

Spotlight

NEWS FROM
FREEDOM
HILL HORSE
RESCUE



Taking a Chance

Goleta's Chance, a Quarter Horse/Thoroughbred gelding, was surrendered to FHHR in early 2006. After many years as a lesson horse, he had become very sour in the arena. Described as a grouchy old man, 20-year old Chance had lost his fondness of children; he would plant his feet and refuse to budge. He had no serious medical conditions, only a persistent cough, which was easily treated; his sourness around kids would take much more work. In 2007, Chance was adopted by a woman in New Jersey, and he made wonderful progress. He would stand for hours while her grandchildren bathed him and fed him pears.

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Spring 2015

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Although she adored him, Chance returned to the rescue in 2008 because she just couldn't get him past his issues in the ring.

At FHHR, we pride ourselves in identifying the best match for our horses the first time. We hope the horses never need to return; in fact, less than five percent have crossed our paths again. Chance was one of those horses. In this case, however, his return ended in an even sweeter story.

A Realtor and native of Calvert County, Dawn had been volunteering at the rescue for approximately a year and a half before finding her new equine companion. She had worked with several of the horses available for adoption, but tells us that she "met Chance and it was over. (I) loved that horse and his personality from day one." In 2009, Dawn decided she wanted to give Chance, at the age of 23, a forever home.

**"I loved that horse and his personality
from day one."**

Dawn owned horses when she was younger including a Quarter Horse/ Arabian cross and an off-the-track Thoroughbred that she showed hunter-jumper until the age of 16. She didn't start riding again until turning 40, this time taking to the trails. It took patience, love, and consistent work, but Chance hit the trails like a champion. We didn't know Chance's full name when he first arrived; Dawn discovered that through research of his pedigree. Lori Harrington shared a funny story about Dawn and Chance, telling us that when Dawn has to be stern with him, "she will call him by his full name, Goleta's Chance, just as a mother will call her child by his first and middle name if he is in trouble."

Now at 29 years old, Chance looks fantastic and is enjoying life with his pasture pals at Double J Stables. Dawn rides him frequently and he still enjoys his trail rides and loves to free graze at the farm. Chance is very patient with children now, like a different horse in his golden years. He is quite the character, though! Being the patriarch on campus so to speak, he will lead everyone in from pasture when it is suppertime, and they will all follow him.

Dawn shared what Chance was like when she first adopted him. She said, "he was a handful with a lot of energy for an old man; it took some time to work out the issues with both of us, but once we did, we became a great pair." The two will venture out on a few weekend trail ride trips with friends this summer, but Dawn says she mostly rides at home and relishes spending time just the two of them. "One of the things I really enjoy," Dawn shares, "is when I go to the barn to see him. He knows my car and, when he sees me, he comes to greet me at the gate. It just melts my heart."



From Top: On a weekend trip to Graves Mountain in 2012; Chance sports his Halloween Biker costume in October 2013 and his Santa hat two months later.

Photos courtesy of Dawn Cox

Volunteer Spotlight: Jennifer Hottle and Beth Meader

Now that FHHR runs its operations from the 10-stall barn at Hampton Plantation, our feed shifts are comprised of volunteer teams. Some shifts have a team of two whereas others have teams of six or more when you count families with kids! Because working together is so important to ensure that the long list of tasks gets done, we wanted to focus this edition's *Volunteer Spotlight* on a feed shift team, specifically our Sunday night dynamic duo of Jennifer Hottle and Beth Meader. Beth is actually a member of three different feed shift teams. She says she really enjoys the physical work, although we wonder if she feels the same after a month of single digit temperatures, snow, and sub-zero wind chills.



Beth moved to southern Maryland 46 years ago and has been a resident of Calvert County since 1986. Although her career was in accounting, she has a degree in Animal Science and never lost her love for animals. Five cats and a pit bull call Beth's house home. With three feed shifts, it seems that the Hampton big barn is Beth's second home. But, it didn't start that way. It was Beth's daughter, Anna, who needed a service project for high school. She had taken riding lessons in the past and after Beth read an article about the rescue in the *Calvert Recorder*, she suggested that Anna give it a shot. That was three years ago. Anna is now in college and Beth says she's been an official volunteer since last August.

Jen Hottle, originally from the Silver Spring area, moved to Calvert County two and half years ago. Jen first heard about Freedom Hill through Facebook. The Training Team posted a request for a small television to watch training and educational videos at the barn. Jen just happened to have one to donate and, not long after, took on a feed

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Like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
FreeToLiveAgain](https://www.facebook.com/FreeToLiveAgain)



FHHR is thrilled to be a part of this exciting event, and we hope to connect more people to the wonderful world of horses.

