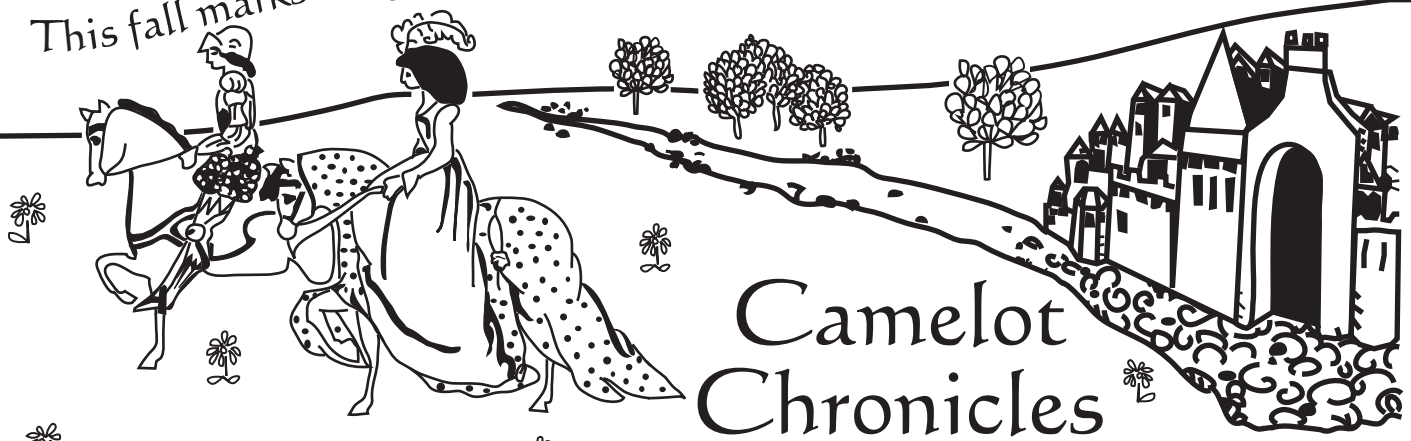


This fall marks our 30th lesson season ~ Celebrate with us!



Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship Horsemanship for Children and Adults With Disabilities

I'm Ready

By Heidi Miller,
Camelot Student

"You are ready," I still remember hearing Mary say. "You are ready."

I said, "I don't know—are you sure? I'm afraid."

Growing up with a birth defect, I got used to saying, "I can't." In Michigan, before finding Camelot, I had been thrown off a horse the last three times I rode.

But seven years ago I found Camelot, and thought to myself, "I have to try again."

I grew up around horses and always loved them, but before Camelot, I had only fallen off of them. My first day at Camelot, I was scared to death. Paladin looked like a giant. But Mary was reassuring, and told me I could do it. I trusted her. Paladin and I had an instant bond. I felt so tall and free on his back and so "normal".

I was born with a condition called arthrogyrosis, which affects my hands and arms mostly. I have almost no gripping ability. So it's very easy to feel helpless, powerless, and it's easy and natural for me to say, "Oh, I can't do that."

I think people put themselves in their own little boxes of comfort. That's why riding is so freeing an experience for me.

It still shocks me that I can get on a horse and ride such a powerful animal and feel strong and powerful myself.

I rode Paladin for three years, and then Mary thought I needed more of a challenge. She asked me how I felt about transitioning to Cayanna. I told her that I was scared, but I thought I was ready. The difference between riding Paladin and Cayanna is like the difference between driving a Model T Ford and a Corvette. She's fast and fun! Cayanna and I clicked instantly.

When Mary mentioned the possibility competing on Cayanna, I was excited and intrigued; I knew nothing about it. Mary said, "I'm just planting a seed. With a lot of hard work, next year you might be ready."

We started working on my pattern, which I could not get right for weeks, until Mary walked it with me in the arena. Then all the dashes, X's, and circles on the diagram started making sense in my head. I finally *got it*.

