

Michelle Bartlett, Mary Hadsall and Ray Klein at a 3 Cowgirls & an Outlaw's annual fundraising event.

## Merlin's Muse

By Mary Hadsall, Executive Director

Typically when I think of valuable Camelot tools, the first thing that comes to mind is a pitch fork and the tubs we use to clean stalls, or the pool skimmer we use to clean out the horses' water tubs on days the buckets don't need to be bleached. But Camelot has a new tool that has sparked interesting conversation amongst volunteers, donors, students and even folks that have never stepped foot in Camelot's barn. This tool is called Facebook.

I invite you to visit Camelot's Facebook page\* to see what is going on at the ranch, view photos we've posted and share thoughts, ideas or well wishes. Facebook gives us a unique opportunity to share what's going on in the barn and reach out to friends.

Facebook also facilitates interesting conversation with other therapeutic riding programs across the country. Recently I had a conversation with an executive director of a program on the East coast, debating the pros and cons of charging or not charging for services. I'm sharing parts of this dialogue with you because it's a good reminder that offering services at no cost is more than just a promise kept, but also a fiscally responsible decision for our grassroots nonprofit program.

Before I begin, here is a bit of history. Our decision to offer services at no charge was made more than 30 years ago when Eileen Szychowski, Camelot's founder, made a pledge to her mentor and riding instructor, Josef Rivers of the Dragon Slayers program in California. As you may already know, Szychowski is an avid rider and a woman who has a disability. After training under Rivers for seven years – all at no cost – Szychowski decided to set up her own program in Arizona. Before setting out, Rivers gave her two well-trained school horses, and in exchange asked only that she pledge to always offer services at no cost to her students. "The only way to keep a magical thing, he said, "is to give it away." He further assured her that if she did so, the money would always come, and the students would always flourish. At Camelot, we continue to pay it forward today.

Szychowski remembers that at the time Camelot arrived in Arizona to set up shop, we were in a recession maybe even deeper than the current economic slump. Yet we were able to establish a substantial organization without incurring debt, never having to charge for services. Eventually we purchased our own property and ranch, amidst of a very depressed economy. Just as we were able to do it then, the same pledge has as much relevance, or even more so, in today's economy, in today's times.

*Facebook Conversation Between Mary Hadsall and "Julia":*

**Julia** June 27 at 3:48 a.m.

Hi Mary, I was talking with my board of directors this past week about removing the fee we charge for lessons. Up until this year everything was done at no charge to the client, and I wanted to keep it that way.

Earlier this winter when we began to see a need to potentially expand the program, our hands became tied because the second

**"Camelot! Camelot! I know it sounds a bit bizarre. But in**

(Continued from page 1)

location would require a fee. What we have noticed happening is that our student roster, waiting list AND donations have plummeted since making this change.

As we are just starting the season and all of our current riders are on funded scholarships, I am ready to remove the fee and go back to the way we were. I don't like the fee, it has always gone against everything I believed in when I started this program. Families with special needs have enough expenses!

I know Camelot doesn't charge fees, and you are well supported, we "were" well supported until the change. I would love to hear your thoughts as I admire your work and program so very much! J.

**Mary Hadsall June 27 at 6:26 a.m.**

Thank you Julia, I appreciate your confidence in my opinion. Our pledge to offer services at no charge at Camelot has been in place since inception, but I must stress that our program is not a free ride. We ask all riders to be committed to the community that has supported their opportunity to ride. By asking our students to give back through volunteerism, we build a stronger community and teach the importance of making the circle of giving complete. That being said, it does not mean that I have not looked at the numbers and what charging for services would do for Camelot's revenue stream. At the end of the day, it is still my belief that the benefits to Camelot by not charging for services, far exceed what we would generate from paid for services by riders.

There are many benefits to offering services at no cost, so much so that I would not want to change Camelot to a fee based program. Here are some of my reasons why:

A) Donors have a high respect for no fees for services.

B) Volunteers feel the same as donors.

C) I am a stickler for attendance and full participation. If a rider misses two classes, no call/no show, I have the option to give the lesson spot to a rider waiting for services. This can be done in a fee based program as well, but generally when a program depends on the rider's payment in order to keep the doors open, the decision is based on numbers, not what's best for the riders.

D) As a general rule, we do not allow class observers. This practice is for safety and right to privacy to all students. The classroom (arena) is for instructor and students. That is not to say that riders do not have the chance to demonstrate the skills that they have mastered to parents and friends, but it does however instill the courtesy to ask. When parents are paying for services, often they feel they are paying for the right to observe the class as well.