MHIB Horse Discovery Centers Participate in the Maryland Horse Chase

The Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) is launching a statewide scavenger hunt from April 6-26 to showcase horses all around Maryland!

This hunt will also introduce the new statewide system of MHIB Certified Horse Discovery Centers. We invite you to visit FHHR and check out the other Discovery Centers as well. FHHR will be open to participants from 9:30am - 10:30am daily during the Horse Chase. Participants will need to take a selfie next to our black and white FHHR sign and take a picture with Occhi while giving him a hug or kiss. The Horse Chase ends on the ASPCA's National Help A Horse Day. We will be inviting all Horse Chase participants to celebrate Help A Horse Day with us at our People Steeplechase and Ponypalooza event! Collaboration is the key to success, and we are honored to be working with the MHIB and all the other Horse Discovery Centers to grow the horse industry in the beautiful state of Maryland.



RESCUE'S BILL OF RIGHTS

We, the Volunteers of Freedom Hill Horse Rescue, in order to form a perfect union, establish rules for safety, ensure proper care for the horses, provide them with safe loving rehabilitation, promote general guidelines for the health and safety, all to secure new forever loving homes do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Freedom Hill Horse Rescue.

This Preamble was written by Shannon Heany Crush's 4th grade son. We love it!

The Horsemanship Team

With the worst of winter over, the Training Team officially began their work this week. Over the break, leadership decided it was time for a name change, one that is more representative of the Team's activities. It was put to a vote and Team is now officially the Horsemanship Team.

Two grants received at the end of 2014 will allow the Team to purchase new tack and equipment, install better footing in the round pens, offer on-site clinics, and send horses to professional training. These grants require FHHR to document progress toward measurable objectives. As a result, the Team, led by Terry Pennington, will use a new record system which will track specific milestones in the horses' training. Every three months (or just prior to adoption), the horses will be evaluated on specific skills such as lowering their head,

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Tina (left) and Jennifer work with Cowgirl and Tucker, respectively, on ground-work skills and desensitization.

Volunteer Spotlight *continued from page 3*

shift. We've caught her arriving early on multiple occasions to do extra work around the barn (like mucking the sacrifice areas)! Next month will be her one year anniversary.

Although Jen doesn't have a favorite horse, she says she has favorite qualities in each. "I love those boys," she tells us, "each in their own special way." She remembers the first time she met Mickey Blue and said, "I thought he was trying to kick me or kill me, but I learned he just likes his butt scratched and that he is really just one of the biggest teddy bears." Beth admits she has two favorites at the barn. She says, "Tucker is so gentle when he is being groomed. He likes to nuzzle and lay his head against you." Beth likes Apple, on the other hand, because "she is so full of energy. She walks beside me when I muck the field," Beth reports, "and she is always interested in what I'm doing." Most volunteers will agree that Beth is absolutely right!

Both Beth and Jen had been around horses in the past, but never did much more than trail rides. They agree that volunteering at Freedom Hill is a great way to be around horses when you can't have your own. Jen adds that she continues to learn new things every day. From farrier care to blanketing, health checks to first aid, Jen tells us that the volunteer trainings have been very valuable for "a newbie like me." For folks thinking about taking on a feed shift, Beth would share that "the work is very physical and can be tiring. You need to be assertive, but always patient and kind." Jen agrees that Beth lives

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Spotlight on Seniors

If you've recently visited the barn, you've probably noticed we have a growing herd of seniors. Some have been with us for a while, whereas others are new. Many times a rescue won't consider an older horse because they are often more difficult to adopt. Other times, rescues will bring in a horse like Mickey Blue, who should have found a forever home easily, but was later diagnosed with chronic disease. The ongoing cost of medication can be costly for the rescue and potential adopters.

Older horses, those who have recovered from injuries, and horses that are well-managed and pain-free, however, still have a lot of love to give and deserve to live a life with dignity and compassion. These horses often become amazing healers themselves to the people they encounter. In fact, while they live peacefully here at Freedom Hill, they help us engage and inspire youth and families in a variety of educational and equine-assisted learning programs.

We love our old guys (yes, they all happen to be geldings) with their unique quirks and personalities. Most are still available for adoption to the right companion home.

