



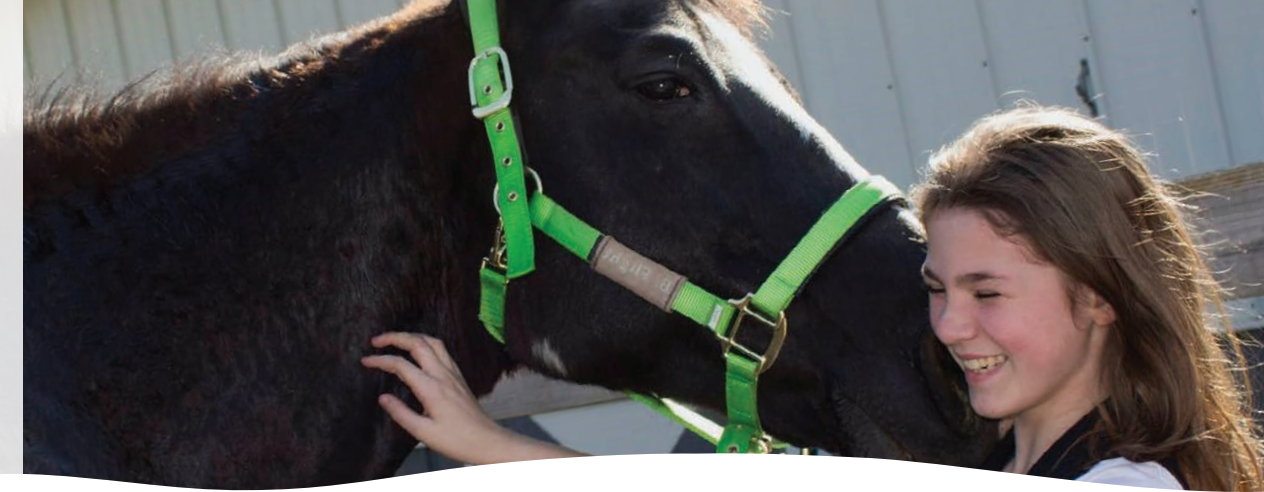
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Brushes of Bravery: A Veteran's Tale

Throughout the year, The Red Barn welcomes veterans to participate in our Take the Reins program where they work with our fabulous horses. Shelley, who visited this past fall, spent some time painting Black Flight. Through painting, she was able to tell her story - the story of a dedicated female veteran.

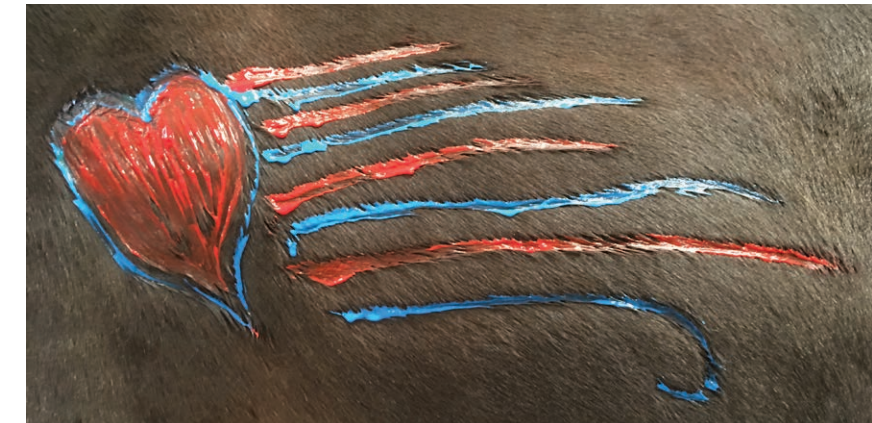
Shelley wrote the following about her experience painting at The Red Barn:

"Near the front, I've painted the heart and stripes to show my love for my country. Those years of service will stay with me forever.

On the horse's rump, I've painted the United States Navy anchor with some pink because I love pink and it should be more widely accepted in the military. It represents what it was like to be a female in a field that is dominated by men.

On her front leg, I've painted vines and leaves growing up and wrapping around to show that my roots will always be on U.S. soil no matter where I am. I also have deep roots with family and friends, who helped me hold on even when I wanted to let go.

The yellow line painted on the horse's spine is the yellow line of fear. Bravery means overcoming that fear no matter what you go through. My love for my country helped me find that bravery."



What Volunteers Say

Story By Sophie Eckert

Children, horses, therapy, big day ahead. Red Barn, wide fields. Blue skies float overhead, relaxing drive, plenty of time for contemplation. Sun shining, birds chirping, smell of nature. Click of the lock and jangle of keys mixed with boots on gravel. Heel, toe, crunch, crunch. Tails swatting, neighing louder. Delighted shrieks, big smiles. No words, never words, he can't form words. Independent eyes, hands. Doing it himself, brush in hand, hand on horse. Next mounting, helmet fastened. Leg swings over, feet in stirrups. My hand wraps around his small ankle. Now we're going, walk on. The horse bobs its head, pushing forward. What's today, what will we do today? Trotting, faster, faster. Turning around, still moving. Legs swinging carelessly. Bouncing, no ties, just my hands. Deep breath, breathe, breathe. Have to keep up, hands on thighs, grip tight. His small body bouncing up and down, facing in the wrong direction. His smile excited, mine nervous, so much risk. Deep breath, breathe, breathe. Slowing down, still backwards. Giggling, I've got you. Like a little monkey, huh? Deep breath, breathe. My responsibility, gotta keep up. I've got you. Risk? Reward? Heart beating faster, faster. He's already lost so much. Body hard to control, no pain today, just big smiles, glimpse of the heavens.