I hope that I have helped. I just looked at the clock and realized that I have been typing away for a bit and I have not had my morning coffee yet, so I better get going before I have a full barn of volunteers! Good luck and keep me posted! M.

**Julia June 27 at 10:33 a.m.**

Thank you so much Mary, your reply reaffirms that what I feel is "right" and the correct course to continue on.

We have always been very active in the community and we have found that some of the best therapeutic results come from the act of giving. I know you have seen this for yourself time and time again! It makes perfect sense to me to make it a larger part of what we do.

And the privacy...I am so glad you touched on that! We don't do any group lessons, but we do have group activities available should the students want to participate. It has been needling me as to

how to best protect the privacy of the students (we serve children and adults like Camelot).

I really do feel so much better after hearing your thoughts. The Camelot program is exactly what my vision has been for our program for more than 10 years. In our area each and every program is a self-pay or direct bill program through the student's physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy. I know in my heart and in my head that this [no fee for services] is the way to proceed, and your thoughts solidify that!

I will keep you posted, and hopefully I will be able to make a trip out this fall to visit the center. I would love to see it in person! THANK YOU! J.

**Mary Hadsall June 27 at 12:11 p.m.**

There is nothing like being surrounded by like-minded individuals. As you hit on earlier, when you have a disability life is very expensive. It is good for my soul to offer a riding experience that personal finances are not a factor or barrier to participation. For many of our riders, everything from their clothing to their automobile needs modification in order to be functional to them. And often that comes at a heavy price.

Many students or their families do contribute financially, I do not turn down funding, but it is not a requirement for riding. I feel strongly about what we offer, and if we are not the right fit for our students they can seek services elsewhere and it doesn't affect Camelot's bottom line. Decisions are based on what's best for our riders. Students work hard in our program and learn from our curriculum, in addition to having lessons in saddle. I have seen, time and time again, that some of the most powerful lessons have happened while my students are on the ground.

I look forward to meeting! Come on out!! Mary

*\*Editors Note: Camelot's Facebook page is public and can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/CAMELOT-THERAPEUTIC-HORSEMANSHIP/266615856284> or via search engine by quarrying: Facebook Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship. You do not need to be a Facebook member to view the page.*

# Camelot, Camelot, That's how conditions are. The rain may





# a Camelot Fundraiser STARRY KNIGHTS

Friday, December 3, 2010  
7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.  
Scottsdale Resort &  
Conference Center

Calling all Dream Shooters for a night of inspiration and entertainment!

Dr. Andy Erlich, Keynote Speaker  
Presents  
The Long Shadows

Silent & Live Auction  
Harley Davidson Motorcycle & 50/50 Raffle

Delectable Edibles Served at the Cocktail Hour  
Finish your evening with Deserts and Coffee

Check Camelot's website for ticket sales soon!  
[www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org)

The Dream Shooter is a mythical knight, an archer with superior command of the longbow. In times of ceremony, gentle folk would share their dreams and ask those wishes be sent to the heavens in hopes that they could be blessed and returned to earth.



A life size model of Jake Erlich, next to his nephew Dr. Andy Erlich.

Dr. Erlich, an international professional speaker and published author, will share a moving and powerful story about his 8 foot 6 ½ inch tall Uncle Jake. For a portion of his life, Jake was the tallest man in the world. This is a unique keynote about a silent film star and circus giant who turned liabilities into assets.

Learn more at  
[www.andyerlich.com](http://www.andyerlich.com).



## NIFTY BITS

News From the Ranch

Welcome to our newest volunteers! Joey Joseph, Alona O. and Colleen R.

Welcome to our newest students: Kevin Burke, Hannah F., Josiah F., Sonya Richard and Amy Scheel.

Welcome Alicia Draper, returning student and volunteer.