When we asked volunteers to share a few of their favorite stories, Angie Kirby said she loves the unexpected slobbery kisses and nosiness when she feeds them and cleans their hooves. That is something they all have in common. Kristy Alvarez, our Executive Director, shared that Occhi "likes to 'help' you put his rope halter on him." He apparently has his own sense of time and gets impatient when you take too long. Jen Purcell told us that Occhi's affinity for mud is one of

Super Senior Support

To supplement their diets, maintain proper weight, and administer medications, our senior boys all require grain. We feed Safe Choice Senior twice a day using over four bags a week!

By becoming a Super Senior Sponsor for just \$20 a month, we'll purchase 1 bag of grain in your name to help keep the boys healthy and happy. And we'll let everyone know how SUPER you are!

her favorite things. She often looks in the field when picking her son up from middle school. One day, she didn't see Occhi. She looked and looked and finally realized he was right there all along, so covered in dried mud that he blended in with everything around him.

The other horses love Occhi, especially Brocca. He often just plants his feet and won't move until he knows Occhi is coming with him. Despite their age, the two of them together have plotted escapes at feeding time and just run directly to their stalls. Apparently, it wasn't the first time Brocca was out on his own. Kristina Truluck, our resident photographer, shared her funniest memory from about a month ago. Brocca "somehow got out of his stall and was poking his head into Mickey Blue's stall. He stared at my vehicle as I pulled up and hurried back 'home' as soon as I stepped out. Brocca greeted me with a neigh and the false angry face like every other Saturday as if his door wasn't wide open."

Most people might agree with Kristina when she describes Brocca as the "proverbial old man." But she quickly adds, "he acts grouchy, but all **Continued on page 10...**



*From left: Occhi, Brocca, and Mickey Blue are interested in their new pasture mate. This was the day Thunder arrived in January.
Photo by: Jennifer Purcell*



Love for Lance



Words can't describe Shelby's love for Lance, but the smile on her face can.

Photos courtesy of Lori Harrington

Lance, a 16-hand chestnut gelding, was rescued from New Holland auction in 2006 at the age of six. He ended up at auction because, despite a few wins on the race track, he wasn't considered fast enough. He followed the path of so many off-the-track-Thoroughbreds, but was lucky to have a second chance. When he first came to FHHR, Lance was not particularly friendly and would even try to bite at volunteers over his stall door. Lance was at FHHR for three years before meeting Shelby and it took another year for her to convince her parents she was ready for the responsibility of horse ownership. Shelby adopted Lance in 2010 and since then they've formed a bond like those you see in the movies. Shelby shared her wonderful story in the Winter 2013 edition of *Spotlight*. Lance was a happy boy with his special someone. He learned to bow and was safe enough for beginner riders. It was bittersweet when Shelby took Lance to the Pimlico Race Track to participate in Canter for the Cure last year (see photo to left). In mid-January, Lance developed a large bump on his side. Shelby and her family were willing to give Lance whatever treatment he needed to be well again, but Lance lost his fight on February 16th. Lance will be missed and remembered by many of us at FHHR.

Horsemanship & Equine Fitness Team

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leading respectfully, backing up, loading in a trailer, responsiveness to cues given under saddle and on the ground, gait transitions, acceptance of various objects and obstacles, and much more.

Members of the Team will generally work with one specific horse, but can work with more than one. More seasoned members may also be asked to mentor and assist newer Team members.

In addition to building upon the professional training our horses receive, the Team does groundwork with horses that can't be ridden. Many of our older horses will be used in educational and equine-assisted learning programs and need to be able to face different situations in a safe, calm and confident manner so that participants will be safe during these programs. Working with the horses on ground manners, desensitizing, equine-assisted learning practice, and helping them learn to use the left side of their brain (the thinking side) more than the reactive side of their brain (the right side) will be very important for the success of the programs that we do to help people.

Volunteers interested in joining the Team should contact Terry Pennington at tp_rainbow@hotmail.com. Prospective members are required to observe several Team sessions and receive an external evaluation of riding/ground work skills at Crandell's Horse Works. Those who wish to ride must have intermediate riding level experience.



Top: Terry leads Apple while Heidi looks on. Bottom: Hannah exercises Ellie.

FHHR will participate in Help a Horse Day to meet these goals:

Introduce FHHR to the community by bring people to the barn

Help horses by adding/improving the facility structures

Qualify for a \$10,000 grant from ASPCA

**Hay,
have
you
herd ?**



ASPCA Help a Horse Day is Sunday, April 26th and we are hosting

Freedom Hill Horse Rescue's ***People Steeplechase & Ponypalooza***



It's all about Creativity, Collaboration, and Outreach

This year, we are running for run-ins. A run-in shelter is located in the pasture and provides horses free choice of shelter during inclement weather. These structures allow us to keep horses on pasture 24/7, which has many documented health benefits compared to being confined to a stall in the barn. Following an online fundraising effort throughout April, we will host a family fun run and event at the barn on Saturday, April 25, 2015, selling "boards" on which families can leave messages for the horses. These boards will be used to build run-in sheds on April 26, 2015.

