

Nickers & News



Upcoming Events

DEC 19, 2015	Holiday Barn Party with Santa Claus & horses
FEB 20, 2016	Spring session volunteer orientation & training
MAR 14, 2016	Spring session classes start
MAY 14, 2016	Spring session classes end
OCT 15, 2016	Mane Event Fall Gala at Connestee Falls

Notes from the Hayloft...

Where has the year gone? More importantly, how did it go?

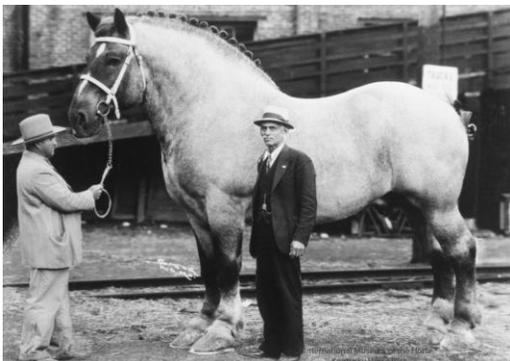
All of the arrows at Free Rein are pointing up as we conclude this, our 15th year of serving the people of Transylvania, Henderson, and Buncombe counties. Here are a few highlights.

- ☑ Served 110 individuals - the most in our history (again)
- ☑ Provided free programs to Transylvania County schools and Transylvania Vocational Services
- ☑ Invested almost 89% of all funds raised in direct program expenses
- ☑ Our instructors held our first Haunted Barn - a fun, free event attended by many families and more than 100 people
- ☑ Engaged more than 75 dedicated volunteers in many different rewarding roles - "in the ring" and in other important functions

Another bright spot was Gretchen Colman's time with us during the fall session as an instructor-in-training. Gretchen runs the Mackinac Island Children's Riding Academy and is working to become a PATH-certified instructor to offer therapeutic riding services up there. We all wish that Gretchen lived here so we could enjoy working together, but the children of Mackinac Island need her, too - and we will get to see her when she visits her Mom, Penny, who lives in Cedar Mountain.

We at Free Rein wish you and your loved ones a safe, happy, and healthy holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Doug Poad (Chair of the Board)



Fun Horse Fact

Brooklyn Supreme is thought to be "The World's Biggest Horse." He stood 19.2 hands (6' 4" at the withers) and weighed 3,200 pounds. He wore a 40-inch collar and boasted a girth measurement of more than 10 feet. It took 30 inches of iron for each of his horseshoes. He was born in 1928 and died in 1948. Can you imagine how much he ate every day for 20 years?

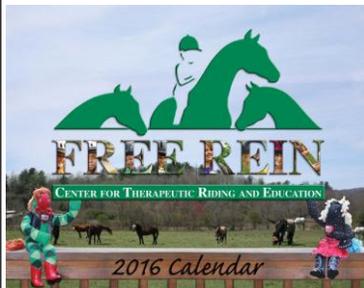


2015 Mane Event Fall Gala

This year's Mane Event broke all previous records for fun, attendance, communication of the impact of our programs in peoples' lives, and money raised to support those programs.

← Sabrina Shook, Sadie's awesome Mom, shared her feelings about what Free Rein means to her and Sadie, saying "Free Rein is the only place I go where people focus on telling and showing me what Sadie can do and not what she can't do." She recounted several "firsts" that occurred at Free Rein, like Sadie's first words ("whoa" & "walk on") and her first intentional interactions with other people. She moved many in the audience to fully fund the hay, grain, and supplement needs for Free Rein's eleven "equine therapists" for all of next year.

Duke & Bird (our "auctiontainment") brought lots of energy, Chef Craig delighted everyone with great food, and The Moon Shine Babies made beautiful music. Several popular live auction and silent items/experiences rounded out a very enjoyable evening for all. Lois & Clark, Free Rein's official "spokes horses" also attended and were featured in a fun raffle called the "Horse Hunger Games" that their creators, Porsha and Denise, coordinated. →



It certainly warmed our hearts to hear several attendees say that it was one of the most enjoyable fundraisers they had been to in years as they checked out and collected their auction items. We hope you can join us for next year's Mane Event.

← We've already reserved the venue for next year's Mane Event Gala on Saturday, October 15th, so save that date and circle it in your 2016 Free Rein Calendar which are available at Food Matters Market, Copy Works, Broad Street Wines, Riversong Veterinary Clinic, The Grateful Dog, The Nutcracker Shop, and the Free Rein office (883-3375).



Meet one of our Volunteers

Karen Shank

Karen served as a nurse in the "healing professions" for almost 40 years. For much of that time, she served as a cardiac nurse in the operating room - assisting surgeons who were repairing peoples' hearts. She views her work with Free Rein as yet another way she can continue to enjoy helping people... and their hearts.

She started volunteering at Free Rein shortly after it was founded in 2000 and continued for several years until her workload began to make it too hard for her. In those early years, her husband Bill also volunteered, both in the classes and in fixing things around the farm. Karen says that, "It was apparent to us both that there was something special about what therapeutic riding did for children and adults and that everyone involved was focused on making the magic happen, so we wanted to be part of it."