Thank you to the following for your major contribution(s) to our program:

Ames Construction  
Lynne LoCascio  
Apollo Group  
Petsmart

Scottsdale Police Mounted Unit  
Van Denburgh Family Foundation  
Pinnacle Peak RMS Group  
Fred and Julie Wechsler  
Bernie Little

Ron and Ginger Barry  
Jack and Paula Strickstein  
Shirley A. Lowman  
Curt and Jerry Pindler  
Raymond Ames  
John and Bonnie Trowbridge  
Janet and Paul Syvrud  
Arizona Cactus Cruisers  
Sorooptimist International of Camelback  
Edna Pindler  
Ruth & Hartley Barker  
Phil Hagenah  
Nick Atwood  
The employees of Ames Construction  
Kelly and Jonathan Richardson  
Gene Spaulding  
Muffy DiSabatino  
Mary Westheimer and Kevin Caron  
American Quarter Horse Foundation  
Amanda Boggs  
Michael and Carmen Blank  
Marti Cizek  
Vicki Baumler, DVM  
Jamie Foley, DVM  
Our Lady of Joy, Knights of Columbus  
Special Forces Association, Chapter XXII  
"Desert Rats"

Camelot is participating in the 2011 Waste Management Phoenix Open tournament's Birdies for Charity Program! To learn more about this opportunity and how you can easily help Camelot raise funds, visit our website at [www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org) or send questions to [michelle@camelot-th.org](mailto:michelle@camelot-th.org).

Nov 20, 2010: Scottsdale Police Mounted Unit Fundraising Clinic

Dec 3, 2010: Starry Knights, a Camelot fundraising event.

Jan 21, 2011: James Shaw Day of Healing Clinic. [www.shawtaichi.com](http://www.shawtaichi.com)

Feb 5, 2011: Arizona Cactus Cruisers Car Show & Annual Fundraiser

April 9, 2011: Hooves & Heroes Annual Fundraiser

Learn more about these events on our website at [www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org)!

Please help us collect email address for Camelot's new database program by sending your address to [subscribe@camelot-th.org](mailto:subscribe@camelot-th.org). If you receive emails from staff, you are already in the new system. Thank you!

never fall till after sundown. By eight, the morning fog must



# A Princess, a Silver Chariot, and her Heroes

*Catching up with a Camelot  
Princess Whose Wish  
was Granted*

By Alicia Draper



*Photo of Alicia Draper on stall duty this summer.  
photo by Mary Hadsall*

**A**s a woman with a disability, I can say that I love my life. At twenty-eight years-old, I have accomplished more than what many ever thought possible for me. Born with cerebral palsy, a disability that affects my fine motor skills and balance, I travel through life with the help of my silver walker, or as I like to call it my silver chariot. My

chariot and I have traveled everywhere from the campus of Arizona State University (ASU) to Rome, Italy.

A few of my life's accomplishments include graduating from ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations, working for Walt Disney World and owning my own public speaking business.

Besides loving my life, I have never stopped loving horses; to be more specific, I never stopped loving horses and Camelot. I am a former Camelot student. I came through the gates with my silver chariot when I was only twelve-years-old. I spent six years studying horses and improving my life under the supervision of the program's founder, Eileen Szychowski. As a horsewoman with a disability herself, Eileen became a strong female role model in my life. She, along with the Camelot horses and volunteers, taught me a lot more than just proper horsemanship. I learned how to be an independent woman with a disability. Everything from how to brush my hair to using my walker as a tool to carry things was part of an everyday lesson plan.

Eileen never allowed me to use my disability as an excuse as to why I could not accomplish my goals. That Camelot life philosophy is one that changed my life. This is why it is my goal to become a therapeutic riding instructor, so I can share this experience with others who have disabilities too.

Years later, I left Camelot to attend college. After I graduated, well even before I graduated, I felt something in my life was missing. That something was an unfulfilled dream of becoming a therapeutic riding instructor.

This dream came to the forefront of my mind when I was studying at Scottsdale Community College (SCC), because they offer a great equine science program. After graduating from ASU and becoming a self-employed disability awareness/motivational speaker, I gave Camelot a call and told them about my dream of being a NARHA certified riding instructor.

NARHA offers instructor certification for people who teach, or want to teach, therapeutic riding. They also promote excellence in equine-assisted activities and therapies.

Right away both Mary and Michelle were ready and willing to help, but before I could teach, I had to earn my rank as an instructor. Earning my rank meant volunteering every Thursday morning to muck stalls for Camelot, and reclaiming my beloved title: the Princess of Poop. And since February of this year I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to reclaim my title every week; but one Thursday was a little different.

I was scooping poop as usual, doing the whole princess and silver chariot thing, when Michelle asked me to speak on behalf of Camelot to a group of ladies that were touring the barn that day. These ladies were members of Philanthropic Educational Organization Sisterhood (P.E.O.), an organization that promotes education opportunities for women through scholarships.

