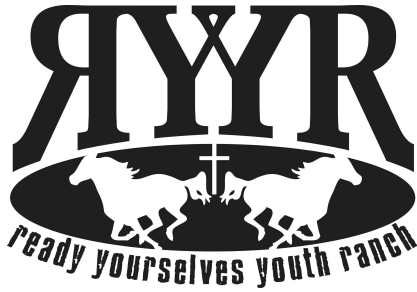


February 2023



Our Vision...For every child to experience redemption.

*Our Mission...**LOVE** the child, **SAVE** the horse, enable children and their families to realize the **HOPE** they can have in Jesus Christ*

And now these three remain:
faith, hope, and love. But the
greatest of these is love.
- 1 Corinthians 13:13



Remembering the source of Love:

“God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” 1 John 4:9-10

What I Learned From You

The kids that come to the ranch feel a bond here. They go away but always come back. I think it’s to “re-feel” the things they felt when they were here. One such young man recently stopped by to visit and catch up. He shared his struggles and then voiced his concern upon hearing my struggle with insomnia and the depression that came with it. Believe me when I tell you, I am on the mend, Praise be to God! He sent me this message recently and I had to share:

*“Since the day I first met you, all you have seen was the good in me, never the bad and you do that for everyone. You have looked out for me for many years, I was 16 when I started coming out to the farm. I am now 22. I have been through alot since then but the only time things got bad is when I would stop coming to see you. I've appreciated everything and still appreciate everything you have done and still do for me. You have helped many in your life and it hurts me to hear you're going through alot now and just know I will always be here for you. **I have learned alot about life because of you. I've learned happiness when I was around you. I've learned how to smile. I learned how to love. I learned what it meant to have a family and better yet a mother and now I just want you to know my whole life. I've struggled with mental health and I think, I hope, I can help you how you have helped me. If you ever need anything you just ask even if it's someone to talk to, trust me I know how much depression can hurt and how much it can make you feel like you're losing yourself and your loved ones. I love you and I hope you get better. When I get a job we are going to get breakfast or lunch or dinner once a week so we can talk and catch up, my treat. You and your family are my family and I've looked at you all like that since I've meant you. I love you and I'm here anytime you need me....you've saved my life in many ways and I just thought you deserved to hear that.**”*

For all of you who support our ranch with donations, with your time and talents, this is why we do what we do. Changing one life at a time. The impact is real, it is deep and it is lasting. We couldn’t do it without you. Do you see how important your support is? THANK YOU!



The Miracle Horse (Oakley's Story)

Oakley is a bigger horse. The average horse weighs about 1,000 lbs and is 14 to 15 hands high, that's 56-60 inches tall at the withers (top of the back for you non-horse people LOL) When you look at Oakley, you might think his legs are swollen, but they're not, he's just "thick".....all over. At 1,375 lbs 15.1 hands high, we guess that he is possibly some kind of warmblood cross. He's about 16 years old and he's black with a big white blaze down the front of his face and nose.

When Oakley came to our barn as a boarder owned horse two years ago, he seemed like such a mellow fella. His owner, Emily, was kind enough to agree to let us use him in the ranch program. His disposition made him great for beginners, you know, more "woah" than "go." From the first day Emily owned him, Oakley had a runny nose. She had two veterinarians look at him. They gave some meds to administer and said not to worry about it. Many months later, after he moved to the ranch, we noticed that his nose was always runny. At Emily's approval, we had another veterinarian take a look at him. After a round of antibiotics and antihistamines, he seemed good for a short time. Then the snotty nose came back.

Savanah Bonzo, my youngest daughter, who manages the barn and our herd, suggested to Emily that we take him to an equine hospital for further testing. She had an indescribable gut feeling that something just wasn't right with Oakley. He was just a little "off." She noticed that he didn't engage with the herd. Older horses can be stand-offish but Oakley was only 14. He would stand by himself in the field, away from the other horses, almost like he's depressed.

After taking x-rays of his head, Dr. Sasha Hill at Cleveland Equine Clinic quickly had a gut feeling, and it wasn't good. She saw a large volume of "puss balls" in his head. She took a test sample but said it would take 5 days to confirm. In the meantime, Oakley had to be quarantined because if her hunch was right, it was EXTREMELY contagious. It was winter and we didn't have a quarantine area away from the barn. So, after a long exhausting day hauling him and another horse to the equine hospital, Savanah took giant plastic sheets and stapled them floor to ceiling in his 12 x 13 stall. She worked late into the cold night to disinfect everywhere she could and started to make a game plan.

In the horse world, if you say the word “Strangles” it freaks people out. The fear that strangles instills is justified. This infection in early stages is a bacterial infection, Streptococcus Equine, that can be cured with strong antibiotics. However, because many of the signs are missed it can go unchecked and it becomes a terminal illness. For the ones that do manage to survive the latter, they’re never the same. The quality of life is usually just existing every day with multiple other health issues that develop. We had 20+ horses on the ranch. You can imagine the panic, fear and stress that just filled the air at the barn. I know many nights Savannah was exhausted just managing his daily care, infection prevention, configuring protocols and gathering a small team of volunteers dedicated solely to Oakley’s care. That and managing the fallout once the word got out. Even though Oakley had been checked by two different vets, what would people think? How would this affect the ranch’s reputation? But as always, God took care of it all.

