



Nickers & News

Summer 2022 Issue



Message from the Chair

Susan Kish, Board Chair, Free Rein Center

Hello, I'm Susan Kish the new Chair of the Board of Directors of the Free Rein Center. This is my third year on the Board; the first two years I was secretary. That position gave me a "bird's eye view" of what is before me in the coming year.

The first item is I have huge shoes to fill. Thank you, Jerry Clouse, for being an exemplary Chair for our Board. Jerry brought thoughtfulness, thoroughness, and innovation to every decision and action made in his terms as Chair.

The second point is how wonderful it is to serve with the people on the Board of Directors. We may not always agree on every issue but there is never a doubt that each individual is passionate about Free Rein Center and wants the Center to succeed in its mission. A number of members have served for several years and some are newer to the Board but not necessarily to the Center. We recently welcomed two new Board members, Connie Edmands, a business leader in the community (Broadstreet Wines) and Leta McDonald, a volunteer with Free Rein since 2015 and a former Judge. Together, all of us want Free Rein Center to be the best it can be. Helping us to do that are wonderful, dedicated staff members – Brittany McCathern, Roberta Brownlee and all the instructors, barn staff and exceptional volunteers.

Noting wonderful people, I am not forgetting our Corporate Sponsors, our Individual donors, aka Partners and our HEROS who sponsor a horse. Without your help, Free Rein Center would have had a difficult time making it through the last two years.

Recently, the Board has enacted a Planned Giving Document for Free Rein. Free Rein welcomes all donor pathways, including volunteering and defined planned giving. A well-planned gift can reduce or eliminate long-term capital gains taxes, provide current income tax deductions, reduce possible estate and gift taxes or even increase your income. Methods include: Bequests, Charitable Gift Annuities, Donation of Stocks of Appreciated Assets or Donate through an IRA. For questions or further instructions, please contact the Free Rein Office at 828-883-3375.

As we look to the future, we see a strong Free Rein Center. A place that works daily to uphold its mission to serve the community by strengthening the spirits, minds, and bodies of children and adults through interaction with horses. Come join us on our journey!



Message from Departing Chair

Jerry Clouse

My three-year term on the Free Rein Board of Directors is at its end. I have been fortunate to serve as the Board Chair of this remarkable organization for most of this time. Through good times and bad, including more than two years of COVID-19 restrictions, Free Rein has continued to serve area adults and children afflicted with developmental, cognitive, emotional and physical challenges.

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Thanks to the continuing dedication of our loyal donors, we have survived and thrived, maintaining a strong financial position during this critical time. Also, thanks to the group of dedicated board members who love Free Rein beyond measure and who worked tirelessly the last three years to make certain that the Free Rein mission and vision were fulfilled.

As we worked through the Pandemic crisis, I was reminded of an apropos quote by Henry Ford who said. "When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." Free Rein is still flying high!

I welcome Susan Kish as the new Board Chair. Susan is extremely qualified and dedicated to our mission and vision. I know she will do an outstanding job in carrying Free Rein forward.

In closing, I can truthfully say my association with Free Rein has been a life changing experience and one that I will never forget!

Spring 2022

The week of April 10, 2022, kicked off our Spring Session consisting of one, six-week session, totaling 93 participants and an additional four-week session, with 26 participants. These sessions allowed for the development of new programming and the accommodation of participants on the existing waiting list. The first Spring session welcomed back the exceptional children school groups, groomers, ground activities, and individual riders. Following our interruption of the program due to COVID restrictions, Free Rein was excited to reinstate our partnership with Project Odyssey for our Veteran's. The program focuses on horse behavior and herd dynamics, proper horse interaction, and equine care. Project Odyssey also provides opportunities to participate in team building activities through the interaction with horses.

Now we are looking forward to continued participation in our programming in the Fall.

