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November 2023

Keillor Stone House repairs are complete

Keillor Stone House's foundation was found to have structural damage, so the City of Edmonton had the stone house shut down for everyone's safety. All items were removed, the power and water shut off, and then work started on the house.

The roof was lifted off and placed safely to the side on supports. The large part of the building was raised and the workers disassembled the stone building stone by stone, carefully marking and photographing each stone so it could return back to its original position.

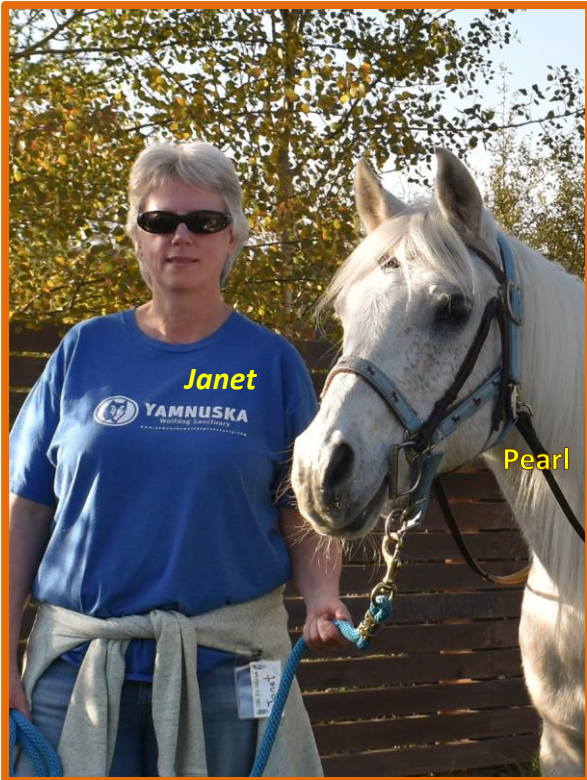
The support structure was rebuilt and levelled and concrete was poured. All of the original stones were placed back in their original spots by a masonry master, with new mortar fastening them tightly together. Carpenters, electricians, plumbers, drywallers and handymen all made the stone house come together. Stone house is finished and the surrounding grounds are ready to use. Ready for all to be invited in!



Keillor Stone House repairs (continued)



2023 LBTRA Service Awards



25 Years



15 Years



15 Years





10 Years



5 Years

Riding Calendar for 2024

Winter 2024 Orientation

Wednesday, January 10 (6:00 to 9:00 pm)

Sign in: 6:00-6:30 Introduction talk: 6:30-7:00

Break into groups for hands-on experience Finish 9:00

Winter 2024 Riding Session

Sunday: January 14 to March 17 (10:00 am to 3:00 pm)

Wednesday: January 17 to March 20 (4:00 to 9:00 pm)

Spring 2024 Riding Session

Sunday: April 7 to June 16 (10:00 am to 6:00 pm)

No class on May 19 (May long weekend)

Monday morning: April 8 to June 17 (10:00 am to 1:00 pm)

No class on May 20 (Victoria Day)

Tuesday morning: April 9 to June 11 (9:00 to 1:00 pm)

Tuesday afternoon: April 9 to June 11 (4:00 pm to 9:00 pm)

Wednesday: April 10 to June 12 (3:00 pm to 9:00 pm)



2024 Spring BBQ Fundraiser

Date/Time to be announced

2024 Summer Week

(for riders already enrolled ONLY)

Monday, July 22 to Friday, July 26

(10:00 am to 3:00 pm)



Riding Calendar for 2024 (continued)

Fall 2024 Riding Session

Orientation: Wednesday, August 28 (6:00 to 9:00 pm)

Sign in: 6:00-6:30 Introductory talk: 6:30-7:00

Break into groups for hands-on experience Finish 9:00

Sunday: Sept. 8 to Nov. 17 (10:00 am to 6:00 pm)

No class on October 13 (Thanksgiving Sunday)

Monday morning: Sept. 9 to Nov. 18 (10:00 am to 1:00 pm)

No class on October 14 (Thanksgiving Monday)

Tuesday AM: Sept. 10 to Nov. 12 (9:00 am to 1:00 pm)

Tuesday PM: Sept. 10 to Nov. 12 (4:00 to 9:00 pm)

Wednesday: Sept. 11 to Nov. 13 (3:00 to 9:00 pm)



A huge THANK YOU to **Sarah** for making all of the "goodie-bags" for the riders on Halloween night! She volunteers with us on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons.