Our boarders were informed and they knew the lengths that we went to prevent spread of infection. They were very understanding. A few days later, the diagnosis was confirmed but protocols were already in place. Savannah decided that she had to keep the care team to a minimum of people to avoid spreading infection. So it was just her and Rebecca, our Program Manager. One took care of him at morning feed, the other, evening feed. At each feeding either of them would enter Oakley’s stall to water, feed and clean his stall. The same wheelbarrow, manure fork, buckets, etc. were used only for Oakley. They were also disinfected each feeding along with the inside and outside of his stall. Anything that was touched was disinfected. That person had to leave the barn directly without coming into contact with anything or anyone. Go home and remove their clothing and wash all exposed areas. This also meant that Oakley was stuck in his stall 24/7 until this was over. Poor guy, he couldn’t even look out of his stall.

Then there was the medical aspect. Savannah had to find the nearest hospital that could treat Oakley and get a rundown of procedure, cost and long-term prognosis. She made calls to several hospitals and Ohio State University had the best team, equipment and experience to treat Oakley. OSU is about 3.5 hours away, more likely 4-4.5 because you’re hauling a load and animals don’t take kindly to radical speed and driving. There was an urgency so when we got word that Oakley could get into OSU, Savannah had to hit the road. Oakley would have to stay at the hospital for several days. It was 1 in the afternoon, and it would be dark when it was time to come home. Driving in the dark, and being exhausted wasn’t a good combo, so we had to find her a co-pilot. Mind you, Savannah loves spending time with her dad but this wasn’t going to be a fun daddy/daughter day trip. With God’s traveling mercies, everything went well and both arrived home at 11pm. They were beat, but safe and sound.

In late stage infections, abscesses form a dense fibrous capsule, think of a solid ball covered in snot. They had to remove each little “ball.” The procedure took 8 days to complete. Then Oakley was required to be tested once a week for 3 weeks. Fortunately, this testing could be done at a closer facility, Cleveland Equine Clinic (only 1.5 hours away). For him to be considered clear of strangles, Oakley had to test negative all 3 times. After the three tests, Praise God, Oakley got the all clear.

I know God’s hand of protection was upon Oakley and the ranch. Think about it, Oakley had been at our barn for over six months, came into contact with many people and horses that could have spread the infection. Even more amazing is that this horse had strangles even before that! Oakley should have been dead. Even more so, strangles is extremely infectious and yet, not one single horse contracted it. How’s THAT for a miracle?

Oakley was quarantined for about two months. In addition, he had sustained suspensory ligament injuries in his back leg which required his legs to be wrapped and unwrapped daily, 12 hours on, 12 hours off. This just added to his long list of special care. I thank God for all our volunteers. Savannah and Rebecca got him through the worst of it with Rose and Gracie picking up the tail end of his care.

In the end, what we thought was a laid back, quiet horse was actually a seriously sick horse. Once Oakley recovered we got to see the “Spicy” side of him. Remember when Savanah had that gut feeling that Oakley was “off”? We discovered that one of the top 5 symptoms of strangles is depression. That was why he didn’t engage with the other horses. After Oakley felt better, he had a lot more “get up and go” which required some patient re-training.

This incredibly stoic horse has been through so much, he is a fighter. Oakley is one tough horse. God had a plan for him, he saved him for a purpose. I’ll share more in my next newsletter.

Luna



Some of you may remember Luna. She was a boarder horse at our ranch for several years. Luna left the ranch a few years ago but has now returned as a donation from her owner, Sara Porto. Luna is a 15.2 HH, bay and will be 20 years old this May. She’s a thoroughbred born with the name Dirwin’s Storm, who Sara adopted from another horse rescue.

Luna’s most memorable physical characteristic is probably her one eye. A bacterial infection caused the removal of her eye. She has a dry socket. This does not take away from her very sweet disposition and that she is a rideable horse, she just needs a few adjustments from those who handle and work with her. Luna’s in good health and our hope is to get Luna tuned up and keep her as a ranch horse or find her a suitable home.

Above left photo is of Luna reunited with Juliet. After Athena retired and moved away, there were many days that Juliet did not want to go outside with the herd. She was very sad, but now she and Luna are becoming best buddies. Above middle photo of Savanah, Beetle & Rose bathing her upon arrival. Please pray for wisdom with regard to Luna’s future. Thank you!

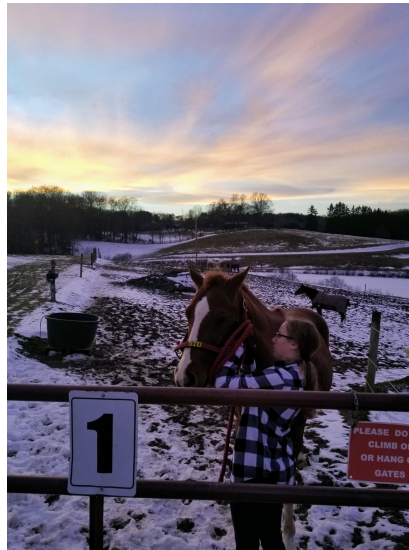
Even while we serve we are also served by others!

