

The Salem Spirit

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Maryland Salem Children's Trust, Inc.

Winter 2012



WE TEACH THE WORLD TO LIVE

Submitted by: Shelly Mohr

2011 life at the Salem Equestrian Centre was marked by some big changes. Last spring we lost our barn "mascot", Otto, a massive Belgian Draft who taught many of the Salem Children how to ride and gave them their first taste of success and confidence. Last summer we welcomed Salem's first Therapy Dog, a vivacious puppy named Ella, who continually neutralizes emotions and helps people see the brighter side of life. Thanks to your support, thoughts and prayers, our program has continued to expand, improve, and flourish!



Ella, Shelly Mohr, Dudley, Amanda Garlitz and Koda

When considering the article for this newsletter, I couldn't help but reflect on all that this past year has involved. The single most significant contributors to this program come in the form of horses. It is the equine teachers in my charge that brought about the greatest changes, improvements, and successes last year. It is to them that I now tip my hat.

I was sitting in the Salem School waiting room a few weeks ago browsing through a copy of Readers Digest. At the back of the small magazine was an article on the upcoming film, "War Horse". Being a fan of all things horse and history, this article fascinated me, and reminded me again of how much a horse can teach. The original author of the novel "War Horse", Michael Morpurgo, and his wife are the owners and operators of Farms for City Children, a charity that gives at risk inner city children the chance to experience life on a family farm. Their greatest attraction is horses. The article went on to recount the tale of a little boy who attended the program. The Morpurgo's were warned when he arrived not to address him as he had a terrible speech impediment and stutter and would have a panic attack if addressed in public. The child never spoke, the whole week. Until the night before the group was supposed to leave when Morpurgo found him in the barn, nose to nose with the horse he had been riding all week, talking. Talking with perfect diction and not a hint of a stutter, pouring out his heart to a listening ear, telling his horse how he felt, about his life. This experience, in conjunction with the stories of several WWI veteran who similarly confided in their horses led Morpurgo to pen "War Horse" in 1982. 29 years later it has become a moving film that displays the incredible teaching and healing power of a horse.

The week after "War Horse" hit theaters I asked one of my students what was his FAVORITE thing about his mount, Koda. His reply, barely intelligible as he buried his face and hands into Koda's thick, soft winter coat was this, "He keeps me warm!" This sounds trite, but I do believe that for many of our hurting children it is a horse that begins to teach them the invaluable lesson that they can safely receive what they so deeply desire. They can receive the comfort of a warm, powerful but not overpowering, friendly but not calculating, loving touch. The "hug" they always wanted. The greatest gift which anyone who has been abandoned, abused or neglected can receive! A tangible representation of the gift a heavenly father freely gives to his children, unconditional love and acceptance. I have seen that one little, simple experience change lives!

If you asked one of the children here at Salem what their horse has taught them, they would probably reply with smiling enthusiasm, "how to trot!" or, "how to canter!!" But what they are really saying is, "how to succeed," "how to trust," "how to persevere!", "how to love," "how to lead". As 2012 opens I look forward to seeing the little miracles that our horses will perform for each child that enters this stable. I look forward to witnessing each life lesson that our horses will teach that would not be received from another source. If you could stare into the eyes of any one of our horses and ask them, "what do you do?" I imagine they would say,

"We teach the world to live, one little heart at a time."

"Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat... We must find each other."

-Mother Teresa



Letter From the Executive Director

It's always great to hear when one of our former residents is doing well! Shane came to our program several years ago with diagnoses of Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and a Mood Disorder. Some of his behaviors were running away, cruelty to animals, stealing, lying, fire starting, self mutilation and attacking others. The psychologist who treated him prior to coming to us stated, "...the forensic evaluation... suggests a high likelihood of Shane being a risk to hurt himself or others. Shane was a very challenged little boy.

As Shane settled in at Salem, we realized that he was very intelligent and despite being a handful at times he had great potential. For example, one day when Shane got into trouble at school I stopped by the counseling room to see how he was doing. I witnessed Shane conducting his own trial, playing the roles of defendant, staff, witnesses and even Judge Judy! It was quite the show!

Today Shane works several part time jobs in his community and volunteers helping homeless adults and AIDS patients. Shane is also very active in his local church and his faith has remained strong since leaving Salem. This is what he said when I spoke with him recently and asked him how he would describe how Salem helped him, "I knew the staff at Salem had love and compassion and were there to help me. I knew I was out of harm's way and the structure at Salem helped me to become who I am today."

