



Through hands on experience in a safe and peaceful environment, children facing conflicts and challenges come together with rescued horses to help each other learn to love and trust again.

Winter 2015

Co-founder's Message - Jane Yancey

Saying Goodbye is Never Easy

Fall, in all its glorious colors brings change to our Earth. Days become cooler and our world, ever-changing, transforms. Leaves on the trees spoil us with one last firework, showcasing our Heavenly Father's brilliant artwork, as they say their last goodbye, falling gently to the ground.

Like the seasons, life is always changing at Wings of Hope Ranch. Sadly, we have had to say good bye to one of our volunteers this past year that has positively left an imprint on the Ranch.

In Memoriam: Ann Jackson, January 16, 1961 - October 25, 2015



Ann Jackson

This fall, our dear **Ann Jackson**, passed away, after fighting a long and courageous battle with cancer.

She was a loving mother, a passionate artist and a caring volunteer at Wings of Hope Ranch.

Ann had been a Ranch Volunteer Supervisor before her illness; and after, in her love for the program, she showed her willingness and desire to continue to serve, by returning to her role as Supervisor, even while she battled the disease.

She leaves her legacy with our program in her artwork, as well as being the writer of our western themed nativity script performed annually at the Ranch by our ranchers and volunteers.

In honor of her memory, Wings of Hope Ranch honored her at the 2015 production of "Deck the Stalls!" Nativity play.



As an artist, Ann was painting this pony at Wings of Hope Ranch.

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Celebration: Hoe Down for Hope and Silent Auction

by Jane Yancey

On September 12th, Wings of Hope Ranch held its annual Hoedown for Hope for the first time ever at the actual address for Wings of Hope Ranch, and we want to report it was a success in so many ways! Although the weather called for storms that day to ruin the event, we were blessed with perfect weather at the Hoe Down while there were storms throughout the area elsewhere!

With over 175 in attendance, we were able to raise \$5,678.03 that will greatly benefit the continued service of this non-profit ministry. Thank you to our sponsors, **Q Barbeque** and **Edelman Financial Services**, as well as to the many **volunteers** that gave of their time that day.

Thank you **RVA Auctions** for hosting our online silent auction. Everyone enjoyed the barbeque and all the homemade sides. Music was provided by Randolph Macon College students Sophie Schaaf, Derek Dittmar, Jessica Rawls and Chris Lynne. Our guests thoroughly enjoyed the family activities like Chicken Bingo, the cake walk, s'mores, games and prizes!

Thank you to all that made this night so special and we look forward to next year!

Christmas at the Ranch

by Vicki Pinner



Fun was had by all attendees at the annual "Deck the Stalls" at Wings of Hope Ranch on December 5, 2015. Thank you for all who came out to support us!

Rain may have prevented the annual trail ride at Millstone, this year, but glorious sunny skies prevailed over "Deck the Stalls" which was held at the Wings of Hope Ranch on December 5, 2015.

There was a nip in the air which was as it should be. Plenty of people attended this event which has been held every December for the last three years.

Beloved Ann Jackson, who passed away in October, was surely smiling down from Heaven to see all the people in attendance to see the play which she wrote for Wings of Hope Ranch.

Conner Pace, a junior from Patrick Henry High School, directed this year's presentation which opened with a nice rendition of "O Holy Night," sung by Melissa Hoban. The audience soon found themselves joining in, and even Salvation the horse seemed to be enjoying the beautiful strains of the song. Everyone seemed to enjoy the nativity presented with a Western flair.

Before and after the presentation, people visited with Wings of Hope Ranch volunteers, talked to the horses, investigated tack at the tack sale, and even found some yummy goodies and hot cocoa to warm their tummies.

If they hadn't already gotten into the Christmas spirit yet, it is certain they went home with it in their hearts.

Make a tax-deductible donation to Wings of Hope Ranch by December 31, 2015!

