

WaKeeney man uses horses to help kids

By Ron Wilson
 Director
 Huck Boyd National Institute
 for Rural Development
 at Kansas State University

Can you hear the sound of thundering hooves? It's the sound of a horse galloping. Those hooves and the horses who have them might be just the thing that some children need. Today we'll meet a man in rural Kansas who has seen first-hand the beneficial effect of horses on troubled youth.

Chuck Mattke is the founder of Hooves of Heaven, an equine assisted learning organization in northwest Kansas. Chuck has a heart for troubled youth, having had some challenges as a young person himself.

"I have dyslexia and had trouble in school, got into fights," Chuck said. His father traveled all over the world in the military before retiring to the family farm near WaKeeney. WaKeeney is a rural community of 1,850 people. Now, that's rural.

In big city schools, Chuck had seen - and experienced - how some youth were treated as dumb and given no respect. He always had a knack for relating to troubled kids.

Chuck studied criminal justice in college and became a truck driver. He and his wife raised their two children. "Once our kids were grown, we decided to get into foster care," Chuck said.

While Chuck's daughter was still in high school, she started giving riding lessons as her supervised agricultural experience in FFA. "I noticed that she might have 25 kids for riding lessons, and some were driving fifty miles to get here," Chuck said. He noted this strong interest in the horses as well as beneficial effects on the children.

Chuck did some studying and learned about a program called EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association). EAGALA is an international nonprofit association for professionals using equine therapy to address mental

health and human development needs. He and his daughter became certified in EAGALA.

Chuck has seen these benefits first-hand.

"One time I lied about my age to get a job at a camp, but on the day I was to report to work, I got a call saying there was no job," he said.

"Then they told me I could be a horse wrangler instead. Every time I've had trouble, it seems horses would show up. This is my time to give back."

In 2005, Chuck established Hooves of Heaven, a foundation created with the vision of bringing people and horses together. Hooves of Heaven offers riding lessons and human-horse interaction for troubled youth.

"One of the gifts God gave these horses is to mirror the handler," Chuck said. "These horses have a knack for reading these kids." Giving a kid time to work with a horse and express his or her own voice appears to help. The kids might

be foster children, juvenile justice clients, or local families. Chuck has worked with kids on suicide watch and gang members from Kansas City with amazing results.

Following the EAGALA principles, youth might be introduced to horses and assigned tasks with a given horse while other horses remain in the same pen. "It helps them deal with having other issues intervene when you're trying to get something done," Chuck said.

Often the youth get their first ride on a well-trained horse so it is a really positive experience. Then untrained colts are brought in and the youth experience the challenges of trying to train them. The lessons of the training can benefit the youth themselves.

"You don't tell the kids what to do," Chuck said. "You have them tell you what's going on, and then you use what they're telling you to help them."

As the kids give voice to what is happening in the human-horse

interaction, it seems to help them understand how human relationships can be improved as well. For more information, go to www.hoovesofheaven.com.

Can you hear the sound of thundering hooves? It's the sound of a horse galloping. Those hooves might be carrying a rider, but they may also carry solutions for trou-

bled youth. We salute Chuck Mattke and all those involved with Hooves of Heaven for making a difference with equine-assisted learning.

And there's more. We'll learn about life-changing examples from this program next week.

public notice

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF SHERMAN COUNTY, KANSAS
FILED PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 59 OF THE KANSAS STATUTES ANNOTATED

In the Matter of the Estate of LOIS J. WINTER, Deceased.

Case No. 12 PR 29

NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that on the 31st day of October, 2012, a Petition of Will and Issuance of Letters Testamentary was filed in this Court by Sally Pettibone, a devisee and legatee, and executor named in the "Last Will and Testament of Lois J. Winter" dated October 19, 2009, requesting the Will filed with the Petition, along with the Codicil attached, be admitted to probate and record; petitioner be appointed as executor without bond; and that petitioner be granted Letters Testamentary.

You are required to file your written defenses to the Peti-

tion on or before November 26, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. in the District Court of Sherman County, Kansas, at which time and place said cause will be heard. Should you fail to file your written defenses, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

All creditors of the decedent are notified to exhibit their demands against the Estate within the latter of four months from the date of first publication of notice under K.S.A. 59-2236 and amendments thereto, or if the identity of the creditor is known or reasonably ascertainable, 30 days after actual notice was given as provided by law, and if their demands are not thus exhibited, they shall be forever barred.

Sally Pettibone
 Petitioner

VIGNERY & MASON
 214 E. 10th, P.O. Box 767
 Goodland, KS 67735
 Telephone: 785-890-6588
 Attorneys for Petitioner

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Get your mower ready for spring

If you are done mowing for the year, be sure to service your mower before putting it away. Make sure you drain the gas tank of gasoline-powered engines or use a gasoline stabilizer. Untreated gasoline can become thick and gummy. A few drops of oil squirted inside the spark plug hole (after you remove the spark plug) will help lubricate the cylinder. While you have the spark plug removed, replace it with a new one.

If your equipment has a battery, clean the battery terminals, which usually corrode during the season. A wire-bristle brush is a good tool for doing this. The battery can then be



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removed or connected to a battery monitor that will keep it charged over winter. If you remove the battery, be sure to store it in a protected location for the winter (a cool basement works best).

Now is also an excellent time to sharpen mower blades so they'll be ready next spring.

Sharpening rotary mower blades

is fairly straightforward. The following steps will guide you through this process:

- Check the blade for major damage. If you can't fix it, it likely will need to be replaced.
- Remove grass and debris from the blade with a moist cloth. Dry before beginning to sharpen the cutting edge.
- Remove nicks from the cutting edge, using a grinding wheel or hand-file.
- If using a grinding wheel, match the existing edge angle to the wheel.

If hand-filing, file at the same angle as the existing edge.

- Grind or file until the edge is 1/32 inch, about the size of a period.
- Particularly with a grinding wheel, avoid overheating the blade as this may warp it.
- Clean the blade with solvent or oil, much like if you were cleaning a gun, for optimum winter storage. Avoid using water because it will promote rust.

Following these tips can help you better prepare your mower for winter storage and also save you some steps this coming spring.

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