Raise Funds in April

- Online effort
- Buy a Board
- Names or messages to horses can be inscribed on boards
- Prizes include cash, gift cards, and other items

Run & Fun on April 25th

- People Steeplechase
A course jumping obstacles our horses use in training
- Ponypalooza
A family fun event with food, horse rides, face painting, scavenger hunt, and more
- 10am - 2pm at FHHR, across from Northern Middle

Build on April 26th

- Use supplies to build run-in sheds and fencing
- Invite military personnel and local Boy Scout Troops to help
- Post photos from both days' events
- Begin application for \$10,000 grant from the ASPCA

Detailed information is available online at freedomhillevents.weebly.com

Have questions or want to help? Contact Jennifer Purcell at jennifer.freedom.hill@gmail.com or Charity Higgs at charity.freedom.hill@gmail.com



Senior Stories

To write the Senior Spotlight article, we reached out to a few volunteers to ask if they would share stories about one of our sweet senior boys. The response was fantastic. Stories like these make us feel so proud to do the work we do. Two stories are featured here and we will also add them to our website for all to enjoy.

What Seniors?

By: Ann Looker

When I was asked to write something about the senior horses at FHHR, my first thought was, "What seniors? Oh, you mean the 3 musketeers!" At least that's what I call them and there isn't anything except for their age that would make me consider them seniors. Just like the 3 musketeers, these boys, no matter how many times their venue changes, always seem to find their way back to each other. When I arrive to feed and take care of them, I can usually find the three of them huddled by the gate planning something mischievous, with Mickey Blue or as I call him the "bossman" giving the nod that the festivities are about to get underway. Then there is the "enforcer," Brocca, who comes with the muscle and "tude." Happily bringing up the rear is Occhi, the "brains" of the operation. Occhi rolls around and cakes himself with mud thinking that it's a great disguise, and that if no can recognize him then he can't be blamed for anything. Mickey Blue loves to be groomed, Brocca loves to be fed and Occhi loves playing hard to get. Now, as we all know, the 3 musketeers turned into 4 when Thunder arrived. Thunder usually stands back from the group as he is trying to find his role as the 4th musketeer, but I am sure it will not take long before the boys help him along with that. Every week I anxiously wait to return and see how Thunder's role is developing with the good old boys. It has been an extremely humbling and extraordinary experience over the last 2 years, taking care of these gentle giants, watching these boys being boys, as you can't help but laugh at their antics. These beautiful horses all have an unfortunate story that brought them to FHHR and all they ask for is to be loved. They still have so much love and energy to share and I look forward to many more laughs and special moments with my musketeers. They can turn my worst day into the best day ever. It is almost like they can sense I need a friend and there they are, just standing there looking at me with the most loving look in their eyes telling me that everything will be ok. What seniors?

Big Brave Blue

By: Renee Reid

Not long after my husband and I began volunteering at FHHR, we were given the opportunity to take the Saturday morning feed shift at the small barn at Hampton. We were excited because, though I had been working Monday morning shift for some time, our goal had always been to volunteer as a family, along with our two girls. Saturday mornings meant that Ella, age 9, and Elise, age 6, wouldn't be in school and could come spend time with the horses, do a little hard work, and get good and dirty, as all kids should. Though I was often anxious about one of them getting hurt, I swallowed it down because I knew that it would be good for them.

One Saturday in the late Fall, my husband and younger daughter were ill, so just Ella and I headed to the small barn. While I was still a little uncertain around the horses without another adult there, I thought it would be a great opportunity to spend some one-on-one time with my girl – we could gain confidence together. The morning was cold, but the sun was bright and beginning to soften the frost on the grass. Ella was wearing new gloves, black ones with bright white polka-dots that seemed surreally vivid in the clear light. Before we began work I went through our little safety routine: "Always be aware of where the horses are; be careful not to spook them with loud noises or sudden movements; only work on the side where I'm working so you're not alone...."

"I know mom, I know. You say the same thing every weekend!"

"I just want you to be safe, Ella. The horses are very big, and you're very small."

"Got it, mom."

