

Nickers & News



Upcoming Events

MAR 14	Spring Session Classes Start
MAY 7	Spring Horse Show (see back page for details)
MAY 14	Spring session makeup week classes end
MAY 28 & 29	White Squirrel Festival (Come see us there)
JUL 2	Fourth of July Festival (Come see us there)
OCT 15	Mane Event Fall Gala at Connestee Falls

Notes from the Hayloft...

Daylight Savings Time is here and it's time for our spring session to start.

If you've never actually seen what we do in person, please do consider coming out to see it first hand and meet some of our students, their parents, and our volunteers. Our classes will be held on the days and times shown below. They last one hour, except where noted. Please call in advance to make your visit even more enjoyable.

MON 2:30, 3:30, 4:30

TUE 12:00 (TVS groomers), 1:30, 2:30, 4:30

WED 10-12 (Middle School), 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30

THU 11, 12:00 (TVS groomers), 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30

FRI 9:30-11:30 (Elem. School), 12:00, 2:30, 3:30

SAT 9:30, 10:30, 11:30



Do you have a friend or loved one in another area who might benefit from therapeutic riding? You can find one of more than 850 centers like us near them on the PATH International website at:

<http://www.pathintl.org/path-intl-centers/find-center>

Free Rein will be at the inaugural United Way of Transylvania County's "Volunteer Fair" on April 13th from 10 am -2 pm in the Rogow Room at the Transylvania County Library. The fair will feature Free Rein and other nonprofits in the area showcasing their rewarding and enriching volunteer activities. Come out and see what you can do... and what an impact you can have... while making Transylvania County an even better place to live.

Doug Poad (Chair of the Board)

Fun Horse Facts

1 A mother horse (mare) is pregnant (or "in foal") for 11 months. Most mares give birth in the spring to a single baby, although twins are not uncommon. Within 1-2 hours of birth a foal is able to stand up and walk. Foals' legs are almost the same length at birth as they are when they are fully grown - their legs are so long they find it difficult to reach down to the grass to eat! Foals can focus their eyes almost as soon as they are born and cut their first teeth within a week.



There's More to Free Rein Than our Classes

Free Rein is a nonprofit, but that doesn't mean that we that we don't have to do everything that any other business or organization has to do. We must have effective program plans and training, administrative processes, information systems, people policies, marketing strategies, and fund raising strategies. This is what allows us to continue delivering the wonderful programs that we do.

Our unique challenge is that most of these things are done at Free Rein by volunteers. Most people see the Horse Leaders and Side walkers in our ring and think that they are the only rewarding volunteer opportunities at Free Rein. There are many other ways to get involved. We are always looking for people who would like to help us in the following areas.

- ♥ Barn chores - help a couple of hours a few nights a week feeding & grooming the horses and cleaning stalls
- ♥ Gala team members - help plan and put on our fall Mane Event gala in October
- ♥ Newsletter Editor - apply your creative skills to putting our quarterly newsletter together
- ♥ Festival booth helpers - come out to the White Squirrel and Fourth of July festival to make new friends for Free Rein and tell our stories
- ♥ Technology - help manage our website and/or Facebook page
- ♥ Fund raising - research grant sources & help draft grant proposals, help with mailings and other fund raising efforts
- ♥ Board members - serve on the diverse, dynamic, and hard-working board



If you'd like to "join the herd" of volunteers who get so much out of helping Free Rein help so many in our community, please get in touch with Doug Poad (our board chair) at 883-5673 or freereincenter@gmail.com.

Meet one of our Volunteers

Toni Garrett

Toni started volunteering at Free Rein in 2015 and has really been a wonderful addition to our "herd" of dedicated, hard-working volunteers. She is up for almost anything asked of her, even donning a costume to match one of our horses at Free Rein's Haunted Barn last Halloween.



Toni serving as a Horse Leader

Toni first heard about Free Rein from her church's Sunday Bulletin and says, "I was SO excited about it that I called Michael right away! It sounded like my "dream job"! I LOVE horses and had a Palomino when I was growing up, from age 8-17. Then I had 2 Leopard Appaloosa's that I had to sell 6 years ago, so it had been quite awhile since I had my horse fix!" She must have really needed that horse fix, as she averaged 13-15 hours a week at Free Rein's barn during her first session last fall.

When asked what she likes about volunteering at Free Rein, she said, "I just love the way the children's faces absolutely light up when they arrive. They are so excited every week and it just warms your heart to see them. My favorite thing was one of my students who was afraid to get on a horse when we began the session. He was so great around the horses, very gentle and a wonderful groomer but terrified to ride. But after several weeks of great coaching from our instructor Rachel, he finally got on and while we were in the ring he had a smile from ear to ear and said 'I can't believe I waited so long to do this...it's awesome!' His confidence level just soared. Driving home that day, I cried tears of joy, for him and for the blessing of Free Rein."