New Additions

by Marielle



Lilo

Lilo is a dun Quarter Horse mare with unique stripes on her mid legs. She was born around 2008 and has done it all. English, western, working livestock and mountain traversing. Arriving at Whitemud in March 2022, Lilo was put right into the summer camp lessons. Lilo is now part of the Little Bits program for adult riders.



Disco

Disco is a stunning buckskin Quarter Horse mare that was born in 2012. Disco moved to Whitemud in 2022 and is privately owned. Disco is only used by a few riders in our program and they are very lucky to work with her.

Augustus of Troy (aka: Gus)

Gus is a handsome 16 hh. bay Warmblood gelding that was born in 2009 and his sire was Iroko. Gus competed in cross country horse, hunter and jumper competition with his previous owner. He arrived at Whitemud in 2021 where he was used in the WELCA program. This year, Gus has shown a lot of growth with patience and is now being ridden by more independent riders in our program.



Scout

Scout is an adorable Arabian flea-bitten grey gelding that was born in 2005. Scout's life with his previous owners as a family horse made him very patient and kind. Arriving in the summer of 2023, Scout was ready to jump into the WELCA and Little Bits program where he fits right in.



Blessed Twice Mary (aka: Mary)

Mary is a pretty chestnut Quarter Horse mare that was born in 2005. With her previous owner, Mary was a working cow horse. She moved to Whitemud in late 2022 where she started in the WELCA program but was so good, she was then introduced into the Little Bits program and is now a favorite with riders and volunteers.



In Memoriam

COCOA

We are incredibly sad to share that on October 17 our beloved lesson horse Cocoa crossed the rainbow bridge. She was an incredible part of the WELCA program, and we are so thankful for the time that we got to spend with her. She has quite an extensive history as part of our lesson program.



When Cocoa, a cute little bay Arabian cross, first came to WELCA as a lesson horse in October 2009 at 14 years of age, she showed her high-spirited determined self. She really missed her foal, and it took her a while to settle; she was very loud and called out a lot and acted like she would never settle. We know that many people thought we were crazy to bring her in, but she proved them all wrong. After a while, her confidence grew and she showed her true, kind self.

Cocoa became a top choice as a kind and trusted horse for both the WELCA and Little Bits programs and introduced numerous riders to the love of horses for many years. She was a talented horse and would walk, trot, canter, and

jump with the best of them, but also be quiet and sweet enough to carry beginner riders. She was always a reassuring horse on-lead and was always so careful in carrying nervous riders -- working hard to give them confidence.

She would always be patient with her riders but had a great work ethic and gave many a rider an "accidental" canter when she decided it was time. She did need her occasional free lunges to drain off some of her abundance of energy even up into her golden years. She always loved her pen mates dearly and many are familiar with her unique whinny -- checking to see that her friends were close by. But she did realize that after her classes she would always be able to go back to them. One horse that had a similar affection for Cocoa was Ali Cat. Together they were an inseparable and beloved bonded pair. And although the hole at WELCA that is left in Cocoa's passing will not soon be gone, there is a comfort in knowing that she is reunited with her best friend, and they are galloping greener pastures.

In Memoriam (continued)

DANCER

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of the wonderful lesson horse, Sirocco Dancer (aka: Dancer)

On April 13, 1995, a Bay, Morab (Morgan/Arabian cross) mare with a half moon star named Sirocco Dancer was born. She was a playful filly who spent her youth roaming and galloping a big pasture with other young horses. When she turned four her training began- she came along easily. However, when it came to driving which is what her previous owners had hoped for, she did not seem to enjoy it, so she became a saddle horse for trail rides and Pony Club.

In 2014, Dancer came to WELCA as her sweet temperament and easy nature seemed perfect for the lesson program. Little did we know that she was also fast like the wind! At the canter she had an amazing talent for dodging and weaving pylons while zipping around the arena- she truly had a need for speed! In beginner lessons, she was a true angel. She was patient, slow, and listened well. But she would sometimes test to see if riders were paying attention: more than



once a rider would be standing in the middle of the arena with a confused look as to how they got there, and Dancer with a pleased expression.