When Karen "eased into" retirement, she came back as a volunteer and has been a real "work horse" since. If you drop by the barn on any given day, there is a very good chance that you will see her and a couple of her fellow volunteers (Cathy Murawski & Toni Garrett) there with her. All three of them are there for 12-15 hours per week and more during some weeks.

When asked what she gets out of it Karen said, "I've witnessed non-verbal children say their first words and children who were very withdrawn become animated and excited about something... and the impacts that their children and grandchildren's participation had on their parents, grandparents, and guardians." She also said that she enjoys, "Working with the instructors and other volunteers, who all share a vision about what they are there for and the impacts that they can make together. In an organization staffed almost entirely by volunteers, it seems to all come together and work with a minimum of tension and effort."



Karen says that the thing she enjoys least about Free Rein is, "rainy days, when we have to cancel lessons, because I miss being there and I know how much the students miss it - especially the children with Autism who don't respond well to schedule disruptions." She also says that, "If you've never been around horses, this is a safe, enjoyable way to do it - the horses are all about love and attention and really relate well to their human herd-mates - they can and do teach you so much, too."

Meet One of our Riders

Ryan Tinsley

Ryan started riding at Free Rein in 2013, on the recommendation of his Occupational Therapist, who felt that he would benefit from improved core strength that he could achieve by riding a horse. His mother, Portia, also believed that participating at Free Rein would help him improve his social and interpersonal skills.

Ryan had never spent much time in the company of horses before coming to Free Rein, but he and Monty have become “fast friends.” Portia said that, “Ryan looks forward very much to his time at Free Rein during the week. He enjoys everything about Free Rein, starting with grooming his horse, helping put the tack on, and especially riding.”

Here's Karen again - working with Ryan, too.



Portia also said that she, “would tell other parents that it has been a very good experience for Ryan - and her as she watches him work with the horses and ride. It seems to make him much more self-confident and has helped him interact better with other children and adults, too.”

Rachel Evans, his instructor this session, said. “Ryan is a happy and outgoing young man. Ryan's favorite activities at Free Rein would probably be picking hooves, trotting and feeding the horses after his lesson.”



Meet one of our Horses (by Kara Franks)



Name: Mr. Pumpkin

Barn Names: Mr. P., or just Pumpkin

Breed: Haflinger

Color: Palomino

Age: 23 (about 76 in human years !!)

Height: 13.2 Hands - *much* shorter than Brooklyn Supreme !!

Sex: Gelding

Favorite Treat: Pumpkin Muffins, of course (he's never tried Pumpkin Spice Latte)

Favorite Quote: "It is more fun to talk with someone who doesn't use long difficult words but rather short easy words like 'What about lunch?' "

- Winnie the Pooh



Mr. Pumpkin has been a Free Rein favorite for many years. After a bit of a “rough start” in his life, he has used the past decade or so to better the lives of others.

He is much-loved for a variety of reasons, including his flashy color, his size (he's short enough for a good hug), and most especially for his personality. Always ready to make a new friend or spend some time with an old one, Mr. Pumpkin always has an excited nicker for everyone coming into the barn. His slow and easy going mannerisms make him a great confidence builder for timid riders, but also a fun and relaxing ride for more experienced ones.

One of our more photogenic horses, he always perks up and looks his best whenever people are nearby. He also likes treats and anyone who brings them.

Please enjoy this newsletter packed with fun and interesting and information about **Horses Helping Humans Heal**

Contact us at 828-883-3375 / www.freereincenter.com

Free Rein Center is a qualified 501(c)(3) public charity.

Gifts and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by current tax law.



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Please share this newsletter with friends and family, no matter where they live. Free Rein may only be able to serve people in our local region, but there are more than 850 PATH International Member Centers around the globe. If they know someone who can benefit from equine-assisted activities and therapies, they can locate a center near them at the “find a center” link on PATH International’s website at www.pathintl.org.



Lois & Clark, Free Rein’s official spokes horses, visited many local businesses that sponsor our calendar pages and other activities throughout the year.

Here they are at Jaime’s Creole Brasserie. Watch for them and their future adventures on our Facebook page and in future newsletters.

Free Rein’s 2016 Calendar

Our beautiful calendar is ready for your enjoyment - they make great gifts, so get yours now.

Our calendars are a labor of love and really help tell the stories of our riders, volunteers, and horses in pictures. If you’ve never been to Free Rein to see classes in session, these beautifully done calendars will make it seem like you are there in person.



Thanks to the generous support of our monthly sponsors, every penny of the \$15 we ask for these calendars goes directly to support our programs. They are available in the Free Rein office and at the local businesses identified in the Gala article in this newsletter. If you “bought” a day, we’ll track you down & get your free calendar to you... and our thanks for doing so.



Why Does our PATH Intl. Center Membership Matter?

Free Rein’s adherence to PATH Standards helps us deliver:

- ☑ **Professionalism & Consistency** - Our instructors must complete a comprehensive training and certification program & 24 hours of annual continuing education in:
 - Equine management & horsemanship
 - Instruction & teaching methodology
 - Specific disabilities and their precautions & contraindications
- ☑ **Safety & Confidence** - Every aspect of our operations and classes are governed by standards in administration, facility safety, equine welfare and class conduct
- ☑ **Effectiveness & Efficiency** - administrative standards & professional networking ensure that we use our resources wisely and deliver the best programs possible