Free Rein's Lead Instructor - though the start was less than promising.

At the age of two, Greyson "was chaotic" and "unaware of his surroundings", according to his mother. He has formed a deep and beneficial bond with Annie. Annie, a 24-year-old dark bay colored Connemara Pony is as steady and unflappable as she is non-judgmental. "He loves Annie," Laughter, remarks of her son's devotion to the pony. Annie is the same every week. She is always there for him and he trusts her one-hundred percent."

The personal connection to a living, breathing creature, the texture and feel of the horse's coat and muscles, the rhythmic gait, all can be calming and allow for otherwise jumbled senses to snap into focus, says Mary Stoehr, his Free Rein instructor. Everything from muscle tone to depth perception to hand-eye coordination to perceptive language skills come into play during a horse-assisted therapy session, where rider, horse, volunteers and teacher move through a succession of tasks that teach a variety of skills along with basic horsemanship.



Meet one of our Horses (by Laurie LeDuc)



Nickname: Tonka

Registered Name: Impress Too Paint

Breed: Paint

Color: Sorrel & White

Height: 15.2

Sex: Gelding

Favorite Song: Give Peace a Chance by the Beatles

Lesson from the Herd: Peaceful Leadership

Everyone loves Tonka and Tonka loves everyone he meets. If you just need to hug a horse, then Tonka is your Horse! He was named Tonka because he reminded his mom of a strong, tough Tonka truck. Inside that hefty frame is a generous heart of pure gold. Tonka genuinely enjoys his job and is a skillful teacher with infinite patience.

Tonka used to trail ride and came to Free Rein as a result of some problems with his feet that limited his ability to move comfortably on rocky trails. With some corrective shoeing he is now sound at walk and trot. Tonka loves to have a bath - BUT - no clippers please! You know that buzzy sound/feel they have... he is scared of them! His favorite treat is carrots and he will choose them over Pony Pizza every time. Sometimes he saves stuff for later in his always droopy lower lip!

As the herd leader, Tonka models strong, steady dependability. He is dependable with students as well. The herd seeks a leader who is confident and will not use force unless it is truly warranted. This consistent, peaceful style of leadership allows the herd to conserve energy for real emergencies. Can you imagine living in a world where all leaders practiced Peaceful Leadership?

Free Rein Riding Center



Funded by Free Rein's "Raise the Roof" Campaign

RAISE THE ROOF

It really is time to raise a roof over Free Rein to help make us "rain free." "Raise the Roof" was intentionally chosen as the theme for this capital fund raising campaign to invoke the memory, images, and experiences of an old-fashioned barn-raising; since that is exactly what it will be.

The facility will include a large covered arena with an attached 10-stall barn and multi-purpose room where students can gather in a dry place before lessons and where parents and guardians can watch their lessons. Free Rein has always had to cancel classes when it rains... as many as 20% in

some sessions. Parents, students and volunteers all feel the impact of a cancelled lesson and since Transylvania County is one of the three wettest counties east of the Rockies this happens more often than we would like.

In raising funds from a mix of individuals, corporate sources and philanthropic foundations, Free Rein plans to bring the community and region together to raise a roof so that the many young people with Autism and others who depend on the structure of a scheduled weekly session can count on it - rain or shine. Each dollar given to the project will help Free Rein three ways (1) build a covered arena that Free Rein will have long-term access to, (2) reduce or eliminate Free Rein's lease payments, and (3) build a meaningful endowment for Free Rein's future.

We have raised nearly \$80,000, or almost 17 percent of the goal of \$475,000. We ask everyone in the community and region to consider helping make this worthwhile dream a reality by supporting this fundraising campaign that will benefit many families.

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

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.

MANY thanks to our hard-working volunteers, some of whom are pictured below at our volunteer appreciation picnic. If you were at the picnic and enjoyed the music, come to Oskar Blues on July 21st and listen to them again.



Mark the Date !!
Oskar Blues' Makin' a Difference Monday

10% of sales go to Free Rein

July 21st - Noon - 8:00 pm

Music by "Pretty Little Goat"