Every week, I rode my pattern on Cayanna—the best horse ever! I think Cayanna liked working the pattern with me, too, and everyone said we made a beautiful pair.

The following season, we picked up right where we had left off. I absolutely loved riding my dressage pattern. Then, one week Mary said, "You are ready."

I said, "Really? Are you sure?"

Again, she said, "You are ready."



Heidi Miller riding Cayanna

I can still hear her voice and feel my stomach flip with excitement.

I said, "I'm not sure, but I trust you."

I never thought I'd do anything so awesome.

In preparation, we went to watch two different dressage shows and I thought, "there's no way I can do this. Not with all these 'normal' riders." All the "what if's" and "I can't's" came into my head.

Mary, told me in her calm voice, "You can do it. You're ready. You know your pattern. Trust, breathe, and enjoy every minute you're out there. Whatever happens, you'll be fine."

The week before the show, I wasn't allowed to ride my pattern. My lesson

(Continued on page 2)

"Come to the edge," he said. They said, "We are afraid."



Heidi Miller with her ribbon and flowers

“Heidi Miller, #185, you’re next! Get ready.”

Mary led us out into the arena. Her words, “breath, have fun, you can do it, you’re ready,” echoed through my head. We took a couple of laps around the arena and the bell rang—I think—then Mary gave me the thumbs-up. I entered down center line, smiled, and began. We rode the pattern perfectly. Yay! We ended on center line, smiling and saluting the judge. I couldn’t believe we had done it!

We were all excited as we waited for the scores to be posted. I went back to the practice area, and many people congratulated me. I felt proud of myself, and so free and “normal” and joyful.

Then the scores were up. I went over and the woman handed me a beautiful yellow ribbon and congratulated me on third place!

“Are you kidding me?!” I said. “I didn’t know there were ribbons!”

What a shock; an awesome surprise! Third place—I still can’t believe it! And I still can’t believe that I was able to compete in a “normal” horse show. My experience riding in my first dressage show was amazing. It was one of the best days of my life. Thank you to everyone at Camelot for making such a special experience possible for me!

When I came out for my next lesson, Mary asked me, “Are you ready to learn your next test?”

I said, “Yes!” with a monster grin and absolutely no hesitation. C



Cayanna at Hooves & Heroes 2010

What Is “Normal”?

By Michelle Bartlett, Director of
Community Relations
& Riding Instructor

One of my many jobs here at Camelot is to educate volunteers, and sometimes students, in the fine art of disability etiquette, and the proper use of language. Words are a powerful tool that can build you up or hold you down. They can empower, motivate, and strengthen a person’s conviction to follow their dreams. They can shape one’s perception of others, and of oneself.

Language is powerful.

Heidi Miller and I had many discussions about her use of the word “normal” in her article, *I’m Ready*. I argued that we should take the word out, because she *is* “normal”. She is a masterpiece in her own right. She should not define herself by her limitations, but by her strength and character, and all the “I can”s she can do.

Plus, who is to say what is “normal”? There are no two people on the planet who are truly identical. I’ve never taken a look at someone and said, “Hmmm, two arms—check. Two legs—check. They must be ‘normal’.”

But Heidi is skilled in the art of persuasion, and she argued that this was how she felt at that moment in time. She felt included in the horse community and she felt like everyone else. She was part of the group, and she doesn’t typically blend in the crowd. She felt in her heart that she had achieved her definition of “normal”.

I decided to respect her feelings. I warned her that I just might write a short article to remind my other students (riders and volunteers) that “normal” is subjective, but that I would respect her perspective on the matter.

After pondering at great length this word “normal”, I’ve decided that not one of us is “normal”. So let’s be “not normal” together! C

Heidi’s Story: I’m Ready

(Continued from page 1)

was all about relaxing and having fun.

Saturday, April 21, 2012, was show day! I was nauseous and so excited!

At 6:30 a.m., I arrived at Dale Creek Equestrian Village in Litchfield Park. Mary, Ray, and Cayanna were already there. It was a gorgeous, warm Arizona morning.

