



The Camelot Experience

By Beth Suarez

Editor's Note: This letter is a testimonial written at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 lesson season. Reprinted with permission.

Dear Camelot Friends,

I can hardly believe a second year of riding, fun and friendship has come to an end. What an amazing two years it has been! As excited as I was when I learned that Diego had been accepted as a student at Camelot, the actual experience has far exceeded even my greatest hopes. Last year, at the end of the season, I wrote a letter thanking you and telling you about the wonderful ways Diego had been impacted by his time at Camelot. While all of that remains true for this year, that's not the focus of this letter. Diego's time at Camelot has been life changing, but not just for him. That is the vantage point I want to share today.

Diego has Williams syndrome. The Williams Syndrome Association's motto is "Unique Challenges, Extraordinary Gifts." Some of Diego's gifts are that he is cute, friendly, and full of empathy. His challenges include gross and fine motor issues, cognitive impairment, and hyperemotional reactivity.

Diego is a Cub Scout, and I am his den mother. One reason I guided him to this activity was because all he really needed

to participate fully were commitment and enthusiasm, both of which he has in spades. He loves Cub Scouts and is eagerly looking forward to next spring, when he can become a Boy Scout. However, as this time approaches, I have been scared. Boy Scouts is not like Cub Scouts. While Cub Scouts is parent led, Boy Scouts is Scout led. The troop he is preparing to join, Troop 131, prides itself on letting the boys make every decision. Diego's commitment and enthusiasm won't be enough for him to succeed in Boy Scouts without the patience, understanding, and help of the troop. He can't, for example, put up a tent by himself (due to very poor fine motor control), a skill required of every Boy Scout. As I watched Diego's older brother navigate his way through the troop this year, I worried. The troop does not coddle its new members.

Have you ever experienced a moment when you knew God has stepped in and arranged for things to work out? I had such a moment this year at the Hooves & Heroes event. As luck would have it, Troop 131 has a special connection to Camelot and helps with this fundraiser every year. The pride on Diego's face as he talked to all of his future troopmates and told them about his Camelot adventures was moving. More importantly to me, I saw those boys



Boy Scout Troop 131 serving Diego lunch during the 2016 Hooves & Heroes event

really *get it*. Their service to Camelot had previously been to help a theoretical someone. When they realized that they would soon have the opportunity to help a fellow Scout, I believe they all committed to that task wholeheartedly.

Such is the nature of Camelot—it continues to move and inspire all who are involved, be they students, volunteers, or visitors. Camelot has taught Diego that his disability is simply a part of him but doesn't define him. It has taught Troop 131 the same lesson. The boys have communicated this week to Diego's older brother how much they are looking forward to having Diego as a part of the troop!

Thank you, Camelot! ∞

The Suarez Family

The Value of Volunteering

By Sharon Phillips, Camelot Volunteer

Editor's Note: This was originally a Facebook post from May 19, 2016. Reprinted with permission.

Today was Patrick's last lesson at Camelot, and we sent him off to college with a scavenger hunt that ended with anchovies, Peeps, and a volcano cake.

I met Patrick five years ago, when I was considering volunteering for Camelot. A friend volunteered here, and the idea intrigued yet intimidated me since I had no experience with disabilities. I worried I would say something wrong. I worried I would do something wrong. But mostly, I worried it would make me too sad. Gardens and architecture were much more in my comfort zone, which pretty much comprises sunshine, puppies, and flowers.

So I could better understand the work, Camelot let me observe the last class of the season, where I met Patrick, then 13 years old. He and the volunteers were bathing a horse and chatting, and the talk turned to special powers. Someone asked, "If you had one special power, what would it be?" One volunteer wanted to fly; another wanted to be an opera singer. Then came Patrick's turn, and he casually mentioned that it would be cool to walk. Gulp. He said it matter of factly, with a slight, sweet smile and without a trace of self-pity (which I've come to learn is his signature style; I have never seen him in a bad mood). But still—gulp. It took everything in my power not to burst into tears and run back to volunteering at a garden, where life is fair and the worst thing I would ever encounter would be powdery mildew. I feared I couldn't handle this place but finally decided to give it a shot. I signed up to help with Thursday classes, which was Patrick's day to ride.

