

# Nickers & News



## Notes from the Hayloft...

We served 65 people in our spring session... more than in any session in our history... again.



Due to editorial delays, this issue is coming out a month late. We're sorry for the delay in delivering the news. We'll get back on the quarterly schedule with the September issue.

Circle Saturday, October 15th on your calendar - that's when The Mane Event Gala will be held at Connestee Falls Clubhouse. The team is working hard on plans that sound even more fun than last year's event, which was by all accounts a very enjoyable and successful event. See the story inside for more details and how to be part of it.

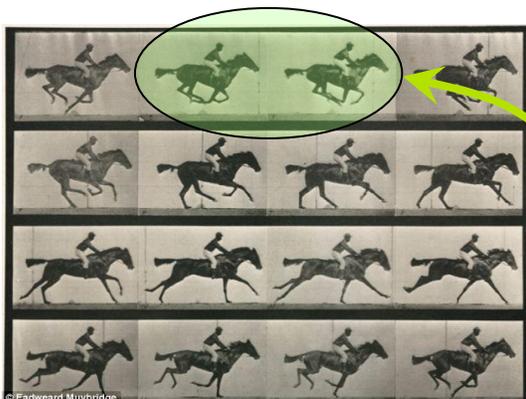
At the end of every spring session, a tremendous amount of work takes place to return horses to their camps and get the barn ready for Rockbrook to hold their summer programs. I'd like to recognize... and thank the following folks, who did all of this hard work.

Judy & Greg McCathern	Amber, Hunter & Hailey Taylor
Austin McCall	Karen & Bill Shank
Amberly Ralston	Andy Bullwinkel
Janet Pierce	Claire Oppenheimer
Cathy Murawski	Toni Garrett
and, of course... our Horse Care Coordinators	
Brittany McCathern	Kara Franks

And a huge thank you to our Volunteer Coordinator (Michael Rosenthal) and the many volunteers who make it possible for us to keep serving a few more people every session and do what we do.

*Doug Poad* (Chair of the Board)

Upcoming Events	
AUG 20	Fall volunteer information & orientation session
SEP 6	Fall classes start
SEP 9-11	Free Rein at Mountain Song Festival - come see us there
SEP 17	Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
OCT 15	Mane Event Gala at Connestee Falls
OCT 3	Free Rein at Brevard Music Center's First Mondays Performance



## Fun Horse Facts

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In 1872, Leland Stanford made a bet that, at some point in the gallop, all four of a horse's legs are off the ground at the same time. Eadward Muybridge proved him right by using a series of 24 cameras and photographing a racehorse named Sallie Gardner. Here are the pictures that won Leland the bet.

## Mane Event Fall Gala - Be Part of the Fun



Several of our guests at last year's gala remarked that it was the most enjoyable fund raising event they had attended in several years. The team working on this year's Mane Event is working hard to add even more fun this year.



Please make plans to attend and enjoy an evening of fun, good food, and good fellowship - all in the pursuit of helping the horses that help the humans heal. **We expect a "sellout" crowd again this year, so buy your tickets now.** Tickets are \$75 per person and you can buy them using PayPal on our [website](#), or contact the office at 828-883-3375.

Duke and Bird will bring their energetic and entertaining selves again. Look for some new attractions in the silent auction, too, said Dr. Denise Stretcher, chair of the gala organizing committee. "Mane Street Shopping" is new this year and promises to be very exciting. This is where you can shop for "Bubbles and Baubles," poke around the "The Cork Corral," and load up at "The Chuckwagon." Curious about these new activities? Come to the Mane Event, and check them out. It will be held at Connestee Falls' Overlook Clubhouse on Saturday, OCT 15th, from 6 - 10 pm.



Musical entertainment will be provided by Mother/Daughter duo [Humilicious](#) and the Bold Grey Mares. Lois and Clark (Free Rein Center's "spokes horses") will share some short video interviews of some friends of Free Rein Center with answers to an important question about Free Rein Center.



Lois & Clark (Porsha's creation) enjoying a milkshake at Rocky's

## Meet one of our Volunteers

### Porsha Smith

Porsha didn't actually feel that she deserved to be highlighted as a volunteer, since she is a member of the Board of Directors. As one of our longest-serving volunteers (she began volunteering as a side walker in 2004 and has only missed one session since), it was easy to find the hole in that argument. In addition to being part of hundreds of in-class sessions, she's also served very ably on the board since 2011 and contributed to Free Rein Center's success in many different ways.



Porsha & Avery getting ready for class

She was one of the organizers of this spring's horse show, about which she said, "I have had so many wonderful experiences and memories over the last 11 years, but our first horse show is at the top of my list. Just watching the students share their achievements, seeing the excitement and smiles on faces was so heartwarming. It was a day to say, This is WHY Free Rein!" She also created the first "therapy horses" several years ago. When Denise Stretcher joined the board they teamed up to create quite the herd. Lois and Clark (our official "spokes horses") and every other one is special with their own personality.

A speech-language pathologist for 30+years, Porsha has a huge heart with lots of room in it for children with disabilities and autism. She says that she "had read a great deal about the physical and emotional impact that animals have on these individuals, so I just had to be a part of something that would enhance their lives--Free Rein was it!" Porsha even organized and delivered training for our instructors on various types of disabilities and methods for effective in-class methodologies for them.

She said that, "I have never been a 'horse person' and was actually quite afraid of horses, so joining FR made me step out of my comfort zone and has been therapeutic for me as well. I have watched these wonderful creatures give others a sense of strength, self-esteem, accomplishment and joy that cannot be put into words. To see a student who struggles mentally, physically or emotionally, look down from a horse and smile, says it all."

