



# THE "NEIGH"-BORHOOD NEWS

from Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Volume 9, Issue 1 -- December 15, 2010

Here's the latest...

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## Stocking Stuffer Ideas

Need a perfect Stocking Stuffer or gift idea for your family and friends this Holiday Season? WE have some suggestions!  
 There's no better gift than one that gives to our DC riders as well!

### 1. Our beautiful, functional 2011 Catch a

Dream Calendar is a perfect way to show off what Dream Catchers is all about. They are available for \$15 in our Shopping Cart or by calling the Center at 757.566.1775. Thank you for helping make our Riders' Dreams come true!



### 2. 2011 Bridles & Bow Ties Raffle Tickets are

now on sale for \$10 each or \$100 for a book of 12. What better gift than a chance for a trip to THE BAHAMAS, dinner for 6 at the

BLUE TALON, or a stay at THE WILLIAMSBURG INN?! Order ONLINE today!

3. A wonderful book for Horse Lovers everywhere. HORSE TALES FOR THE SOUL, by Bonnie Marlewski-Probert, is a wonderful gift idea

## Christmas at Dream Catchers



Last weekend we had two very successful events – we participated in the Williamsburg Christmas Parade down Duke of Gloucester Street in Colonial Williamsburg, and then afterwards celebrated the holidays back at Dream Catchers with the Annual Volunteer Holiday Lunch. Both events were very successful...a BIG thank you to those of you who joined us in spite of the bitter cold to participate in the parade and to those of you who helped celebrate our volunteers at the lunch. It was a grand way to kick off the holiday season...even the horses got into the holiday spirit as Tater, Nobie and Blackie represented the herd in the parade (dressed in red and green bows, and Tater wore his elf socks).

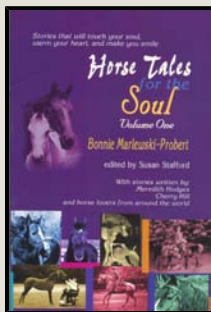


Back at the barn, we are celebrating with our students by letting them pick an ornament with their horse's picture off of the lighted tree in the indoor arena. Most of the ornaments were made by students from Classical Conversations, a local homeschool class who chose to take on this project as a holiday service to us. Thank you, Laurie Swope and Jennifer Eanes, for your help and support in making this happen!

## Student Spotlight – Beth Ellis

Our rider for this month is a very quiet young lady that many may be familiar with if you have come to any events at Dream Catchers. Beth Ellis has been a rider here since September 2007. She is currently a second grader at BC Charles Elementary School in Newport News. She has two brothers, Zack and Ethan, that come with her every Wednesday afternoon. She not only rides horses but also sings in her church's youth choir and takes keyboard lessons.

this Holiday. They are filled with true, heart warming stories about horses and the people who care about them written by Horse-Lovers from around the world! Get them before they're gone in our Shopping Cart and enjoy them for a lifetime!



**"From the Horse's Mouth"**  
by *Tori Conner*

Winter at the Barn

During the winter time, horses don't get as cold as people do. Some horses have thinner coats than others, and some have really fuzzy, thick coats. During this time of year, horse owners have to make sure that their horse has plenty to eat, because when horses get cold they sometimes lose weight. By eating extra grain and hay, their bodies are able to generate heat to keep them warm. To prevent them from getting too cold, we put blankets on our horses. Also, during this time of year, when a horse is ridden, it is important to warm them up a little longer than you normally would. Their muscles get stiff in the winter and it could cause injuries to their muscles and joints if their muscles are not warmed up and stretched.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Dec 28-30, 2010 • Holiday Horse Camp
- Jan 08, 2011 • Make up Lessons for Sat Students
- Jan 08, 2011 • New Volunteer Orientation, 2 - 4 pm
- Jan 11, 2011 • Winter Session Begins
- Jan 15, 2011 • Volunteer Clinic Horse Handling Part 2, 2-4 pm
- Feb 05, 2011 • New Volunteer Orientation, 2 - 4 pm
- Feb 19, 2011 • Volunteer Clinic -A Ride in THEIR Helmet, 2-4pm
- Feb 21, 2011 • Make Up Lessons - President's Day
- Feb 27, 2011 • Benefit Horse Show
- Mar 05, 2011 • Volunteer Pancake Breakfast 8:30 - 11 am
- Mar 05, 2011 • New Volunteer Orientation - 2 - 4 pm
- Mar 19, 2011 • Last Day for Winter Session
- Mar 22-26, 2011 • Make Up Week for Winter Session
- Mar 27, 2011 • Benefit Horse Show
- Apr 04-07, 2011 • Junior Volunteer Horse Camp
- May 21, 2011 • Bridles & Bow Ties 2011