Thank you for partnering with us to change Shane's life and hundreds of others over the years!

Lighthouse of Hope Church

Tim McGregor, Pastor at the Lighthouse of Hope Church, Cresaptown Maryland recently presented Dana Norris, Salem School teacher with a wonderful monetary contribution for the children of Salem. These funds raised by the youth and congregation at the church were presented along with a challenge to other youth groups to surpass Lighthouse of Hope Church's donation. Anyone up for the challenge? Contact Donna Brenneman, Salem Development Director at donna@mdsalem.org for details!!!



Salem Residents Host Open House

Each year at the holidays the Salem residents decorate their houses and entertain staff and visitors. This year's Open House was a total enjoyment for the visitors and children alike. Thank you to the Thomas, Andrew, Matthew, and James houses for such a welcoming evening of fun and celebration!



In Memory of

MR. MARION STARR
By: Catherine Altieri

MR. MARION STARR
By: Alpha Pi Chapter Chi Sigma
Sorority

MR. MARION STARR
By: Kathleen Whorrell

BILL WHORRELL
By: Kathleen Whorrell

TONY SALMON
By: Melinda Gibson

MARION & GEORGE CHARLES
By: Gloria Charles

HELEN SCHUETZE
By: Alice Daniel

JACK & PAT RUCKERT
By: Steve Ruckert and Susan Miller

JOSEPH & MARY SKOVAN
By: Patricia Clark

MR. MARION STARR
By: Ms. Mary Sue Hannan

In Honor of

DR. ROBERT DONAHUE, DDS
By: KAREN CARROLL

ALEX & RACHEL ELIPOLO
By: James J. Eliopolo

JOHN & WENDY ELIPOLO
By: James J. Eliopolo

SHELLY MOHR-EFFORTS IN THE
SALEM THERAPEUTIC EQUES-
TRIAN PROGRAM
BY: Lee & Ken Fisher

HANNAH MECHEM
By: George and Karen Wodicka

ANESTASIA CRIBLEY
By: George and Karen Wodicka

ROBIN & EARL SMITH
By: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Inskeep

CATHERINE ANN & TOM FISHER
By: Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Inskeep

MD ADK UPSILON CHAPTER
By: Wanda Zink

ROBIN and EARL SMITH
By: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Inskeep

CATHERINE ANN and TOM
FISHER
By: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Inskeep

DR. ROBERT DONAHUE
By: Karen Carroll

MELVIN UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
By: MELVIN UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH CONGREGATION

AMY BROADWATER
By: Wanda DeHaven

OUR FRIENDS & FAMILY
By: Bryan & Debbie Buchwald

We are so thankful for these loving gifts!



Bette Dawson
Education Coordinator

Employee Milestones

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for men,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance
from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

-Colossians 3:23-24



WCBC Host of the 2011 Salem Christmas Party

The Cumberland Holiday Inn was “Santa Central” again this year as WCBC staff managed to put together another outstanding event in honor of the Salem Children. This annual event is one that the children remember and reminisce about year after year.



With the assistance of the wonderful “Host Families”, Mary Clites and her staff made the dreams of the children come true, with an evening of love, companionship and tons of presents. The children are so appreciative of the time spent that evening by families on their behalf and the unconditional love shown to them.

Area vendors again went out of their way to provide a delectable buffet for all in attendance, and there was top notch entertainment by “Three Katz and a Mouse” and the steel drum assemble from Fort Hill High School band. Showing their support also was Lakeyn Barnard, Miss Cumberland Outstanding Teen and Megan Kiley, Miss Allegany County Outstanding Teen.



Several representatives were on hand from Braddock Middle School in order that they could be personally thanked for their participation in fundraising and their outstanding contributions to Salem Children’s Trust.



Although it seems impossible, each year WCBC somehow exceeds the previous year’s level of dedication and excitement and brings such an outstanding event into the lives of all in attendance.