My ride time was 7:30 a.m., so I went to check in and get my number. We were number 185, and we proudly hung the tag on Cayanna’s bridle. We brushed her and tacked her up. We had to improvise with my mount because the platform we were planning on using was occupied by the judges! I had to use the tall free-standing steps all the other riders were using. It was scary, but I did it.

Then it was time to go into the warm-up arena with all the other competitors. As Cayanna and I entered the area, Mary said, “Have fun, and don’t run into anyone!”

I said, “Thanks a lot!”

We were all dressed in our best dressage garb. Each of us was practicing our own pattern.

I was doing it! I was on a beautiful horse in this area of chaos, with all these “normal” riders. I couldn’t believe it. Then a girl came to get me. She said,

“Come to the edge,” he said. They came.

How far would you go to heal someone you love?

So asks the film, *The Horse Boy*, the stirring account of one family's epic journey to Outer Mongolia in search of help for their autistic son. The documentary feature chronicles Rupert Isaacson and Kristin Neff's very personal odyssey as they struggle to make sense of their child's autism and find healing for him and themselves in this unlikeliest of places.



Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship Presents



"Healing With Horses"

Saturday, November 3, 2012

6:00 -9:00 PM

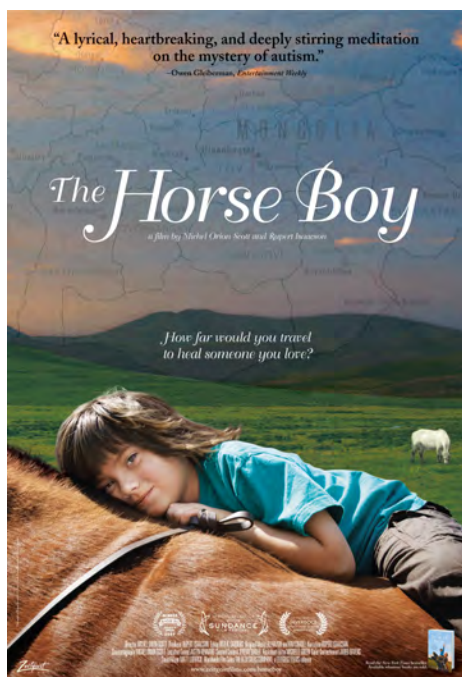
The Scottsdale Plaza Resort

7200 N. Scottsdale Rd.

Scottsdale, AZ 85253

Dinner, Silent & Live Auction

Keynote Speaker Rupert Isaacson,
founder of *The Horse Boy Method*



Camelot will use the funds raised through Starry Knights to expand our services by bringing *The Horse Boy Method* to our program.

Single ticket \$125, Corporate (10) tickets \$1000
Buy early for our **OneTen thru Ten/Ten** special
(Single tickets are \$110 if purchased by October 10th)

For more information and to purchase tickets,
visit us at CamelotAZ.org/StarryKnights

In Memory of

Jack Benaroya

Bravo

Calvin & Leyna

Katy Arrington

Betty Scharfman's father

Ted Szychowski

In Honor of

Cindy & Marshal Clayton

In honor of your daughter's engagement

Billie Foltz

Sharon & Lou Goldman

Chuck Johnson

In honor of your 65th birthday

Ken Kalina

In honor of your birthday

Jan Miller

Jackie & Larry Moore

Edna Pindler

Curt Pindler

April Reiner

Jack Strickstein

Amy Van Denburgh

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 occasions. All such donations are acknowledged with a special card and a mention in our newsletter.

When sending in your gift, please include a brief note designating who it is memorializing, and in which category you are submitting them. If you would like an acknowledgment card sent, please include their address.



Welcome to our new students: **Harrison M., Silke G., Claudia R., and Kali G.** Welcome back, **Jessy H.!**

Welcome to our newest volunteers: **Nick S., Sasha G., Michelle B., and Taylor N.**

Thank you, **Our Lady's Guild of Our Lady of Joy Catholic Parish**, for your generous donation. Welcome to the Round Table!