Free Rein Staff

Brittany McCathern, Program Director

Roberta Brownlee, Office Manager

Kara McCarson, PATH Instructor

Mary Stoehr, PATH Instructor

Toni Garrett, PATH Instructor

Megan Johnson,
Horse Care Coordinator



Some of our participants enjoying our Spring 2022 session.

Community Outreach – PROJECT ODYSSEY 2022

Free Rein partnered with Project Odyssey®, a 12-week mental health program that uses adventure-based learning to help warriors manage and overcome their invisible wounds, enhance their resiliency skills, and empower them to live productive and fulfilling lives. Based on their unique needs, warriors can participate in an all-male, all-female, or couples Project Odyssey. This spring, Free Rein facilitated members' therapeutic experiences with horses. The following are some of the comments from these participants.

What was the biggest thing you learned from today's session?

- I learned that horses are the gentle powers of the planet.
- To stay in the horse's line of sight.
- Horses are like people, if they are loved and nurtured they will show basic love and obedience with one exception, people are evil and horses are not.
- Telling someone what to do is not as easy as it seems.
- Sometime the horses just need a second before they're ready to perform, just like people like us when we anxious/overwhelmed, etc.
- To trust the horse.
- We have to trust and believe.
- That horses are loving animals, they mimic how we feel - if you're comfortable, they're comfortable.
- To be firm but gentle.
- Don't need the horse's name to get its attention.
- How working in a calm manner effects how you maneuver the horse.
- To stay calm, talk softly, be present with the horse.



Meet the Herd

Dakota

Breed: Quarter Horse

Age: 32

Color: Flea Bitten Gray

Height: 15.2 hands

Gender: Gelding

Dakota has spent most of his career as a camp horse here in Brevard. Dakota has a sturdy yet slimmer build that makes him ideal for medium riders. His smooth movements are good for a rider with high muscle tone. Dakota has seen and done it all, giving him the right confidence and attitude for therapeutic riding. His training and time as a camp horse make him an excellent choice for beginners and more advanced riders.



Toby

Breed: Haflinger

Color: Strawberry Roan

Age: 25

Height: 13.2 hands

Sex: Gelding

Toby is owned by Rockbrook Camp and joined the Free Rein team the fall of 2019. He had been a therapy horse for many years at Ride Like a Knight Therapy Program in Laurinburg, NC and had spent the past decade of summers here at Rockbrook Camp as a camp pony. Toby is a very laid back and gentle horse; his very large, round barrel and smooth gaits make him ideal for riders with flexible hips and hyperactivity.

Olaf

Breed: Norwegian Fjord

Age: 14

Color: Brown Dun

Height: 14.2 hands

Gender: Gelding

Olaf came to us in the fall of 2020. He was used in Free Rein's program fall '21 and spring '22, after he spent some time getting back under saddle and back into work again. His curious personality kept volunteers, instructors, and participants on their toes. His small, yet sturdy build allowed us to utilize him in various aspects of our program. After using him in our fall and spring sessions, he let us know that he would be happier being a one-person horse. We were able to find his Forever Home with two other Fjords and a lady who adores him. He now has the one-on-one attention he craved and has become one of her most reliable trail horses.

Happy Trails!



Free Rein's Mission is to serve the community by strengthening the spirits, minds and bodies of children and adults through interaction with horses.

Free Rein's Vision is to provide interactive horse-human experiences to an inclusive community which enrich life skills, promote personal well-being and build lasting relationships.

Free Rein's Values
We offer a positive experiential, collaborative environment that heals and cares for our community, participants and horses through mutual respect, positive atmosphere and personal growth.

**Moe****Breed:** Oldenburg**Age:** 27**Color:** Chestnut**Height:** 16.1 hands**Gender:** Gelding

Owned by Rockbrook Camp, Moe has been with Free Rein since 2014. Since his start at Rockbrook, he has been giving lessons at camp and teaching little girls everything they needed to know about horses. In Moe's younger years, he worked at St. Andrews College throughout the year. With his three floating gaits, he showed in dressage. Moe loves to be scratched on his face especially his forehead, being groomed and hanging out with his friends out in the pasture. Clients who need sensory input love to ride him with his bouncy gaits. Moe also loves to jump and stroll on nice trail rides in the field.