Fast forward a year. Once again, it's the last class of the season, and Roseanne and I are in the golf cart getting ready to feed horses. Patrick, in his motorized wheelchair, decides to race us to the pasture. We're all laughing and having a ball. I thought back to a year earlier, when I worried that being here might be depressing and realized that quite the opposite was true. During that year, I saw how incredibly happy Patrick and the other students were to ride. They had fun but also gained a sense of freedom and independence that was not always easy to find elsewhere. I could not have been more wrong about what to expect and was happy I took the chance.

Fast forward four years. It's the annual Halloween party, and I arrived to see Patrick dressed as me, complete with blonde wig, orange shirt, and a backpack full of snacks. Again I wanted to cry, but this time because it was one of the sweetest, funniest surprises ever. How was I ever afraid of this place?

There have now been five years of Thursdays and great memories with Patrick and the other students. Instead of leaving sad, I leave in awe of their great attitudes, bravery, and refusal to give up.

During this time, I also began therapy work with my Cavalier King Charles, Tucker, and had the same misgivings when I started. I understood the value of the work but wasn't sure if I could stomach weekly nursing home visits. It's not always easy, but it's been another extremely rewarding experience, so now I'm training Tallulah, my Bernese Mountain Dog puppy, for therapy work as well.

Volunteerism, long dismissed as the province of bored housewives, is often the only thing that keeps many valuable organizations afloat. Sometimes my gut instinct about a volunteer placement has been correct (it turns out that an outdoorsy Luddite really isn't ideally suited to poring over spread sheets on finance council). But in many cases, I've been wrong. Very wrong. So if you're considering volunteering at a place that's out of your comfort zone, please give it a try. At the very least, you'll help an organization in need. If you're lucky, you'll enjoy yourself. And if you're really lucky, you'll meet someone as cool as Patrick. ∞



Patrick riding Cliffy with Rico F. and Sharon P.



Nifty Bits News from the Ranch

Welcome new students: **Steffi E., Katie G., and Kiara G.**

Welcome to our newest volunteers: **Sally K., Janet O.,** and warmest welcome back to **Sherry P.**

A big shout out to **Harold's Cave Creek Corral** for another outstanding charity golf tournament. Camelot is very grateful to be one of their beneficiaries!

Camelot would like to express our deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to our major donors: **Ginger Barry, Amanda Boggs, Harold's Corral, Knights of Columbus Council 13286, Gerry & Curt Pindler, Kris Stevens, Scottsdale Area Association of Realtors, Van Denburgh Family Foundation, The Verdoorn Foundation, and Western Refining.**

Our current quest is to broaden our base of financial support and develop an endowment program that secures our future and enables us to pass on Camelot's eternal message of hope to future generations.



Merlin's Muse

By Mary Hadsall, Executive Director

What is it like to be pushed out of your comfort zone, to knowingly put yourself in a position where you will be stretched mentally and physically? This takes a great deal of courage. Fear can be debilitating and more paralyzing than a physical condition. For everyone who has taken the plunge and ventured forth, I applaud your efforts. I say this because recently I embarked on such an experience myself, and what I learned was powerful.

In July I participated in an ASL Arizona Total Immersion (AZTI) sign language training course, which was 24/7 for five days. We were instructed to "turn off our voices and open our eyes and minds!" And so I did, and the experience was great. Of course I came away with a larger ASL vocabulary, improved signing skills, and a drive to practice, practice, practice. But on a deeper level, I now have a better appreciation for how difficult it is to live and function when you are a round peg trying to squeeze into a square hole. The frustrations, misunderstandings, and miscommunications happen on such a large scale for so many across a broad spectrum.