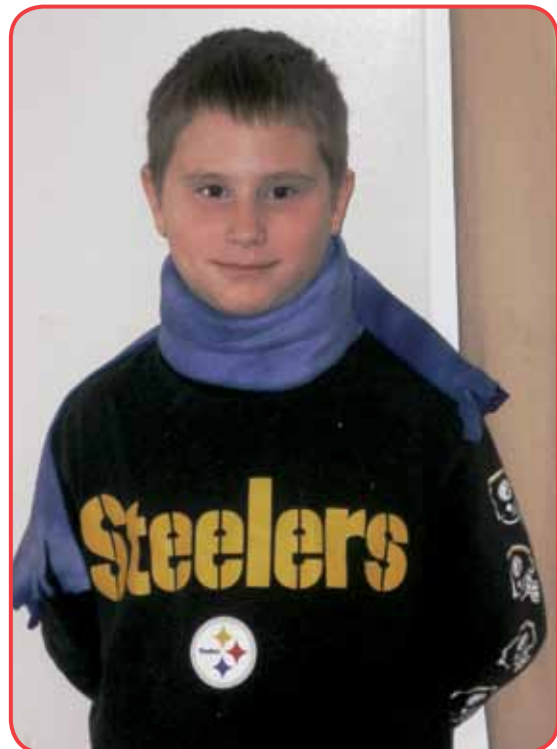
A big thank you to all those involved and all the unsung heroes behind the scenes that made the party possible.





Donation of Handmade Scarves

Thank you to sweet nine year-old Lydia Martz for handcrafting scarves for all the children at Salem. Everyone was touched by your selfless act this holiday season. You truly showed us the meaning of Christmas!





RESIDENTIAL STAFF RETREAT

Cornerstone Baptist Church was kind enough to assist Salem in hosting the most recent Residential Staff Retreat at their Cumberland Maryland location. Along with a day of training, fun and games – an amazing covered dish dinner was supplied by the Salem Staff. Thanks to the staff who worked so hard to make the retreat such a success.

During the event, votes were taken on the Employees of the Quarter with winners announced by Todd Mechem, Executive Director. Those staff announced as outstanding employees best representing the needs of the Salem children were: Tressia Ferree-Night Staff, Tiffany Sebold-Residential Specialist, Angela Dennis-Teaching Parent, and Amy Fabbri-Teacher’s Aide. Congratulations to all the past, present and future Employees of the Quarter! You make Salem the amazing caring place it is!!

The staff are all looking forward to the next retreat and spending the day learning and laughing.



SALEM WISH LIST

We are looking for donations for the following items: We are in need of a sponsorship of youth Bibles! Would there be an organization, youth group or individuals that could assist us in this project? As our Salem Youth Group expands we are looking to educate the children with the latest, easier to interpret Bibles.

- Dressers for the children’s bedrooms • CPR Defibrillator • Funding For Mission’s Trip For Youth Group
- Small Passenger Car That Passes Maryland Inspection

Any questions may be directed To Donna Brenneman-Development Director
donna@mdsalem.org – 301.689.8176 Ext. 208 | **THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!**

Please mail to : Salem Children’s Trust – 605 Salem Drive – Frostburg, MD 21532

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Item Sponsored: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

IN HONOR or IN MEMORY (Please Circe One) NAME: _____

Address to Mail “Recognition Card”: _____

POTTER'S PLACE HOST'S SALEM AT CITY PLACE

Potter's Place Church of Frostburg, Maryland recently invited the Salem residents and staff to participate in a holiday themed luncheon held at City Place in Frostburg. Along with the wonderful feast, the children and staff were able to spend the time in fellowship with the Potter's Place congregation. We thank Potter's Place for always thinking of Salem! Blessings to all!



THE FROSTBURG CHAPTER OF SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

The Frostburg Chapter of the Soroptimist International recently extended an invitation to Salem to attend a Holiday meeting held at City Place. It was wonderful to spend time dining, crafting and interacting with the members. Salem Development Director Donna Brenneman gave a brief overview of the Salem philosophies and Salem residents Taylor & Torika, spent several minutes discussing their experiences and how they felt that Salem had impacted their lives. In addition the members presented Salem a wonderful donation to end the evening. Thank you Frostburg Soroptimist International for allowing us to be a part of your mission!



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www.mdsalem.org

Member
United Way of Garrett County
United Way of Allegany County
CHA • MANSEF • MARFY • MD Nonprofit



THANK YOU NANCY BEALL

For the generous and heartfelt contributions made to Salem Children's Trust. Your compassion and love for Salem and support of what we are achieving at the school and within the homes goes beyond words.



Braxton, Shelly, Dudley,
Amanda, Koda and
Introducing Salem's Therapy
Dog - Ella