What Would You Give?

by Tammy Kane

What would you give to have a conversation with your non-verbal child? My husband and I would have given our own voices, our own lives even, if it meant giving our son the ability to communicate. Michael was diagnosed with autism at 24 months of age. He has never spoken.

All of his doctors, therapists, and teachers told us he would never speak, and we should not really expect him to be able to communicate in any way. We were told he had no short-term memory. On top of all of this, we were told he had no ability to empathize, or connect emotionally with another human being. We knew they were wrong, but how could we give him his voice? Over the past eight years we've tried anything and everything to help him.

Fast-forward to November 2014 when my mother-in-law and Michael's piano teacher both mentioned the Rapid Prompting Method (RPM) to me. I watched a couple of videos on RPM and saw kids and adults who acted just like Mike. But they were communicating by pointing to letters to spell out their thoughts. Not just, "I want a cookie," or "I want a raisin," but spelling out deep thoughts like "I think the soldiers felt honored when George Washington helped them with the log."

I contacted Elizabeth Vosseler M.A. CCC-SLP, a RPM provider and made an appointment. In our appointment, Elizabeth explained how the speech center of the brain is in a separate area from the language center. She talked about when someone has apraxia or motor-planning issues that prevent them from being able to do life-skills, how can they possibly motor-plan their lips, tongue, vocal cords, diaphragm, lungs, jaw, throat all in coordination to make words? Or hands to do sign language? Or scroll through an iPad app? Think Stephen Hawking here or anyone with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Cerebral Palsy (CP).

She said, "I bet people have told you that he has no short-term or working memory." She said to think about all the evaluations he's been through. To answer any of the questions, he has to speak, write, or pick-up something. What if he has little to no control over his body, has almost no ability to motor-plan how to do any of this, but language is developing normally?

I am telling you that we have been on a miraculous journey since that first meeting with Elizabeth. It has only been nine short months since our first visit, and we have intelligent conversations with our son all the time now. We are now reading him age-appropriate chapter books, rather than baby

books, and he is in love with them. How do I know? Because he tells us by spelling out his thoughts on his letter board. He has absorbed everything anyone has ever said, done, and everything he has read, yes read. We have discovered he can read, and has been doing so for years. This has been our biggest learning – presuming competence. His memory is better than I have ever imagined.



When Krissy, his real-life Mary Poppins and co-facilitator of this miracle, asked him what RPM means to him, he spelled out on his letter board, "It means my mind is not bad." At the end of a recent lesson with Elizabeth, he spelled out, "I don't think anything is impossible for me." In six short months, our whole world has been changed.

If you have a loved one who is non-verbal of ANY age and is not having any luck in communicating thoughts, needs, or pains beyond some basic options in an augmentative device, please look into this. I included Elizabeth's contact info

below, and a link to the RPM website that has more providers and great information, and some Facebook groups that may be of interest.

Tammy Kane is the mother of Michael, a Wings of Hope Rancher.

Resources:

Elizabeth Vosseler, M.A. CCC-SLP
Growing Kids Therapy
<http://www.growingkidstherapy.com/>

Helping Autism through Learning and Outreach (HALO)
<http://www.halo-soma.org/>

Meeting Michael through Rapid Prompting Method (RPM)
<https://www.facebook.com/Meeting-Michael-through-RPM-557398037730427/>

Rapid Prompting Method Homeschool Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1570780503153938/>

Tammy Kane
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Sautoria

Why do humans have such a hard time being patient? I have observed them rushing around in a hurry to accomplish everything. They can hardly wait for anything. They ought to be more like us horses; they should live in the moment. They don't seem to understand that they could accomplish more if they slowed down and became more patient.