Mark your calendars for our **2013 Hooves & Heroes** fundraiser, which will be held on Saturday, May 4, at Camelot.

Save the date for the **Harold's Ball Wash Open Charity Golf Tournament** at Tatum Ranch Golf Club, September 24. This event benefits two charities, including Camelot! For more information or to sign up, visit www.haroldscorral.com.



a Camelot Fundraiser

STARRY KNIGHTS

"Healing With Horses"

Saturday, November 3

6:00 - 9:00 PM

The Scottsdale Plaza

(North of Indian Bend on Scottsdale Rd.)

Keynote speaker **Rupert Isaacson**,
founder of The Horse Boy Foundation

Tickets available at Camelot or CamelotAZ.org/StarryKnights



Coughdrop's Chatterbox

A Letter from the Editor's Assistant

Welcome to the first of many articles to be written by me,

Coughdrop, Camelot's newest therapy horse and renowned

author. I'm a silver bay miniature horse, and I have done quite a lot in my lifetime.

I've worked at another therapeutic riding center and participated in drill teams (several miniature horses in carts performing a routine—it's rather exciting and I'm great at it!). I've competed in arena driving trials, pulled my cart in parades, and even visited schools and nursing homes.

I enjoy writing. For years I wrote a column for the *Bridle & Bit* magazine, and I've written for newsletters as well. Now, I am very excited to be a contributing writer for the *Camelot Chronicles*.

In addition to writing for Camelot, I'm also looking forward to working with students in the fall. Camelot has always been a program led by people who have disabilities. Although I'm not a person, *per se*, I am the most recent staff member brought into the program who has a disability.

I have a visual impairment. My left



Artwork by Craig Zamboni

eye was removed in 2005 due to glaucoma. But this has never stopped me from living a complete, active, and happy life. In fact, I'm proud to be an example of what little horses can do. I don't see my disability as a

limitation; rather, it puts me in a unique position to educate the community.

Now that we've been properly introduced, in future articles, I will be writing about all sorts of different topics. I might chat about one of our student's and horse's accomplishments, news from the barn, a volunteer topic, or whatever interesting carrot is tossed in my direction. Since my stall is centrally located, I am conveniently situated to see it all!

Until our next issue, happy trails! 

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He pushed them... and they flew! ~ Guillaume Apollinaire

A Heroes' Hero

~ Bravo ~

By Michelle Bartlett,
Director of Community Relations &
Riding Instructor



Volunteer Jenna Stiles on Bravo; Lynne LoCascio, a volunteer & student, on Scout

In September of 1999, a little bay mustang stepped off a trailer and onto the grounds of Camelot. As he took in his surroundings, he didn't have any idea of the dreams he would fulfill or the lives he would change. He didn't know how many people would fall in love with him.

But he knew one thing for certain: he had found home.

We said a sad goodbye to Bravo this summer. I'd like to think his strong spirit was needed elsewhere, because spirits like his don't come along every day. What's important isn't how he passed, but rather how he lived, and his legacy.

He lived his life with vigor. He never backed down from a challenge, and he carried many students bravely into battle. He taught some people what was possible, and he reminded others of what they could have again. He was a kind, patient, and trusted steed.

When his bridle was off and his saddle tucked away, he was the rowdy one in the herd, the trouble maker baiting the other horses to join his games. Countless mornings Mary and I would team up to catch this naughty little horse causing a very big ruckus! He never forgot his roots. He never forgot he was a strong mustang. He was always, always free in his heart.

His legacy is within the hearts of everyone who knew him. He left each



Keri M., a student, rides Bravo

of us grand memories to keep. To the untrained eye, he might have looked like an ordinary little brown horse. But we know better. To us, he was magic.

In my heart, he will forever be dancing in rhythm with Scout, nibbling Cayanna's withers,

soaking himself in the arena sprinklers, kicking up dust in the sand, and galloping through the desert with me in the rain.

He was the strongest little horse I've ever met.

He was my hero.



Bravo 1985 - 2012

Save the Date: Nov. 3 '12



"Healing With Horses"

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