We began putting hay out for Blue on one side, Ellie and Apple on the other. Then we began mucking on Blue's side first. He'd always been gentle and personable, so Ella walked toward him as usual, intending to give him a pat. He backed away and snorted. She tried again, and again he backed away, this time throwing his massive head into the air with fearful eyes. I didn't know what was wrong, but my mom-worry was kicking in to high gear, so I told Ella to back away, and give him plenty of room

while we mucked. As we worked, I kept turning to make sure she wasn't too close to Blue – and I was confused. This old man was one of the sweetest horses at the rescue, why was he acting this way? Ella chatted continuously as we pushed the wheelbarrow around and mucked with the red rakes. I was turned away from her, working at a stubbornly frozen pile of manure when I realized she had gone silent. Then came a loud snort from Blue. I gripped my rake and spun around, ready to rush to the rescue, but stopped short, holding my breath. Ella had stretched those polka-dotted gloves straight out in front of her and was standing perfectly still, talking to Blue in a quiet voice that barely reached my ears. He stood with his big head outstretched, ears back, sniffing at her gloves. That was it – he wasn't sure about those gloves. As she continued to whisper to him, her body perfectly still, he inched closer and closer. I felt my worry, and my heart, melt. As my small girl waited, that giant horse walked up and put his velvety nose right in the palms of her hands. She gently stroked his muzzle, whispering to him the whole time. Then she slowly, ever so slowly, stepped forward and rested her forehead against his nose.

Finally, she looked toward me with a smile even bigger than mine and said, "See, mom, you don't have to be nervous. He's the one who was nervous! He's so big, but he was afraid of my gloves!"

Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Events!



Events:

Glowga (Yoga) March 13th
Poston's Fitness for Life

People Steeplechase and
Ponypalooza April 25th

Help a Horse Day April 26th

Eat at the Greene Turtle in
Prince Frederick May 26th

*Additional restaurant fundraisers in
the coming months as well.*

Contact Jennifer for more information
347.595.9100

Volunteer Training Sessions and Work Days:

New Volunteer Orientation &
Current Volunteer Training
*held the 1st Sat. of each month
April 4th, May 2nd, and June 6th*

*All volunteers are encouraged to
attend these monthly sessions
featuring advanced equine topics.*

Volunteer Work Day April 4th
Spring cleaning at Hampton

Contact Lori for more information
301.806.1708

Horsemanship Team Sessions:

Mondays at 6:30pm @Hampton
(all volunteers welcome to observe)

Team evaluations are scheduled
by appointment

Contact Terry for more information
240.535.4009

Equine Connections Program:
May 2nd 2:00 - 4:00

Contact Kristy for more information
240.320.7715

he really wants is some attention, some treats, and someone to tell stories to. He can never get enough scratches! Some-times he greets me by propping his chin on top of my head and just standing there. It's amazing to think that, after all that he's been through, he's trusting and comfortable enough around people to relax like that."

Thunder is the newest member of the senior club, joining FHHR in January. Now approximately 18 years old, he suffered a fractured pelvis when he was younger. We were a bit concerned about Thunder at first. He would barely touch his grain or hay and would often stand by himself. But, because volunteers have been giving him a lot of love, Thunder is finally settling in.

Be sure to read What Seniors? and Big Brave Blue, written by volunteers Ann Looker and Renee Reid (pages 8-9).



How You Can Help!

Super Senior Sponsorship

For \$20/month, sponsor one bag of grain to help keep our seniors healthy and happy.

Become a member on Amazon Smile!

If you shop on Amazon.com, you should join Amazon Smile and choose FHHR. Every time you shop Amazon will donate to the rescue.

Join the Horse Angel Network!

You can support FHHR by joining the Horse Angel Network! We are seeking individuals that are willing to become a monthly sponsor of one of our horses while they are with us. We have several levels of sponsorship available from \$25 per month to \$200 per month. Contact Kristy today if you would like to become a horse's angel.

Purchase Wish List Items

For the months of March through June, wish list items include:

- ◆ Mounting Block
- ◆ Mecate Reins
- ◆ Bags of Sawdust (stall bedding)
- ◆ 4x6 rubber stall mats
- ◆ Wood for fencing
- ◆ Care Kit Items: Fly Spray, MTG, Banixx, SWAT, Kopertox, and Keratex

*Donations can be mailed to:
FHHR, P.O. Box 606, Dunkirk, MD 20754*

Volunteer Spotlight *continued from page 4*

by her own advice, telling us that Beth "really cares about the horses and what is best for them." Beth is thrilled to work with Jen because "she doesn't stop until she is sure the best care has been given to the horses and, most of all, she has been patient with me during my learning process."

Thank you Jen and Beth for loving our horses, keeping the barn looking great, and sharing your time with us. You make a great team!