Calling on Prayer Warriors!

We have recently installed a Prayer Box at the ranch for people to ask for prayer for any requests they may have, anonymously if they choose or with names. If you are a faithful pray-er and are willing to add these to your personal or a bible study/prayer group list to bring before God, please let us know via office@ryyr.org! We will email monthly updates for people committed to receiving and praying for the ranch, volunteers, and children/families.

Winter Horse Care Sessions:

When the weather turns cold and wet, our horses need extra care! Faithful folks from our summer programs sign up weekly to brave the cold and mud to keep the herd healthy and continue the horse-human connections they started during summer. With these extra hands we're able to ensure every horse gets a regular checkup and spa treatment. It's been a joy to see these youth grow in their relationships, knowledge, and skills, while also getting to chat with parents who come along and sometimes join in! Pausing to marvel at the wonderful sunsets God paints is an added bonus.



UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS

OUR FIRST ANNUAL SPORTSMAN'S BASH

ONLY 7 Raffle Tickets left!! General admission which includes access to auction baskets, 50/50, and more are still available for \$25/ticket. Must be 18 to attend.

See more info and get your tickets here: <https://www.ryyr.org/sportmans-bash-tickets>

For additional information: Email: micheline.barkley@ryyr.org or Call/Text: 724-713-1653



Perfect Christmas gift!

RYYR benefit

SPORTSMAN'S Bash

MARCH 4, 2023

NOON - 4:30 PM • BILL'S VALHALLA
7420 Big Beaver Blvd., Beaver Falls, PA

\$50 DONATION

GUNS SUPPLIED BY
GORILLA GUNS LLC

ONLY 333 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD!

11th Annual Golf Outing

June 17, 2023

At Fox Run Golf Course

3rd Annual Purse Bingo

July 15, 2023

Tickets will be available mid May, SAVE THE DATE!

THANK YOU!!

Many thanks to those who donated to our list of requests last month! All I can say is WOW!

THANK YOU for the hand warmers!
They are much needed on days like these!



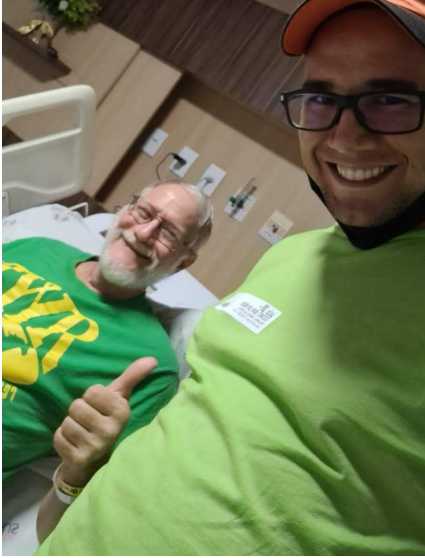
Mel (& her cat buddies) wanted to say thanks for the food 😊



New WERM Flooring in our Trailer

Here is a photo of Liberty being transported on the new WERM flooring in our trailer. Liberty had a sarcoid growth on her ear that has been removed and is being treated. Would you please pray for complete healing for this sweet, sweet horse?

CAN'T KEEP A DEERE DOWN



If anyone knows Don Pepper, they know the man doesn't stop! You also know he is an AVID (putting it mildly) John Deere fan. He's even sporting a green and yellow ranch shirt at the hospital! For those of you who don't know, Don and Zoe Pepper are missionaries that volunteer at our ranch during the warm months. The other months are spent serving in Brazil. Don has just had a hip replacement and came through with flying colors. Praise the Lord!

FEELING GENEROUS?

Check out our Amazon wish list: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

If you live locally, some items on our Amazon wish list are cheaper when bought locally and brought to us (i.e. bleach, buckets w/ screw on lids, etc.)

OR donate through Paypal @ryyr2010

Prayer & Praise Requests:

- For RYYR leadership as we bring in new partners and people to fill much-needed support roles - for the process of creating structure that enables unity of mission and vision
- For children who attended the mentor programs and day camps this summer to continue to grow in knowledge of God's love and salvation
- For wisdom and grace to build up our volunteer community as God intends, and thanksgiving for those who have stepped up to make volunteer celebrations, Bible studies, and fundraisers possible!
- Thanksgiving and praise for God's provision through cold and muddy winter months! Even when we're feeling short-handed, there's always enough energy to get the job done and encouragement from faithful volunteers showing up in all weather!
- Praise for healing so far, and prayer for the continued healing and wisdom needs mentioned above for Oakley, Luna, Liberty, and Don Pepper

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND PRAYERS!

Come and visit our website at www.RYYR.org, share our video <https://vimeo.com/392571914/5c6f4c7d20> and don't forget to follow our Facebook page for all our event updates!