Porsha & Denise at the 2015 Mane Event gala - at one of Porsha's many creative activities for Free Rein.

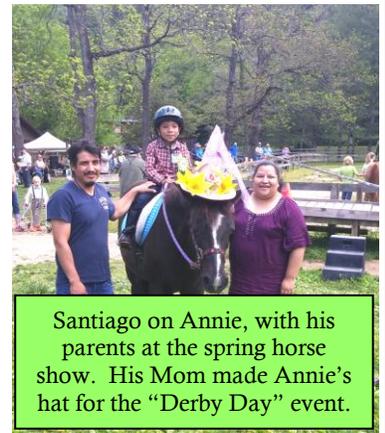


## Meet One of our Riders

### Santiago Barron

Santiago started riding at Free Rein Center in the fall session of 2015. His parents heard about the opportunity from the mother of another participant who told her about how riding had helped her son.

Santiago has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). His mom has told one of our volunteers that he is not often happy at home, but that he often says "Santiago is happy," while riding his favorite horse, Annie. That is a very common refrain that we hear in one form or another from more of our students than just Santiago.



Santiago on Annie, with his parents at the spring horse show. His Mom made Annie's hat for the "Derby Day" event.

His mom tells us that his social skills, speech, and overall feeling of well-being have much improved since he started coming to Free Rein Center. His volunteers tell similar stories, after being with him for two full sessions now.

At left, Santiago shows that his lessons include much more than just riding around in the ring. Very specific activities are designed for him and all of our students that challenge them to engage their whole mind and body in attending to the goals of the activity - in this case, selecting the proper color ring and putting it over the top of the designated post.



## Meet one of our Horses

(by Kara Franks)

Barn Name: Danny

Nickname: Pumba - Possibly after the warthog in The Lion King.

Breed: Connemara

Color: Dark Bay (that's very dark brown for non-horse folks)

Age: Somewhere close to 27

Height: 13.3 Hands - about 55" high at the withers (shoulders)

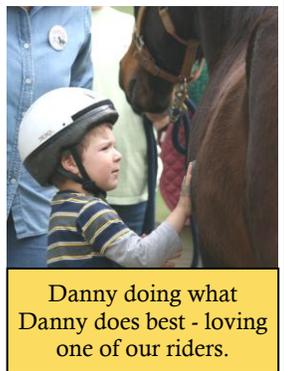
Sex: Gelding (a former Stallion)

Favorite Treat: Pop Tarts

Favorite Quote: Don't give up. I believe in you all. A persons a person, no matter how small. (Dr. Seuss)

Danny came to Rockbrook and Free Rein Center in the late 80's with Lacey, Annie, and Buddy after the breeding facility where they were living burned down. He was only about 2 years old then, but has acquired a magnificent love for children and loves his job as a lesson horse. Since then, he has taught many camp kids and a few barn staff members lessons that they will always carry with them.

Now he takes life a little slower and uses his talents to teach our Free Rein students and some volunteers how to ride. He is a great confidence builder for people who need a little help getting their riding careers going or a great first horse for people who have never ridden before. As long as people are willing to learn, anyone can learn something from Danny. He is the wise old man of our herd and loves passing on his knowledge to everyone he meets.



Danny doing what Danny does best - loving one of our riders.



Please enjoy this newsletter packed with fun and interesting information about Horses Helping Humans Heal  
Contact us at 828-883-3375 / [www.freereincenter.com](http://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.



“Like” us on Facebook to stay current about Lois & Clark & what’s going at Free Rein at:

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You will need to identify Free Rein Center for Therapeutic Riding and Education as your chosen charity... get in touch if you need help.

## Fall Session Volunteers Needed

Free Rein Center couldn’t exist without our dedicated volunteers. Serving more people requires even more volunteers. We are also looking for volunteers to help out with fund raising, newsletter writing, and other areas outside of the ring.

If you’d like to explore this and find out how much fun working with us can be, plan on attending our volunteer info/orientation on Saturday, AUG 20th (at Rockbrook Camp from 9 am - 12 noon). Call the office or email us with questions or to sign up for the session. Refer your friends, too.



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

## Spring Horse Show and Fun Day

Our inaugural Open Gaits horse show on May 7th was a huge success. Everyone who attended had a great time. Thirty-five students and their families celebrated what Free Rein has meant to them and enjoy the riding skill demonstrations and fun activities put on by our instructors and volunteers. Here are pictures of some of the fun & festivities.



Porsha Smith, Free Rein’s chairman of the event, “We planned this Horse Show because we wanted to give the students an opportunity to show their family and friends the confidence and equine skills they’ve acquired at Free Rein.”

## Thanks to the Sasser Family Foundation

Free Rein Center has received a generous grant from the Sasser Family Foundation to help fund our “Leg Up” program with Transylvania Vocational Services. This program saw 17 adults with developmental and physical disabilities participate in Free Rein’s programs during the spring session. The grant also supports training and development needs for our instructors, staff, and volunteers.

## Thanks to Dugan's Pub

Thanks to Ron Gurtler, Owner/Proprietor of Dugan’s Pub for the recent contribution from the “feed bucket” at the pub. Ron bought a beautiful show saddle at one of our galas and mounted it on a bar stool. Patrons who saddle up at the bar put a dollar in a pitcher (the feed bucket), which goes directly to Free Rein Center. This is the most recent in a series of such contributions from the feed bucket... and we are very grateful for the support.