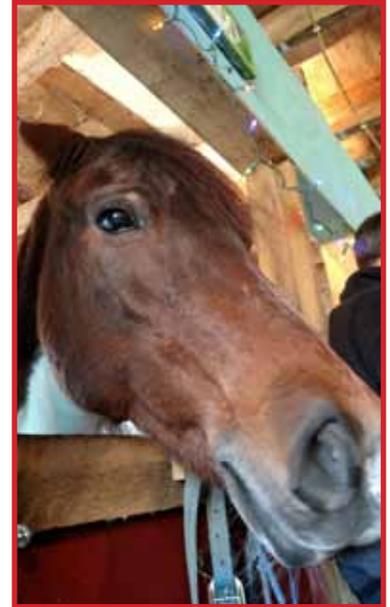
I believe that is why we horses are such a big help at Wings of Hope Ranch. We help humans learn patience, and we work very hard to teach them this. The humans believe they are training us, yet we know that it is we who are training them. From the moment a child steps into one of our stalls with a grooming brush and a hoof pick or runs through the barn door and quickly learns to slow down when approaching us, that child is learning patience which will carry on into his or her adult life.

And it is not only the children that we are helping to learn patience at Wings of Hope Ranch; we are helping the adults too. They have to slow way down in their thinking, in their movement, in their very breath in order to communicate with us.

Yes, good things do come to those who wait. They'll see.

In the meantime,
Be well.

Sal



Devos: The Creation

by Joyce Foster

The theme for the devotionals for the Fall 2015 session was "In the Beginning." The ranchers learned about the creation. The scriptural references were from Genesis 1 and 2. Each week, the ranchers learned about something God created for our world, from Day 1, when He created day and night to Day 7 when He rested.



During the craft project for the Creation session, the ranchers started out with an empty "earth," represented by a Parelli horse ball and turned it into their version of the wonderful world we live in today. They added the sky, plants, sun, moon, stars and finally animals and man.

The last lesson of the session was about Day 7 when God rested and admired His work. One rancher started a collage on Day 1 and added to it each week. The ranchers loved this study on the creation. The discussion and participation was amazing. Several ranchers and youth leaders volunteered to teach weekly lessons, and they did a great job. The other ranchers were very respectful of their peers teaching the lesson, and they were encouraged to mention prayer requests, which they did. Other ranchers readily asked and answered questions, participated in discussions and also volunteered to say the prayer at the end of each lesson.



All in all, this was a great Fall 2015 session, and we look forward to Spring 2016!

A Single Act of Generosity A Double Blessing

by Kelly Smith

Wings of Hope Ranch would not be where it is today without Betty Kniesche, and Betty would not be who she is today without Wings of Hope Ranch. As the current resident of the 52-acre property in Montpelier, Betty affectionately refers to the land where she grew up decades ago as "Papa's land." In 1905, her grandfather purchased 126 acres for \$1,100. It was home to a farm house, general store, and several outhouses. The land has been divided, and structures have changed over the years; however, it has remained in the family for more than a century.



"I was raised on a farm where our doors were always open," said Betty. She tells the story of how her family hosted visitors to the farm and travelers passing through, years ago. She even remembers the traveling salesman, Mr. Cook, who preferred a cup of warmed milk at night before bed. Perhaps that is why it is natural today for Betty to share her land with dozens of volunteers and hundreds of ranchers and campers over the years. As the

saying goes, Betty has never met a stranger.

For nearly ten years, Betty has legally leased about 15 acres of her property, at no cost, to the Ranch. "Truthfully," she said, "all of the acres are utilized for good by the nonprofit, and nothing is wasted." In addition to Betty's home, the property includes an outbuilding that serves as an office for the Ranch, a large storage shed, carport, garage, seven-stall barn, paddock, fenced pastures, and riding pen.

"It's a feel good thing ... it feels like I am contributing a little bit in a tough world. It has been a blessing to me," said the 83-year-old, who also serves as a volunteer Board member for the Ranch.

Betty's husband Donald passed away in 2007 and was able to see the early beginnings of the Ranch ministry which was much smaller then, with three women and three horses initially used for the program. The couple raised their children on the farm which was formerly home to a range of equestrian breeds spanning from show ponies to a race horse to backyard ponies. It had been years since the barn and pastures were used when Betty was approached in 2006 with a request to rent her pastures for a good cause. This arrangement grew into the current pro bono lease agreement which is the backbone of the Ranch today.