During my speech about how Camelot has impacted my life, I happened to mention my desire go back to SCC to get an equine science degree to help me reach my goal of becoming a well educated instructor for my future students. Before the day was over, my wish to go back to school was on its way to being fulfilled. I was told by the Sisterhood that I passed their first interview and needed to schedule a time to meet with the ladies from P.E.O. to discuss scholarships options.

You could say that the Sisterhood rescued this damsel, by helping her dreams come true! Now just a few months later, I am grateful to report that I am enrolled in the SCC Equine Science Program and will begin classes this fall semester thanks to my P.E.O. scholarship and the Sisters, who are my heroes!

So, like I said, I love my life. As a certified therapeutic riding instructor, my classroom of independence and self-worth will be on a horse's back, and all silver chariots and disabilities will be left behind.

disappear. In short, there's simply not a more congenial spot, For



Last year, many of you  
helped us raise  
\$3,016  
through United Way!

THANK YOU  
for your support!



“Only from the heart  
can you touch the sky.”

Rumi



#### WHAT CAN I TELL FRIENDS ABOUT CAMELOT?

For the past **27 years**, Camelot's mission has been to improve the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities through programs of horsemanship and outdoor education, which develop self-worth, independence and active participation in the community.

#### IS CAMELOT A MEMBER OF UNITED WAY?

Camelot is not a member agency, which means we do not receive United Way funds, but qualified nonmember agencies have the opportunity to receive donations from you, through the Donor Choice Program.

# CAMELOT & 2010 UNITED WAY

**Every penny truly makes a difference, especially in the operation of grass roots programs like Camelot.** One way to lend a helping hand is through the United Way Donor Choice Program that begins in September.

This is an easy way for you to have a donation deducted regularly from your paycheck to be given to your favorite charitable organization. **And remember, no amount is too small to make a big difference!**



*Yale and Evan, brothers who ride at Camelot, and Leslie Zelisko, Camelot's Heroes' Hero volunteer, celebrate at Hooves & Heroes 2010. photo by Mary Wales*

Even Small  
Change  
Makes a BIG  
Make a  
Difference!

[www.camelot-th.org](http://www.camelot-th.org)



#### HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Our Valley of the Sun United Way  
**Agency Number is 1003642**

#### OUR ADDRESS

Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship  
23623 N. Scottsdale Road, #D3-259  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85255

For those of you who are not in the Phoenix area and wish to have Camelot as your Designated Donor Choice recipient, you can receive more information about signing up from your United Way staff member or local United Way agency. Camelot is a 501c3 organization. **Our tax identification number is 86 0444470.**

PLEASE make copies of this form to share with your friends or request an electronic version from Michelle Bartlett at [michelle@camelot-th.org](mailto:michelle@camelot-th.org).  
THANK YOU for sharing!

# Help Camelot turn dreams into reality and dreamers into doers!

- ☐ Walk \$25  
☐ Trot \$50  
☐ Canter \$100  
☐ Gallop \$150 +

☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please notify me annually at this time on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

☐ A partial contribution is enclosed.

Please send me a reminder for the balance due on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

*Camelot is a nonprofit charitable organization.*

*All donations are tax deductible and a receipt will follow for your tax records.*

Please help us keep our records current!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name & Address (if new)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

## **CHARGE MY CREDIT CARD PLEASE.**

\_\_ Visa \_\_ MasterCard \_\_ American Express \_\_ Discover

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount

\_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card Number      Exp. Date      3 Digit Code

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name as It Appears on Card

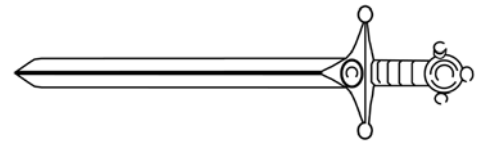
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*Please feel free to call (480) 515-1542 with your credit card information.  
A receipt will follow for your tax records.*

You may never  
know what  
results come of  
your action, but  
if you do  
nothing there  
will be no  
result.

Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948

*Please think of Camelot  
when making your year  
end donations.*



*"Thank you for being  
more than our supporters,  
you are our believers!"*

*~ Mary Hadsall,*

*Executive Director*

# How I Feel when I'm Riding

Written by  
14-year-old  
Alicia Draper, May 15, 1995



**W**hen I ride a horse I feel free as the wind. I feel like I'm in another world. I love riding horses. It makes me feel happy when I'm riding. Horses are so beautiful and graceful. I feel like a queen when I'm riding a horse. It's the best feeling for me. I couldn't stand it if the prettiest horse in the world was standing right by me and it had chains on it. Knowing myself I would just have to rip off the chains and ride her.