Dancer was an integral part of WELCA Horsemanship and Learn to Ride programs, and especially for the Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association. Staff, instructors, riders, and volunteers will dearly miss her. We are all so thankful for the time that we were able to spend with her.

Dancer will be greeted across the rainbow bridge fondly by other lesson horses lost too soon and will once again have the chance to relive her youth and frolic in greener pastures.

In Memoriam (continued)

TREASURE

We are very sad to share the passing of a beloved lesson horse, Lil Treasure, better known as simply, Treasure -- which he truly was.

Treasure was a registered dark bay Morgan born on June 15, 1997 -- his colour changed so much throughout the year that many would stop to admire his vivid dapples in the summer, his teddy bear-like fluff in the winter, and always -- his unique amber eyes.

Treasure arrived at WELCA on May 13, 2018, and although he was only 15.1 Hands, he had a big personality! He came from a show home but once he got here, it seemed that competition really wasn't his thing anymore. Instead he preferred taking care of riders in Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association and in our on-lead classes. Treasure was always a favourite for kids in summer camps with WELCA!

Treasure was very picky with who he liked but once Treasure was your friend, he was a loyal and trustworthy companion. There was no one who understood him better than Ashley and their bond is something that anyone could see.

Treasure will be dearly missed -- there are not many horses that have his combination of patience, elegance, and sass all in one. He really was one in a million.



Sparky

It is with deep sadness that we share the passing of a beloved part of Whitemud, Sparky the barn cat.

Sparky could always be found hanging out on the side-by-side, ready to go for a drive or fast asleep in his favorite "Lost and Found" box -- keeping everyone's items warm. He was a smart cat who had everyone wrapped around his little paws.

Sparky would always become extra friendly by meowing and nuzzling your legs when his food dish was empty, so you had no choice but to fill it up. Although he was known to taunt you with the want for belly rubs ... only to bite when he received them.

Sparky was a sweet boy who enjoyed cuddles with his favorite people or sitting with you in the stands to watch a lesson. Sparky was the best greeter for early mornings and the last one you said goodbye to on your way out the door. He will be dearly missed.



Betty

Please welcome Betty to Whitemud. She lives in the barn area, is very slight in size, but mighty in love. As she is new, please respect her and do not approach her fast. Please do not feed any treats (as she is at the barn for a job) and please do not pick her up (unless asked to). Like the horses, she has a job to do, so she might say "Hi" to you but wander off to catch mice.

My Time as a Volunteer

by Ciaran

I haven't been at Little Bits long, but I've been here long enough to learn that it is a phenomenal program not only for the riders, but for the rider's parents and staff as well. I was approached by my mum's friend who asked me if I would like to volunteer. I have always loved horses and I love working with people. It's amazing to see the growth of the staff, riders and families. I would even go so far to say we have come to be the Little Bits family. I have met so many kind and honourable people who genuinely care, especially for other horse lovers and people who take time out of their day to help these spectacular children. I wait eagerly for another encounter to spend time with these lovely children. Little Bits is a place where children and youth can learn to express themselves in a positive manner. The horses are calm and gentle, and they are very therapeutic for the children and their parents. This allows these youth to feel better and grow socially.



I believe that volunteering at Little Bits allowed me to start the recovery from a very difficult journey, and I am very grateful for the experience and kindness. I am elated to give back to the community, hopefully for years to come.

For the Love of Horses

by Joan

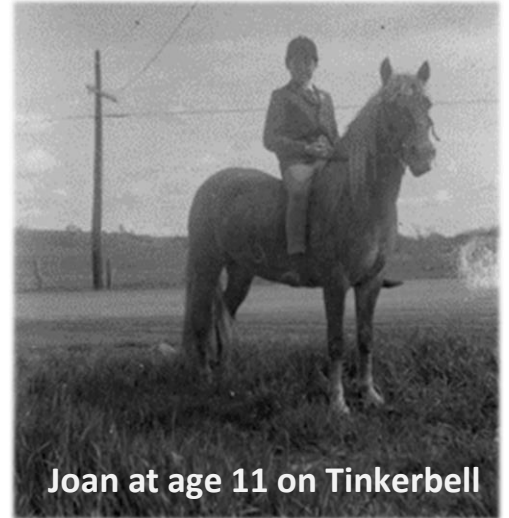
I have been volunteering with Little Bits since April 2023 and it has been a fulfilling experience. I have loved horses from the moment I can remember anything in my life. We lived in a small town in Nova Scotia in a little house with a picket fence. Every birthday (& Christmas) I asked for a pony. To me the backyard seemed immense, and I was sure it was more than enough room for a pony. Mom and Dad would gently tell me that we would not be allowed to have a horse in our town, but I always thought they were just teasing, so as not to spoil the surprise when I would wake up in the morning and see my horse there waiting for me. Of course, my life with horses did not begin that way! We had a big weeping willow in our backyard that Dad planted when we were babies, with several branches that spread out (we thought) like a horse's back, so we and our neighbourhood friends began to go "riding" with our skipping ropes swung around another branch for a bridle, and a blanket or towel for a saddle. We even devised stirrups somehow.