Brae**Breed:** Paint**Age:** 15**Color:** Bay**Height:** 15.1 Hands**Gender:** Mare

Brae joined the Free Rein herd in the summer of 2022. She was formerly owned by Donna and Bill Huffman, who are two of our long-standing side walkers. Brae previously worked on a ranch in Georgia, where she was a trail horse. Before coming to Free Rein, Brae was trail riding in DuPont State Forrest with her previous owner.

Now Brae can be found teaching lessons with campers throughout the day. She enjoys working with all levels of riders. Her willing and sweet personality makes her a favorite around the barn. We cannot wait to integrate Brae into our Free Rein lessons in the fall 2022. Her small yet sturdy build will allow her to accommodate all types of riding with various needs.

Welcome to the herd!

**Mr. Pumpkin****Breed:** Halflinger**Color:** Palamino**Age:** 36**Height:** 13.2 hands

Mr. Pumpkin, in his early life, was an Amish work horse. In 2004, he was bought for Free Rein at an auction, due to his extensive skin allergies. His most enjoyable activity, still to this day, is pulling a cart. His personality made him a chief therapy pony over the years; with his sturdy build he has helped serve a variety of our participants. Mr. Pumpkin has journeyed throughout the different phases of the program being used at Las Paderas, at Barkley Road, at the Pony Club in Etowah, and currently at Rockbrook Camp.

Since he was such a key part of the Free Rein program, he was used in the barn for grooming lessons. Due to his age, he often times was found out in the pasture. He decided he not only wanted to teach participants in grooming and serving as Free Rein's ambassador, but he would also like a more physical job. After communicating to the vet regarding Mr. Pumpkin's best interest, we decided that he should still work minimally to keep him mentally and physically happy. Since putting him back into light work he seems much happier! Sometimes horses are like humans who have worked their whole lives and need a job no matter how small to feel like they are fulfilling their duties.

Thank you Pumpkin for loving your job!!

Financial Reports - 2022 Mid-Year Report

This year due to effective decisions, Free Rein has maintained expenses to the prior year level. However, we have seen and anticipate further increases in the cost of horse care (hay, grain, shavings and supplements).

Our personnel expenses have increased because Free Rein's program attendance has expanded. This, in turn, increases the need for instructor hours.

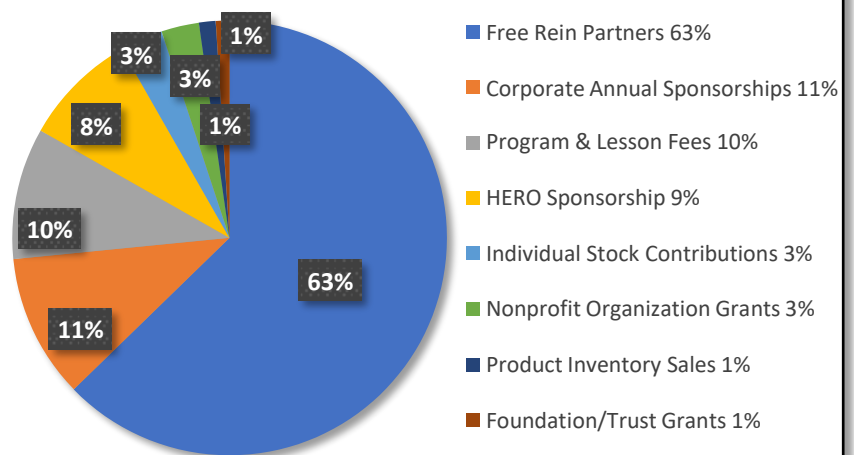
At this time, Free Rein is operating at capacity. Costs also reflect that the majority of our clients are attending through scholarships. Free Rein will not turn down a client for economic reasons and will work with the client through a sliding scale mechanism.