A Single Act of Generosity continued on page 7.

Cinnamon

As told to:

Kristen Brown Covington

Hi guys!

My name is Cinnamon. I am a 28 year young Leopard Appaloosa mare. I haven't exactly had the easiest life, but I sure am happy now!

I was rescued in 2006 by USERL, which stands for United States Equine Rescue League, from a terrible home where I wasn't fed well or properly cared for. I was basically skin and bones when they picked me up, and I am a big girl as you guys know! I am not supposed to be skinny!

When I got to Wings of Hope Ranch in the summer of 2006, I had a bunch of fur and skin scraped off of my back from trying to go under a bar in the trailer that I was on. It hurt really badly, but the Wings of Hope Ranch volunteers took really good care of me, and I don't even have a scar to show for it now!

I was very depressed when I first came to the ranch. They said that I showed no personality traits, which, if you know me, is not normal! Thanks to the love and care that I got at Wings of Hope Ranch, I bounced back very quickly, and became one of the most opinionated horses at the ranch with a sweet, but sometimes stubborn personality... I just like to push people's buttons sometimes. I think it's funny.

I also like to pretend to be lazy so that I don't have to work as much, but it's just an act, I am actually a very energetic and athletic girl once you show me that you can handle "Athlete Cinnamon." I like to call myself Super Cinnamon sometimes, but the humans tell me that I should go with Athlete Cinnamon for now, until I learn to fly, which I am working on! Kristen is teaching me to jump! Even at 28 years old, I love learning new things!

Well, I'm off for now, I need to catch up on the grazing that I missed out on while telling Kristen about myself. Come out and play with me soon! I need more chin scratches!

Love,
Cinnamon



Eagle Scouts: Bless the Ranch, One Project at a Time

by Alison Boyd

Boy are we grateful for the Eagle Scouts! Wings of Hope Ranch has been selected numerous times as a project site for local Eagle Scout projects, and we have loved every one! Most recently, this summer we enjoyed a complete "Barn Renewal" project by Ryan Pettyjohn and his troop. They took out all the old rotting and chewed up wood from the interior of the barn and replaced it all! Then, they took out all the old stall doors and crafted heavy duty (and beautiful) new ones! This was such a huge project. It went on for weeks and weeks! Ryan was incredibly professional throughout all stages of the project. He is an impressive young man and will be successful at anything he chooses to take on in his future.



This fall, we were blessed again to have Michael Harris, Eagle Scout candidate, select Wings of Hope Ranch as his project. Michael opted for the ever difficult, clearing and rebuilding of the front pasture fence. This fence has stood, although on unsteady posts lately, for decades. The brush had grown around it over the years, so the horses couldn't really see their potential escape routes. Dotted with poison ivy and who knows what else, Michael and his troop spent a weekend clearing the brush and debris. Then they spent another weekend pulling out the old fence posts and putting in an entirely new line of fencing for us. It looks terrific and is so much more secure! It was great to see all the activity at the ranch and to meet new friends.

Ryan had planned to paint the new interior of the barn. Since his project took so many man hours we rallied support from one of our favorite community groups, the Good Shepherd United Methodist Children's Ministry! Led by Renee Delgado, the team of adults, teens and really small children came and painted the inside of the barn and helped to complete the project. The little ones took breaks and got to know the horses, especially Samson who is always ready to meet a new friend!



The community really rallies around these Eagle scouts with donations of equipment, supplies and food breaks. It is an important building block in our community that brings people together and helps build these teens into men and our future leaders.

We are so grateful to both Ryan and Michael and all the Eagle Scouts who have gone before them. Wings of Hope Ranch is your number one fan!

2015 Wings of Hope Ranch Video

Share this moving YouTube video created by Wings of Hope Ranch Youth Leader Katie Alford!