I have always believed that I have heightened awareness and sensitivity due to my experiences here at Camelot. But nothing beats walking a mile in another person's shoes. Nothing beats being pushed out of your comfort zone and taking a risk. To those on the brink, ready to take flight but holding back because of fear or misconceptions, take the step and don't look back. ∞

*"To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom."
~ Bertrand Russell*

In Memory Of

Buck
Coughdrop
Thelma Levin
Ted Szychowski
Peggy Welsh
Diane Yurak-Reid

In Honor Of

Robin Erlich
Jesse Franklin
Chuck Johnson & family
Sydney Morrison
Claudia Rank

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 or email and a mention in our newsletter.

When sending in your gift, please include a brief note designating whom it is memorializing, and in which category you are submitting it. If you would like an acknowledgment card sent, please include the recipient's address.



Cindy R., clinic participant, takes a pass through the "car wash".

Back by popular demand!

Desensitizing training with the Scottsdale Police Mounted Unit's officers and wranglers will be held on October 22, 2016, here at Camelot!

Registration will open in September and be announced via Facebook and email. If you would like to be notified, please email info@CamelotAZ.org.

Bring your horse to Camelot and get a taste of what it is like to train a police horse. Participate in sensory training with objects such as pool noodles, balls, tarps, and streamers. Begin training to desensitize your horse to crowds, loud noises, smoke, and more! This will be an exciting day and a great addition to our previous training sessions. We will offer two identical three-hour sessions, from 8 - 11 a.m. and from 1 - 4 p.m. The entry fee is \$110 per session. Each session will be limited to 18 horse/rider pairs to ensure that all participants get sufficient exposure to the exercises and to maintain a safe environment for everyone. Auditors are welcome for a \$25 donation.

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Publisher: Lily Hadsall
Editor: Tallulah Phillips

Let me introduce

By Mary Hadsall, Executive Director

Visitors coming to the ranch often do a double take when they see our newest therapy horse, K2. Our beloved Paladin left some large shoes to fill, and well filled they have become. Camelot is very proud to formally introduce our newest four-legged teacher in the barn. Our beautiful K2 stands 16.3 hands high and weighs in at 1,400 pounds. He is a nine-year-old Percheron whose impressive size is overshadowed by his kindhearted disposition and silly nature. Known to be a bit of a clown, K2 was caught sneaking hats off our guests during our spring gala, Hooves & Heroes, this past May. He is also known as our “little” Houdini, cleverly figuring out various ways to get out of his stall so he can visit his friends. On your next visit be sure to stop by and say hello. He will be glad you did! ∞



K2 enjoying some quiet time with volunteer Alicia D. during a turnout in the arena



K2, ridden by Kristina Vahe during his Hooves & Heroes debut. Standing left to right are Kevin Cherilla, Mary Hadsall, and Kristen Sandquist. Kevin and Kristen, cofounders of K2 Adventures Foundation, provided funding for K2's purchase.

Important Subscriber Information

In an effort to save resources, Camelot is now sending the newsletter electronically.

If you would like to receive a printed copy, please visit CamelotAZ.org to state your subscriber preference.

If you received a hard copy and would prefer an electronic version, please visit CamelotAZ.org and give us your email address.

A Heroes' Hero ~ Cathy Gorham

By Hannah Brisso

Volunteer Coordinator, Barn Manager,
and Principal Riding Instructor

While many of us relish our downtime on the weekends, the horses continue to do what they do, which is, well, make doo. Thankfully, we have Cathy Gorham as a trusty weekend warrior! While her regularly scheduled volunteer day is Sunday, it is not uncommon to see her busy as a bee on Saturdays too. Her flexibility with lending a hand keeps this ranch running smoothly during the weekends.

Cathy began volunteering at Camelot in November 2014 under the tutelage of seasoned volunteer Jim Schulte. Jim impressed upon her the importance of an immaculate barn and aisles for the safety of our students and the comfort of our therapy horses. She took his words to heart and always has the ranch sparkling when her duties are complete. When her ranch chores are finished, you will often find Cathy taking one of the horses for a walk or giving them a thorough grooming in the breezeway.