Free Rein will continue to monitor costs, make effective economic decisions, and gratefully accept donations from our loyal donors and sponsors.

How You Can Help Free Rein

Free Rein counts on the generosity of our business sponsors and individual donors to fund our organization. The money goes to keeping our horses healthy and our riding programs affordable for families. Help us continue to serve the community by becoming a donor. You can sponsor a horse through our HEROS program or make a one-time or continuing contribution. Visit our website, www.freereincenter.org, to learn more, or call our office at 828-883-3375. Free Rein Center is an IRS-approved not-for-profit organization. Our tax ID number is 31-1740563. Thank you for your consideration.

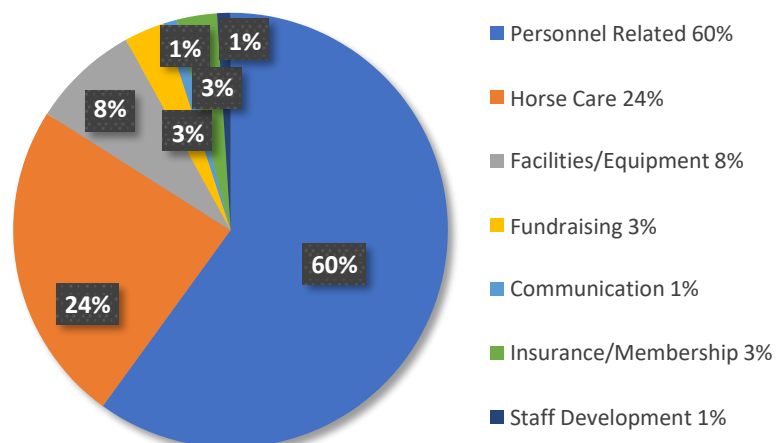
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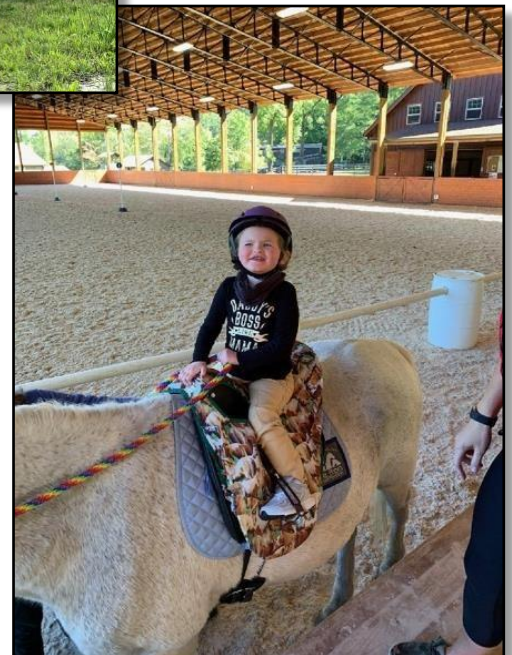
2022 Board of Directors

Susan Kish, Board Chair
 Andy Bullwinkel, Vice-Chair
 Connie Edmands, Secretary
 Jim Garrett, Treasurer
 Sharad Creasman
 Linda Felderhoff
 Leta McDonald
 Porsha Smith
 Denise Stretcher
 Cindy Wilson
 Carter Heyward, Director Emeritus

Expenses



Spring Happenings



Path Int'l (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) is a federally registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, formed in 1969 to promote safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. Free Rein has been a PATH Certified Center since 2001.

Free Rein Center for Therapeutic Riding and Education – P.O. Box 1325 – Brevard, NC 28712 – (828)883-3375 – FreeReinCenter.org

Thank you to all our sponsors and donors for supporting Free Rein.
Without you we could not do the work of changing lives, one hoof beat at a time.

Platinum Level



Gold Level



Silver Level

Brian N. Stretcher, Ph.D.
Attorney & Counselor at Law



Copper Level