By the time I was 9, I started walking over to a horse farm just outside of town after school & on the weekends. I would bring a lunch, hang around and just wait for someone to let me lead their horse or even clean out the stalls. Mom soon signed me up for riding lessons, and then I was allowed to join the British Horse Society's Pony Club. One of the instructors had a pony, Tinkerbelle, that they had bought for their little girl who was still too young to ride. She asked my parents if I would like to ride her daughter's pony, and in turn, she would instruct me. This turned into jumping and horse shows, some of which we would travel to for the weekend. I was in my glory and remember well going into a state of "bereavement" whenever the weekend was over and I had to go back to school on Monday. Tinkerbelle was stubborn (and so was I), but I think she gave me some real tips on persistence and never giving up.

We moved to Ottawa when I was 13 and I rode at 2 different stables. Before long, I was introduced to a wonderful family that asked me to exercise their horse for them. I spent evenings and weekends riding Tara. At that stable, I was offered a part-time job after school to help prepare riders for their beginner group lessons. I taught them individually on a horse with a lunge line where they did not use reins until they established a good seat. This led me to a job for two summers in St. John's Newfoundland, again working with kids and horses! Now

that my kids have grown, with families of their own, I have the time and opportunity to be back with my "best friends" again.

Looking back, I believe that my relationship with horses has been a great balancer in my life. The close relationship of give and take and respect and trust that develops between a child (or adult) and a horse gives us a special strength to help deal with life's challenges. When everything doesn't make sense, just get to the stable, smell the hay, and the scent of horse, run your hands over their strong body, let them breathe on you, wrap your arms around their neck and know that this relationship between you goes both ways. Horses need you but you probably need them more.



Joan at age 11 on Tinkerbelle

I see this amazing connection between the riders and the horses each time I help at Little Bits. From week to week, I see the kids' balance and coordination improve, muscles gaining strength, and their confidence growing. I see the relationship between the horse and rider becoming more real, and I am grateful and moved to be a part of Little Bits.

Gaining skills and teammates

by Flora

My name is Flora. I'm a horse therapy client and a new volunteer for Little Bits. I started volunteering in September. What I enjoy about volunteering is that it helps give a person a reason of feeling wanted and needed. Being a volunteer means you get to learn and try new things, gain new experiences, and meet and help your volunteer teammates.

I came to love horses because when I was 7 years old and I was standing behind a horse. At the time, I thought it was a weird creature with only two legs and no head. It kicked me and I flew into a pile of hay (thank goodness for the soft landing). A lady saw me and came right over. I told her that the creature with two legs and no head kicked me. She said that it was a horse and that the reason it kicked me was because I was standing behind it. She brought me to the front and that is when I fell in love with horses. Please come volunteer with Little Bits and meet these wonderful horses and some wonderful people.



Equipment Donation from the Alberta Blue Cross

by Linda

Earlier this fall I was contacted by Holly Blum from the Alberta Blue Cross. Holly said that they would like to donate to Little Bits and if there was any equipment that we needed to let her know and she would purchase it for us. Stirrup leathers and larger stirrup irons came to mind with winter coming and the need for our riders to wear winter boots while riding.

Holly went to task and ordered 6 pairs of lovely stirrup leathers and 6 pairs of peacock safety stirrups. They were delivered directly to the office and we have them in our tack room, ready to go for our upcoming winter session in January.

This is not the first time we have been supported by Blue Cross. In the past we have received donations of equipment from their employee group - Hearts of Blue. It is because of the ongoing support of organizations such as the Blue Cross that we can continue to provide our riders with lessons at affordable rates.

So, a big thank you to Holly and the group from Alberta Blue Cross!