Cathy states that it has been her lifelong dream to work with horses. We are so happy Camelot has made her dreams come true! ∞



Cathy and Frisco

W Western Refining proudly presents

a Camelot Fundraiser
STARRY KNIGHTS
 in **Black & White**

Saturday, October 29

6:00 to 9:30 pm

The Scottsdale Plaza Resort
 7200 N. Scottsdale Road • Scottsdale, AZ 85253

The evening will include a keynote presentation honoring students & volunteers; silent & live auctions; cocktails, dinner, & dessert; and the drawing for our special wine country raffle.

Visit www.CamelotAZ.org for event details and tickets



Event Tickets

Single ticket \$125

Send a student to the event \$125

Table (8 tickets) \$900

Buy early for our **OneTen thru TenTen** special

Single tickets are **\$110** if purchased by **October 10** ~ Table of 8 is **\$800**

"A Trip to Sip" California Wine Country Raffle

- Two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines
- Two nights at The Oaks Hotel in Paso Robles
- Wine tasting at San Antonio Winery
- \$50 gift certificate at Cool Hand Luke's Steakhouse
- Three-month Wine Club membership

Restrictions apply; see web site for details.



Raffle Tickets \$50 each; 3 for \$100

Only 250 tickets will be sold - need not be present to win!



Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship is a 501(c)(3) organization that has provided services to children and adults with disabilities at no cost to students or their families since 1983.

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_____ Single Ticket(s)	\$125	<i>Early bird pricing \$110 if purchased before October 10th</i>
_____ Camelot Student and Volunteer Ticket(s)	\$85	<i>Special pricing for students and volunteers, (maximum 4 seats)</i>
_____ Send a Student(s) to the Event	\$125	<i>Underwrite the cost of a student attending the event. Early bird pricing \$110 if purchased before October 10th</i>
_____ Table (8 tickets)	\$900	<i>Early bird pricing \$800 if purchased before October 10th</i>
_____ "A Trip to Sip" Raffle Ticket	\$50	<i>One raffle ticket</i>
_____ "A Trip to Sip" Raffle Tickets (x 3)	\$100	<i>Three raffle tickets</i>

Tickets also available on our website: CamelotAZ.org

To prevent identity theft, please call Camelot at 480-515-1542 to charge your credit card.

Mail to: Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship, 23623 N. Scottsdale Rd., D3-PMB 259, Scottsdale, AZ 85255

Donation Form



Every dollar makes a difference, especially during challenging economic times. **One way to lend a helping hand is through the United Way Donor Choice Program that begins every September.** This fall consider having your charitable donation deducted regularly from your paycheck. Remember, no amount is too small to make a big difference!

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Camelot a United Way member?

Camelot is not a member agency, which means we do not receive United Way funds, but we are a qualified nonmember agency.

What is Camelot's Valley of the Sun United Way number?

Camelot's agency number is 1003642.

What is Camelot's mailing address?

See below.

What is Camelot's Tax ID number?

Our 501(c)3 tax designation number is 86-0444470.

Can family members out of state donate to Camelot through United Way?

For those not in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area who wish to have Camelot as their designated donor choice recipient, you can receive more information about signing up from your local United Way staff member or local United Way agency.

Last year many of you helped us raise more than \$1,600 by donating to Camelot through United Way!

Did you know that donations can be made online at CamelotAZ.org?

Camelot is a nonprofit charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible. A receipt will follow for your tax records.

Walk \$25____ Trot \$50____ Canter \$100____ Gallop \$150____

Other \$ _____

Please notify me annually on ____/____ (month/day)

\$_____ A partial contribution is enclosed.

Please send me a reminder for the balance due on ____/____

Please help us keep our records current!

Name & Address (only if there are changes)

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Or feel free to call 480-515-1542 with credit card information.

Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship, Inc.

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