

The Rundown

A Quarterly Newsletter

April 2020

Issue #7

Rewarded for Waiting



Faith is a very sweet girl, the students can attest, but she gets a little worried sometimes. I have been working on recognizing even the tiniest signs of anxiety in her to help her find a happy place before we go on a ride. It was my second ride since giving birth to my second child when I really saw a difference in her.

When Faith's anxiety is rising, she shifts away from her handler. It could be a tiny shift or a big lean depending on the level of worry. I have started stepping back and releasing a big deep breath when she does this to give her time to relax again. This particular time, she shifted away when I stepped up to tighten the saddle before I got on. I took a step back and slowed my breathing and waited on her. She paused and then looked at me as if to say "thank you." Usually I wait for the horse to lick their lips and drop their head to show me they are ready for me to continue, but instead of doing these things, Faith sidled up to me and stopped when the saddle was right in front of me. The perfect place for me to tighten it.

"Huh." I was a little surprised that she seemed to understand this was the next step. It shouldn't have surprised me at all. We do the same thing every time I ride her, but she had never tried to be part of the process and make it easy for me. I wondered if I had ever given her the opportunity to do so. I stepped back to her head because I needed to tighten the other side, but I wanted to see if she would do it again. I released a big deep breath and waited, and sure enough, after a few moments, she shifted around and presented the other side of the saddle to me.

By this time I was blown away. She wanted to help. This little horse, who was so nervous when we brought her home, wanted to partner with me. I walked around her one more time so I could get on, but instead of climbing aboard like I usually do, I waited again. Faith sighed and set her feet to steady herself. I knew she was ready and I swung into the saddle.

How amazing are these creatures? These flight animals have no reason to allow a small predator like a human on their back. And here, she is asking me to be there. To sit in the place where she is most vulnerable. Now imagine you are a child who has been rejected your entire life and what this kind of partnership could do for your soul. Hope lives here.



Introducing a New Program

Hope Lives Youth Ranch is proud to present Donkey Calm: A Donkey Snuggle Program. Take a break from stress and anxiety by spending an hour snuggling with our Miniature Donkeys! Jack and Mabel are extremely affectionate and eager to help you find peace in their presence. 60-minute snuggle sessions are \$30/person, and the donkeys are happy to host two people at a time. Many of our clients like to practice prayer and mindfulness in the donkey play yard, but we also have grooming tools available, and they love to simply rest with their heads in your lap while you stroke them. You must be 10 years or older to participate, and we will start scheduling in May. All of the proceeds from the Donkey Calm program will support our mentoring sessions. If Jack and Mabel's calendar fills up, these funds will cover 40% of our operating costs for the year! Contact us to schedule a snuggle session today!



Sessions Begin May 4

It is time to sign up for next season's sessions if you have not already. There is a new application on the website for 2020, so even if your student participated in the program last year, please fill out the new application and email it to [hopelivesrr@gmail.com](mailto:hopolivesrr@gmail.com). We are looking forward to the 2020 riding season!

NOTE: We will continue to pray for a solution to the Covid-19 pandemic in the hopes that many lives are spared and our sessions can proceed as usual. We will be informing students' families directly and posting on Facebook if this changes.

How to Contact Us:

Phone: (309) 339-1641

Email: [hopelivesrr@gmail.com](mailto:hopolivesrr@gmail.com)

Address: 976 E 2250 North Road
Monticello, IL 61856

Website: www.hopolivesrescueranch.org

Also Find Us on Facebook and Instagram!

www.facebook.com/hopolivesrr/

www.instagram.com/hopolivesrr/

Upcoming Events

Please contact us to sign up for upcoming events.

Session Leader Training April 19 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Registration Required Limit 10 people

www.hopolivesrescueranch.org/events

Spring Cleaning April 25 1-4 p.m.

Prayer Walk May 2 10-11:30 a.m.

NOTE: Due to the prevalence of Covid-19 and our Illinois state regulations, these events are *tentatively* still on the calendar. We will be posting updates on our Facebook page as the pandemic progresses. Please Like and Follow our page to remain in the loop.

How We Are Funded

Every session at Hope Lives Youth Ranch is free of charge. However, we request a donation from students to cover babysitting charges incurred by our director, Emily Reichmann. We are a registered 501(c)3 and are funded solely through solicited donations and the generosity of our community. 100% of the funds donated to Hope Lives Youth Ranch are used to care for the horses and create a safe environment for the children we serve. If you would like to donate to our program, go to: www.hopolivesrescueranch.org/funding or mail your contribution to: 976 E 2250 North Road, Monticello, IL 61856