## GIVEN IN HONOR OF

Amy Van Denburgh  
Arline Herbert  
Ken Kalina & Jane Erin  
Ken Kalina  
Jack Strickstein  
Eileen Szychowski  
Millie Wolf

## CAMELOT REMEMBERS

Kevin Hurley's Cosmo  
Morrie Hazan  
Steven Stone

*Memorial gifts in any amount are a beautiful way to honor a beloved friend or family member, be they human or otherwise. We also welcome gifts in honor of birthdays or other special events. All such donations are acknowledged with a special card and a mention in our newsletter.*

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<http://graphicsfairy.blogspot.com/>

# Double Your Donation

By Jeanne Alspaugh,  
Camelot Volunteer

**A**s I look forward to getting classes underway this fall, I realize that this is my sixth season at Camelot. How time flies when you're having fun! I am very lucky to be involved with the program on many different levels. I am one of the Volunteer Riding Instructor's on Monday and work closely with Mary and Michelle in helping to provide additional instruction to our students. I've had many wonderful experiences out in the barn and every year our students inspire me.

During these tough economic times I began to think about other ways that I, along with other supporters of Camelot, could help raise funding. I learned of a Matching Gift Program through my employer that donates to nonprofit organizations by matching financial contributions that their employees make in the community. This is a wonderful way for Camelot to obtain additional monetary contributions. Many large for profit companies offer Matching Gift Programs. I hope you find this information helpful and research the company you work for or are retired from to see if they offer their employees or retirees this wonderful benefit.

Here is how it works:

**Step 1:** Make a personal contribution to Camelot. This could be a \$10 donation at Hooves and Heroes, their annual event.

**Step 2:** Contact your Human Resources Department to inquire if they have a Matching Gift program, and if so, what is their process. Information can often be obtained on

your employer's website. You or your HR representative will then fill out a form that requests information, such as how much you donated and to whom.

**Step 3:** A representative from your company will contact Camelot to verify your donation. Following confirmation, matching funds will be released to Camelot. That's it! The funds are sent directly to Camelot and you never have to follow up on it.

It can take up to six months for the funds to arrive, depending on the time of year. Donations given at year's end often take longer.

The neat thing about these programs is that sometimes throughout the year companies will increase their matching capabilities to either two or even three times the original amount!

Just think if Camelot received seven donations for \$10 that would total \$70. But what if those seven donations were matched by your employer (or former employer if retired)? This could mean up to an additional \$210 for Camelot, depending on the matching rate for those seven companies.

Be sure to check with your employers to see if they offer a Matching Gift Program. The year is not over and you still have time to submit your request for 2010. Camelot will genuinely appreciate the additional revenue that will allow them to continue to provide services at no cost to students.



Jeanne Alspaugh teaching Scott a lesson about bridles. photo by Mary Hadsall

happily-ever-aftering than here, In Camelot." From the musical *Camelot*.





"Take up your sword against the dragon within...the voice that says, 'I can't.'"



## Heroes' Hero!

## Leslie Zelisko



Leslie Zelisko, first row, third from the left in the cowgirl hat. She is surrounded by the Scorpions, their crew and family, as well as Camelot staff, volunteers and horses. Photo by Fred Carneau [www.rnr-images.com](http://www.rnr-images.com). You can also see Zelisko on page 5.

*"Let the beauty of what you love  
be what you do." ~ Rumi*

Leslie Zelisko has been volunteering at Camelot for nearly two years. Her job began as a weekly volunteer ranch hand, but quickly expanded to include multiple days of volunteering. Now she works with our students, in addition to her barn chores, and sits on our event committees as well.

Leslie is one of those people you can always count on in a pinch! She has also created some interesting opportunities for Camelot because of her connection with the music business. The image to the left was snapped after a photo shoot with The Scorpions rock band, who performed in Phoenix in July on their Sting and Blackout World Tour. The band wanted a photo to remember the Southwest and wanted it to include horses and Harleys. Leslie knew the perfect place! Several of our volunteers own bikes and we have some very photogenic horses!

Thank you, Leslie, for all you contribute to Camelot! Your kindness, dedication and devotion is an inspiration to us all!