In a sadly ironic twist, Toni benefitted from Free Rein when her Sister passed away last fall. She says that, "Horses Helping Humans Heal took on a whole new meaning for me! Being out at the stable was helping ME heal! It was a place that I could get away from reality and surround myself with pure joy. Now I know how the children feel when they come there every week! I never thought that Free Rein would make such a difference in my life, but it has! It is truly my 'Happy Place'!!!"

Toni helps Free Rein be a Happy Place for all of us, too, and especially for our student-riders!!



Throwback Photo - Toni on "Punkin" a few years back

Meet One of our Riders

Kit Lemaire

Kit started riding at Free Rein in the fall 2015 session. She heard about Free Rein in Connestee Falls' NextDoor online community and was immediately interested.

She said that, "I have been recovering from cancer and some other major medical issues and trauma-related incidents that left me feeling weak and panicky. I also have a muscle condition that affects my balance and being able to stand and/or walk."

Kit contacted Free Rein about a week before the fall session was scheduled to start, so her timing was perfect, even though - as she said, "I knew nothing about horses and, frankly, I was scared! But after meeting Jennifer and some of the instructors and volunteers, I felt I was in good hands." Interestingly, a pair of those good hands now belong to her husband, Joe, who is volunteering at Free Rein. Kit says that, "It has become a vital part of both of our lives. Having to live with someone afflicted with an illness or condition is so difficult and this "horse outlet" has helped him, as well. The camaraderie of the barn is just as helpful to my spirit as the riding. Joe and I are always welcomed and we do what we can to help." Kit is also volunteering with horse and barn chores in addition to riding.

She refused to name her favorite horse, saying, "I've gotten to know each of them through grooming and riding them and I love each and every horse at Free Rein."



Meet one of our Horses (by Kara Franks)



Barn Name: Annie

Registered Name: Night Music

Breed: Connemara

Color: Black (with a pretty "lightning Strike" blaze)

Age: She won't say for sure, but we think she's around 27

Height: 13 Hands - about 52" high at the withers (shoulders)

Sex: Mare

Favorite Treat: Peppermint Candies

Favorite Quote: The best teachers don't give you the answers. They just point the way and let you make your own choices. Your own mistakes. That way you get all the glory, and you deserve it. (Mr. Schuester from Glee)



Annie is one of Free Rein's hardest working, most popular horses. She came to Rockbrook Camp in the late 80s with Lacey, Danny, and Buddy after the breeding facility where they were living burned down. She adapted to camp life quickly and developed a love of children. Annie has more than meets the eye. She's spunky and sassy, but always has a lesson to teach. Whether it be a first trot, learning to rein, or even getting on a horse for the very first time, she will make sure you come away with something new to celebrate. The most important thing of all that she offers is her friendship and teaching how to be kind to one another. Annie accepts people with all of their flaws. She feels like nobody is perfect but everyone deserves at least one good friend. Annie found hers in Lacey, but is willing to be there for anyone and everyone who needs her to be their best friend.

Please enjoy this newsletter packed with fun and interesting 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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Spring 2016 Volunteer Orientation Session at Free Rein
We welcomed more than 20 new folks who came out to "join the herd."



April 10-16 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week. We mention that only in passing, as we truly do appreciate our volunteers during every one of the 52 weeks - every year !!

April is also Autism Awareness Month. Come see our display during April at the Transylvania County Library.

DERBY DAY



Spring Horse Show and Fun Day

Our instructors and board are planning an exciting new event that we hope to make an annual thing. It's a horse show and more. Of course, our instructors, volunteers, and riders will demonstrate what they do and compete in some fun activities. It's planned for Saturday, May 7th, so it might just include some Derby Day activities (so start designing your big, funny hat). It will most certainly include fun. Watch for more details on our website and Facebook page.

It will be a day for our neighbors and friends in the region to come out and see what we do and who we do it for. Circle the date on your calendar and make plans to enjoy

the day's fun. The rain date is May 14th, so circle that date, too... just in case.



Grant News

Free Rein is very grateful for the generosity of all of our donors, big and small. Without their investments in our mission, we would not be able to serve our students, their families, and even our volunteers.

We receive more than 20% of our operating funds from grants. We work very hard to maximize the impact of their support, as evidenced by our continued growth in individuals served. We thank the following grant funders who invested in Free Rein in 2015.

- ♥ St. Philips Episcopal Church Women
- ♥ Lake Toxaway Charities
- ♥ Sasser Family Foundation
- ♥ Pisgah Forest Rotary Club



New Pilot Program

Free Rein is developing and "field testing" a new program this spring session that we are calling "Family Ties." It focuses on families at Free Rein, building memories of working together with horses. Our hope is that it can improve the bonds between family members and strengthen family bonds that may have become a bit stressed over time. We're excited and look forward to a successful test.