Katie has grown up at Wings of Hope Ranch, and this ministry has grown right along with her.

Thank you Katie for spending so much time saving so many great memories of our last 9 years at Wings of Hope Ranch!

We are so grateful for every horse and person in this video. God brought all of them to us and blessed us with every one.



<https://youtu.be/6kYOtPMYIRU>

Volunteer Spotlight: Rachel Beatty

by Alison Boyd

My first recollection of Rachel was her arrival at the ranch as a 10 year old. She bounded out of the car with boots and helmet securely fashioned for her first visit to Wings of Hope Ranch. Rachel had recently relocated to Montpelier, VA from out of state where she participated in a therapeutic riding program. Her new elementary school had referred their family to Wings of Hope Ranch, and the rest, as they say, is HIS Story!

Rachel quickly became a shining star in our weekly sessions. Her vocabulary alone had us running for the dictionary as she chatted us up while riding Angel around the ring. Rachel used sentences like "This is a nice trajectory!" or gave Angel (our sweet pony) math lessons by drawing in the dirt with a stick. I am not sure Angel learned any math, but we sure did!

Rachel began as a rancher in our ministry and was a dream student during the devotional lessons because she would ask brilliant questions. Then, when we couldn't answer them, she provided her own explanations, which were usually spot on! For example, when we were teaching about Jesus and our ability to pray to Him directly, Rachel responded with glee, "Jesus is like a world-wide guidance counselor!" We couldn't have explained it better ourselves. Fast forward a few years, and we began what we called a "Youth Leader Program" for ranchers whom we felt were ready to give up their spots as Ranchers/Riders and become mentors for other children waiting for spots. Rachel willingly volunteered and has never looked



back. Rachel turns 18 this year and will be graduating from Patrick Henry High School. As I write college recommendation letters for her, I reflect on the work God has done in her life and ours, through Rachel.

Rachel rose to the occasion of "mentor" as a youth leader when she was about 14 and has ministered to many younger children visiting the ranch. Perhaps even more amazing, when I have a new volunteer now, I assign them to Rachel for training. I feel like Rachel has remembered and retained every rule, every horse's story, and every single duty necessary to work at Wings of Hope Ranch, which makes her the perfect new volunteer

trainer! In addition to mentoring and training, Rachel has the uncanny ability to meet people (of any age) where they are and find common ground. She can intelligently discuss anything whether it is current events or astro-physics! Rachel has a love for others and a sense of honesty that is genuine and real.

As Rachel graduates high school and takes her next steps in to college, we will trust and pray for God to provide for her every need, to protect her from harm and to develop her God given wisdom, talents and gifts in to something amazing that will honor our God. We will thank God for the gift of time and opportunity to pour in to her life and to have received such a plentiful harvest back from this sweet child.

We love you Rachel, and we cannot wait to see you blossom into a young adult.

A Single Act of Generosity continued from page 5.

"I was happy to see the property used again. I've always loved horses. It was an opportunity to do something different. It was the right idea, by the right people, at the right time," she said. "It's been a wonderful nine years. It's been a great time. I've met good friends."

Betty said that she hopes the Ranch will continue to grow and is excited about serving the largest group of children to date – with 32 campers in session. She has made arrangements with her family to ensure the lease

agreement will live on long after she is gone.

So which horse at the Ranch is her favorite? "Sampson," she said, "because he is a gentle giant." The irony is that despite her small physical stature, and gentle demeanor, Betty has made a giant impact herself and has helped open new doors of faith, hope, and love, for many.

This remarkable act of generosity is proof that the old adage is true: it is far more rewarding to give than it is to receive.

Creative Ways to Give this Season

The holidays are associated with a time for giving, and we wanted to thank those of you who so generously support the Ranch, all year long, as well as to encourage others to be creative about ways that you may give within your means:

Volunteer your time – the Ranch is always in need of volunteers to help behind the scenes such as cleaning stalls and caring for the horses, or participating on the frontlines with the children we serve. You can download and complete the Wings of Hope Ranch Volunteer Application at www.wingsofhooperanch.org.