**Celebration of Trees**



Stop by the Crowne Plaza/Fort Magruder Hotel to see our "Cowboy Christmas Tree" from now until December 31st. We are competing for a \$500 prize! Several

Beth has been our ambassador for many special events. She has participated in two Bridles & Bow Ties riding demonstrations as well as having participated in the Carter's Grove Trail Ride last June. Beth is currently riding Winston but she has ridden many of our horses. She began her riding experience on our black pony, Molly, a few years ago. Her favorite experience was when she rode big Jake and took home his huge horseshoe after the visit with the farrier.



2011.

Beth's passion is her stuffed animal collection. Every week, she brings one of her friends to ride with her. She loves to have her furry friend bark or growl at her instructor. She enjoys quizzing her instructor with crazy riddles and making up funny sentences while she rides. Recently, Beth has become very good at neck reining her horse and is learning to be more independent. She looks forward to riding in future horse shows and riding demonstrations at Dream Catchers in

**Staff Spotlights –**  
**Gwen Zimmerman and Jean Greene**



We are pleased to announce that our own NARHA Certified Instructor, Gwen Zimmerman, has agreed to also serve as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Gwen has been hard at work with her new responsibilities, and we are excited to have her as an addition to the Program Staff. She can be reached directly at [dreamcatchersvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:dreamcatchersvolunteers@gmail.com) Welcome, Gwen!



We are also thrilled to have a new NARHA Certified Instructor join our outstanding team of instructors. Jean Greene, a retired school teacher from York County and longstanding volunteer with us, passed her certification requirements at the NARHA On-Site Workshop and Certification that was held here in November and is now fully certified by NARHA to teach therapeutic riding. Jean is a lifelong horsewoman who takes care of her own horses on her farm in Gloucester when she is not at Dream Catchers. Congratulations, Jean, and welcome to the team!

**Volunteer Spotlight - Noreen Howard**



Many people are not aware of our "behind the scenes" volunteers. These wonderful people help us in answering phones, helping with mass mailings, calling everyone if lessons are cancelled and a variety of other jobs that help us run an effective program. They are every bit as crucial to what we do here every day as our lesson volunteers who

work hands-on with the students. Our volunteer of the month for December is one of those wonderful administrative volunteers, Noreen Howard.

non-profit organizations decorate trees and the non-profit which receives the most \$ in donations wins! Vote with your \$ and our cowboy Christmas tree may win us \$500!

## The Director's Corner

by Nancy Paschall

### It's That Time of Year

*It's that time of year*

*When the world falls in love*

*Every song you hear*

*Seems to say*

*Merry Christmas*

*May your New Year dreams come true ...*

*from the Christmas Waltz*



This time of year we focus on family and friends. Here at Dream Catchers our friends include our students, their families, our volunteers, our staff, our supporters, and our horses. Last night when Patrick finished his lesson, he kissed each volunteer on the cheek and Bonnie, his horse, on the nose. Patrick has autism and doesn't speak much or show much affection, but he spoke volumes with his kisses.

Another friend of Dream Catchers is Ben Conner, Ph.D, a Dream Catchers volunteer, husband to Melissa Conner, father to the Conner Clan, and the Director of Capernaum. Ben wrote in a professional journal article published last week:

*"Friendship opens us up to participating in others' lives and connecting with them beyond the model of caregiver and patient, or service provider and client. The medical model is concerned with issues of aetiology, diagnosable signs and symptoms and is always interested in finding technical solutions to the problem of disability. The patient, therefore, is related to in terms of a specific, definable pathology, an individual problem to be eliminated – this model does not address the human as a person set in the context of a web of relations."*

The article really struck a chord with me. Especially the line *"the human as a person set in the context of a web of relation."* (emphasis mine). We here at Dream Catchers foster friendships and a sense of family not created merely by blood or marriage, but

Noreen has been a valuable addition to our family here at Dream Catchers. She is here several times a week, and is always cheerful and ready to provide us with any help that she can give us. She has a wonderful way of greeting new participants and donors that come through our doors. She is always ready to give the staff a moral boost with her unique sense of humor and perspective on life. In addition to volunteering at Dream Catchers, Noreen loves the horse races at Colonial Downs. Horses are part of her life, and she has found a unique way to give back to the horse world by volunteering at Dream Catchers. Thank you, Noreen, for all that you do to help make Dream Catchers the special place that it is!