Sophie Eckert
Red Barn Volunteer

When she is not studying or helping lead her volleyball team to victory, you can find Sophie Eckert assisting in lessons at The Red Barn. Sophie, a senior at The Altamont School, recently completed her college application process. Several of these applications asked for a short essay about her experience as a volunteer, which prompted her to write a creative essay about her time at The Barn. We are so thankful for Sophie and can't wait to see where the future takes her!

8,400

**VOLUNTEER
HOURS**



378

**HOURS OF
CAMPS &
LESSONS FOR
VETERANS**

*Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. ~ Psalm 37:3-4*

A Lesson in Confidence

Liliana has been in physical and occupational therapy since she was three-years-old. It took her two years to walk on a 1.5-inch high balance beam because she was so scared of falling. This fear was also evident at The Red Barn, where she was hesitant to ride during her first lesson. She soon mounted Blue, though, and relaxed almost immediately.

Over time, Liliana has become fearless. She looks forward to her lesson every week and can't wait to get back on the horse. Her mom, Rebecca, said she is so relaxed that you would think she has been riding for years. The Barn gives Liliana a sense of connection and peace. When she is at The Barn, she is no longer stressed or afraid.

This confidence has translated to other parts of Liliana's life. For example, going to the dentist used to be a traumatic experience for her. Since she has been riding, she no longer has meltdowns at the dentist or the doctor's office. Liliana is also willing to try more things in physical therapy. She understands and accepts more challenges.

Her instructor's patience and encouragement have helped her understand that she can do anything she puts her mind to!

Setting the Foundation

Aside from offering camps and lessons, we help others interested in equine assisted therapy achieve their goals through regular onsite trainings. This may include program workshops to become a certified instructor, to learn more about our industry, or even to learn how to start their own agencies.

We want to give back to others in the same way so many others have helped us. We are blessed to be able to do what we do and love the opportunity to share those blessings whenever possible. One of our favorite memories from this year was helping Valerie learn more about beginning the certification process and starting her own agency.

Valerie had the following to say about The Red Barn.

"Joy and I share a professor, Dr. James Slack, which is how I found out about The Red Barn. I stumbled into this PATH (yes, that is a pun) to develop a similar non-profit in Mississippi. The Red Barn sets a high bar, but we are starting to develop a board and pursue PATH Instructor Accreditation.

We visited The Barn this past October to see how things run. The staff was so helpful and open about their struggles and successes. The story alone has impacted me for life. It gave me so much hope that we could help people here outside of Jackson.

I am grateful for the mentorship and hospitality that my daughter and I received when visiting. Thank you to Joy and the entire staff for sharing and helping others grow and serve.

What an enormous task we have ahead of us, but how fulfilling it will be! God Bless!"

A Labor of Love

A steady chatter arises from the lawn of The White Barn as students talk amongst themselves while they wait for Horsemanship Camp to begin.

"I wish I had a horse," says one girl, as those around her nod their heads in agreement, or else echo her sentiments with a hearty "yeah" or "me too!"

A few hours later, the chatter sounds a little different.

Sometimes, our camps are themed with topics like Pioneer Camp where students learn about the importance of horses in the westward expansion or Horse Breed Camp where we learn about different breeds of horses and the cultures in which they originated. Other camps may be based on literature classics like Misty of Chincoteague featuring our very own Chincoteague pony, Salty.

This particular Horsemanship Camp offers participants the chance to spend time learning how to care for horses on a daily basis - everything from cleaning stalls and water buckets, providing proper nutrition, maintaining a safe barn, and keeping tack conditioned. It also includes time learning to groom, lead, and do ground work with the horse.

Though the "work" is just one small part of the camp, it offers a true look at what it takes to run a barn that houses sixteen horses. It allows students to dip their toes into the waters of responsibility and perseverance.

"So, who still wants a horse?" Ms. Ashley asks as the students wait for their parents to pick them up, reflecting on the hard work they've just completed.

They all look at each other, until finally someone is brave enough to say what they are all thinking.

"Having horses is hard work," he says, then quickly adds, "But it's worth it!"



What Parents Say

The Red Barn is something our family can look forward to. Sicileigh loves riding and learning, but the relationships she has built are priceless. She has become less shy, which was really important to us.

- Sicileigh's mom, Shun



1,656

HOURS OF RIDING LESSONS



1,845

HOURS OF TRAINING



1,919

HOURS OF CAMP