Memorial gifts are a wonderful way to ensure that the memory of your loved ones live on for a cause that was near to their hearts. A BIG thank you to all who celebrated the life of Alison's father, Richard Anderson, by donating in his memory – more than 30 contributions totaling about \$2,000 were received!

Honorary gifts may be made in honor of persons living today that you love; for example, to celebrate a birthday, holiday, or special milestone in their lives. The next time someone asks what you would like for a gift, please consider having them make a gift to the Ranch in your honor. We will notify you when a gift is made in your name unless the donor wishes to remain anonymous.

Matching corporate gifts can literally double the impact of your contribution. We just received a generous \$1,500 gift from an individual who works for Dominion Power, and her employer is matching her donation. This brings her total giving to \$3,000! If you are unsure whether your

company is part of a matching gifts program, please contact us, and we will find out for you. Companies usually require a simple form to be completed that documents the contribution to officially recognize the gift before it is matched, and we will provide you with a tax deductible receipt as proof of giving.

Volunteer match programs like the one at CarMax pays \$10 an hour to our nonprofit for every hour an employee, or a child of an employee, volunteers to serve at the Ranch. Special thanks to Emma Hartsell and Cathy Booth, who participated in this program, as well as to Rachel Simon before she went to college.

Planned gifts are a creative way to plan now and give later, leaving your legacy by designating Wings of Hope Ranch in your Will, bequest, or estate plans. If you are considering a planned gift to the Ranch, please speak with your financial advisor, and we will share our nonprofit tax ID number with you.

All monetary and in-kind donations to the Ranch are tax deductible, and we will provide you with a receipt upon request for your records. On behalf of the campers, ranchers, and volunteers at Wings of Hope Ranch, thank you to all of our faithful supporters whom without, our ministry work would not be possible.

Thank You!

2016 Spring Ranch Season

2016 Spring Ranch Season Information: March 13, 2016 - May 29, 2016

Children who attend Wings of Hope Ranch can expect a fun-filled hour of activities ranging from Bible-based devotional, chores, grooming, and tacking, and riding a horse (if desired). Somewhere in the hour and a half, it is certain that the horse will do her special thing...miracles occur and the child leaves renewed, refreshed, and feeling loved.

Any child who wants to participate in Wings of Hope Ranch is eligible and welcome. The program is FREE of charge on a space available basis. We have served children with many different special circumstances, including those with ADD/ADHD, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, family crises such as divorce, abuse and abandonment, among others.

We do not provide any counseling services at the Ranch, however, we know the children receive hope and healing from our equine minister who provide patience and unconditional love to all of the children. The only requirement to attend the ranch is a true desire to be here.

Required dress includes jeans (or long pants) and boots with 1/4 inch heel and a helmet. Thanks to our supporters, we can provide the helmet and boots if you dont have these items. Please call **804.833.8903 ext. 2** for more information.



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"Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind." Job 12:7-10

MISSION

Through hands-on experience in a safe and peaceful environment, children facing conflicts and challenges come together with rescued horses to help each other learn to love and trust again.

Wings of Hope Ranch is a Christian organization that rescues neglected horses and rehabilitates them to provide a horse ministry, free of charge, to children facing conflicts and challenges. We strive for an environment where both volunteer and horse model God's unconditional love and acceptance.

We seek to love, encourage and share hope with everyone while providing a place where all people feel welcome, safe, and accepted just as they are.

We pray the ranch is a place where children who come hurting leave each week seeing their true beauty, value, and self-worth.

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Wings of Hope Ranch is a Christian 501c3 non-profit corporation, an all-volunteer organization that relies solely on the generosity of volunteers and sponsors.

These men, women and youth are the life-blood of the ranch and we could not operate without their time and resources.

Would you consider becoming one of our volunteers or sponsors?

Volunteer applications are available at:
www.wingsofhoperanch.org.