

Newsletter

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Restoring hope. Transforming lives.

Restoring Hope, Transforming Lives

by Jackie Kaschel

The Body Keeps the Score, (2014) by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, is a New York Times best seller. This college level textbook, based on Van der Kolk's 30 years of trauma research, states "the urgent work of the brain after a traumatic event is to suppress it through forgetting or self-blame to avoid being ostracized. **But the body does not forget**" which causes all kinds of issues. "This has profound ramifications for talking therapies and their limits because the rational mind cannot do the repair work on its own since that part of you is pretending it has already been repaired."

A big idea from his research is that "**Safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.**"

This may sound simple and even obvious but look at the statistics from recent reports (April 2023) published by The Center for Disease Control. In 2021, Suicide was among the top nine leading causes of death for people ages 10-64 **and the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 20-34.** Over 48,000 people died by suicide in 2021. **That**

is one death, every 11 minutes. In an effort to help more in need build safe connections, Peace Ranch is expanding its services to add intensive retreats and extended therapy for both children and adults. Our new programming will focus on helping individuals and families feel safe in their bodies and learn how to develop and maintain safe connections.



Military/EMS:

Mustangs & Veterans

by Cortney Moguel

What do the lives of Wild Mustangs have in common with Veterans? Instantly what comes to mind and stands out is hypervigilance, focus, and a need for confident leadership. Hypervigilance is an "elevated state of constantly assessing potential threats around you;" according to Wikipedia. The very nature of survival.

As prey animals, Mustangs also depend on their keen sense of awareness of their surroundings to determine safety for survival. Veterans serve with levels of hypervigilance that assist them in deployments, but that asset may become counterproductive causing anxiety and fear when they return home.

Training Mustangs requires a great deal of intentionality, presence from the trainer, and confidence. The horse is looking for a confident leader, which presents the opportunity for its leader to recognize incongruences in their own focus and fix them. The Veterans level of confidence will be reflected by the horse's response. Will it trust you or is there some work that needs to be done to earn the horse's trust? This process of relationship building is an excellent way to learn practically how to be fully present, focused on the task, and improve communication skills with the horse, all of which transfer easily into relationships with humans.

You can't talk trauma out of the body.

by Jan Stump



Peace Ranch retreats will target populations impacted by trauma: veterans, parents/families with traumatized children and people in recovery. The needs of these populations all have something in common.

They all suffer with trauma and the resulting isolation. Traditional strategies are limited in addressing a problem that rests in the body, brain and nervous system. Peace Ranch is uniquely suited to address trauma needs: the natural setting and the neurobiology of horses creates 'regulation in the body. Relationships are repaired and strengthened. This is critical; relationship (connection) is a key element for healing and a protective factor against relapse. Retreats will provide:

- * Large 'doses' of nervous system reset.
- * Target the body and nervous system with sensory activities, movement, rhythm and 1:1 time with the horses. Retreats will also offer psychoeducation regarding trauma, providing clients a new perspective on trauma recovery.

To meet the greatest needs:

Children & Families: In a February 2022, across six

Northwest Michigan counties, NLCMH saw 124 children for crisis counseling or inpatient services — triple what they saw in the same month a year prior. Astonishingly, there are no experiential programs that enlist parents as partners. **Peace Ranch is changing that.**

Addiction & Recovery: The incidence of trauma in addiction is documented from 50 to 75%. Munson Healthcare reports that 39.6 percent of patients treated in the emergency department for substance use disorder will return to the ED within 90 days. No programs in our area offer experiential, neuro-sequential trauma services for substance use disorder. **Peace Ranch will change that.**

Veterans: In the five-county region, there are over 13,000 military veterans. Veterans complete suicide at a rate of 22 per day. Offering strength focused solutions is a game changer — most veterans prefer an outdoor setting that plays to their strengths of hands-on activities. **The Peace Ranch team is thrilled to add this in-depth clinical program.**

For more information go to www.peaceranchctc.com , email jan@peaceranchctc.org , call 231.499.4736

Our Mission is to provide Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning to all in need.

Our Vision is to create a PEACE-ful experiential center, a therapeutic community dedicated to cultivate growth and learning to rehabilitate those who are ill or suffering that they may turn or return to productive living.



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Native Horse gets her Native Name

The Mustang is a horse native to the U.S., so we reached out to Kenny Pheasant to give her a native name. Kenny is Anishinaabe and belongs to the Wiikwemkoong First Nation.

A small group gathered for the naming ceremony. Kenny said after seeking, he knew what the filly's name would be and she confirmed that when he met her. This was such a rich experience, and we are so grateful to Kenny for his investment in our foundation horse for the new Veterans & Mustangs program. **"Wiingash"** translated means "Sweet Grass" which is one of the four sacred medicines, represents the northern direction and the white color on the medicine wheel. It is the symbol of healing and peace. Also called "Holy Grass" it is used for spiritual purification

and prayer.

mental health professionals from the Michigan Eagala Network for continuing education, a requirement of certification. Peace Ranch strives to be a leader in developing a strong Michigan network of equine psychotherapy professionals.