## A BIG THANK YOU



Dream Catchers partnered with Seasons of Williamsburg on November 22nd and with Hi Ho Silver on December 1st for special holiday shopping! These retailers donated a percentage of their sales to us for these special shopping events. We

sincerely appreciate the support of Seasons of Williamsburg & Hi Ho Silver! Support those who support us ~ for beautiful and unique gifts, remember to stop by Seasons & Hi Ho Silver!



## Cori Sikich Award of Excellence

This award is given to a staff member who exceeds expectations, is a great ambassador for Dream Catchers, and who exemplifies being part of the team. The 2010 winner is Group Coordinator, *Kim Wendell*. The senior staff selected Kim based on her work with the school groups and her data gathering for the current research project on Autism, sensory integration, and therapeutic riding.

Kim has been with Dream Catchers since January of 2005. She was certified as an instructor in March of 2006. She has been instrumental in building the relationships with the school administration and the teachers. Some of the earliest school groups came through a grant funded by the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation. After that funding was completed, Williamsburg – James City County Schools continued to ride with funding from the school system and funding provide by generous donors to Dream Catchers scholarship funds, including the Emily Pearce Scholarship Fund.



Kim is known for her creative lessons, enthusiasm, and infectious smile. We have had as many as 14 students riding simultaneously! She is a wonderful ambassador for the program. Her school group volunteers adore her! Her background, as a special education teacher and the mother of a son with special needs gives her a unique perspective. One of my first memories of Kim is of her watching a mother break down in tears in the aisle of the barn because her child was throwing a temper tantrum and screaming. Kim asked the child's mother "why are you crying?" The mother said she was embarrassed, Kim put her arms around the mother's shoulders and said;" it's ok, we understand that here—my son has Tourettes- and used to do the same thing." As Kim led the mother away a few steps, the child looked up, stopped crying, and got up. A student in one of the current school groups is extraordinarily difficult

relationships based on a shared mission and culture of friendship and connection. Our mission and our values connect us and consequently we develop friendships. Those friendships are between volunteers, parents, students, staff, supporters, and horses. I would not want the task of mapping out the multiple relationships that connect us here at Dream Catchers. For me, these friendships make me thankful. Full of thanks and joy...for each of you who make Dream Catchers such a special place. Dom Helder Camara said, "When we are dreaming alone it is only a dream. When we dream with others it is the beginning of reality. Thanks to each of you for making so many of my dreams come true! Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, give thanks!

*Conner, Benjamin T.(2010) 'Affirming presence: spiritual life and friendship with adolescents with developmental disabilities', International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 15: 4, 331 — 339 To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/1364436X.2010.533479*

URL:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1364436X.2010.533479>

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Our riders pay only a portion of the real cost of lessons. The balance of our operating costs is generated through fundraising. Your gift enables Dream Catchers to maintain a safe and thriving equine facility -- happy, healthy horses; knowledgeable, nurturing instructors; and well-trained, conscientious volunteers. We depend on your financial gifts as well as your precious gift of time! We are always looking for volunteers of all ages to support the dreams that our humble organization helps come true!

If you would like to sponsor a horse, sponsor a child, make a donation in honor of a loved one or friend, or would just like to give, please send your donation to:

***Dream Catchers  
P.O.Box 1261  
Williamsburg, VA 23187***

Call 757.566.1775 or donate online at [www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](http://www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org)  
Thank you for your continued support.

to mount on the horse. Time after time, he pulls hair, screams, and kicks, only to become silent once he has a leg on each side of the horse. Kim doesn't attempt this mount once, twice, or even three times...with willing volunteers she tries at least four times to get this child on to his horse. She does this every single week. That is why more than one of the anonymous nominations for the Cori Sikich Award of Excellence mentioned how much love Kim has for each one of her students. Thank you Kim, for your hard work, dedication, and passion.

**Dream Catchers on FACEBOOK!**

**We want you!**

Click the Link and [BECOME A FAN](#)

**Show your support for Dream Catchers with your purchase of t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, travel mugs, coffee mugs, water bottles and more. Stop by the Admin building to say hello and do a little shopping.**

Please send comments or questions about this newsletter to [dcadmin@dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](mailto:dcadmin@dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org)

**Need a printed copy? We will be happy to oblige!**

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THANK YOU!**

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