



Restoring hope. Transforming lives.

Great things are a series of small things brought together.

December 1, 2020

~Vincent Van Gogh

Dear Friends,

The weeks and months are flying by, so many changes and adjustments, adding, subtracting, doing more of some things and less of others with not much time to process, have made my cup feel a little emptier lately. One thing that is unchanged is our commitment to serving both horses and humans in need. Carrying out the work is healing in itself and though we have had many incredible moments, one stands out and is worth sharing.

In June, "Joel", a young man in his mid-twenties came to Peace Ranch for help with severe depression. Having been diagnosed with a life threatening autoimmune deficiency in his teens, his body was ravaged by disease leaving him wheel chair bound and oxygen dependent. Working with Cowboy gave him a sense of connection and control with a friend who did not judge him by his condition. He enjoyed his visits, became more confident and the depression was lifting.....until he got sick and needed hospitalization again, and again, and again. At the beginning of September, the doctors told his mom it was time for him to make a list of the things he really wanted to do while he still had time. Number 1 on his list- Ride a Horse! His mom reached out for help.

Since Peace Ranch could not accommodate a physically fragile rider we reached out to our community and together we assembled a team that could accommodate all of his special requirements. What happened was a wonderful collaboration resulting in one of the most beautiful therapy moments I've had the privilege to witness.

Joel had his ride on Blue, a retired Police Horse at Reining Liberty Ranch directed by a highly specialized team including an OT, supported by a PATH instructor, an RLR volunteer and two Peace Ranch volunteers- Jan, our Program Director, the extra pair of hands as we walked in concert around the arena, and me scuttling alongside carrying the oxygen tank. After dismount, *Joel* spent time sitting, silently with Blue. The interaction between the young man and the horse was rivetingly magical.

Joel's mother wrote, **"I can't thank you all enough. Joel (and all of us) had an absolutely amazing day. He is so happy. I can't express how thankful I am for all of you and everyone that helped out today. When he told me he wanted to ride I was worried we wouldn't be able to make it happen and you all just did it."** We did do it- with a lot of help. At a time when division, competition, and hatred seem rampant, this experience of unity, collaboration, and love, for the sake of one in need, has helped to fill all of our cups.

2020 has been a year fraught with adversity causing people of all ages to flock to Peace Ranch for help. Young and old are struggling with serious issues aggravated by the constant change and uncertainty in the world. Connection with our horses, lifts depression, breaks through anxiety, and helps people regain a sense of control, inspiring them to reach toward their dreams but we can't do it without your help. Our 10-year Anniversary celebration and all fundraising events were cancelled due to COVID-19. Please give generously at this critical time to support the ministry of Peace, restoring hope and transforming lives.

Sincerely,

Jackie Kaschel