



# Stable Stories

NEWS FROM STABLE DAYS YOUTH RANCH

## SPECIAL POINTS OF THANKS!

To Bernice, Dr. Alex, Buckingham Equine, and the Kandiyohi Country Humane Society for their part the rescue of Merida, Blaze and OG  
THANK YOU!

To Tony Anderson for the install of our barn windows.  
THANK YOU!

To Paul Cochenour for his generous gift of Parelli equipment, membership dues, and educational DVDs  
THANK YOU!

And to all of you who have donated items of need, time and finances.  
THANK YOU!

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It was the end of the day, my body tired and sore from the laborious chores, hauling water, wood and hay, shoveling snow and manure, and trudging through the thick cumbersome snow drifts.

As I warmed myself by the fire I thought over the events of the day.

Ben was in Texas, Andi was with Hannah, and I was here, 'holding down the ranch'.

The wind chill was -45. The Temperature was ugly, and the wind were gusting up to 45mph. The wind blew with such force, it nearly carried me out to the north pasture.

I don't mean to dwell on this weather thing, but winter life in the Midwest sometimes stinks!

The breaker for the pasture's electric lines had failed, causing the heater for the water tanks to turn off, which caused both tanks to form a thick layer of ice. Using a shovel, I swung at the ice until it broke into chunks and then gloveless, pulled the ice out of the



tank, giving the horses access to the water underneath. I threw hay, served oats and filled up one manure cart

## FIRESIDE

with well, manure. One pasture down and one to go.

Nearly flying with the wind at my back, I reached the north pasture in record time, I flipped up the gate latch and



pushed, but it didn't open. I wiggled it, kicked it, and stepped on it, but still nothing. It would not budge.

I blame the weather for my brilliant, brain frozen idea to ram the gate with my shoulder. Unfortunately the only thing that moved, was me.

"I give up" I mumbled to my self as I climbed through the fence. With more emotion than earlier I swung my shovel and smashed into the layer of ice that covered the water tank. Each swing seemed to fuel my anger.

With the second tank cleared, and the other jobs finished, I headed for the barn. The wind now against me, I battled with its force, tucking my head into my coat and leaning deep into it's strength, I pushed myself forward, every step was a chore.

My heart was heavy, my hands were burning, my face was numb, the few strands of hair that escaped my hat were frozen to my eyelashes. I was certain my feet were frost bitten and my shoulder was throbbing. I fought back my tears, but gave into my growing sour mood. "Stupid gate!" I yelled, "stupid, stupid ugh!"

My outburst was so childish it made me chuckle, "I'm so 'stupid'", I laughed at myself.

I prayed for endurance, and by the time I reached the barn, I knew I also needed to pray for forgiveness. Anger and self pity are ugly and neither are helpful.

In the shelter of the barn, protected from the wind, my heart continued to soften and although I was still freezing, I enjoyed my time with Frieda, Merida and Hero. I have come to love the

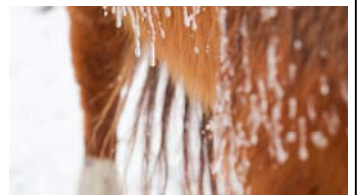
smells, the ambience, and even the chaos of ranch life (just not the winter weather).

I'm inspired by the life stories of our horses and am humbled to have the privilege of caring and loving these beautiful animals.

The sun was setting and my chores where done. Back at the house I stoked the fire and grabbed a cup of tea.

This week the house temperature has been in the upper 40s in the mornings and if I'm able to keep the fire hot enough for the blower to stay on we can climb up to the upper 50s. This evening the house was at a disappointing 52.

My emotionally charged day had all the drama of a poorly written soap opera. I had been angry,



overwhelmed hurt and discouraged. I had given in to a bitter feeling of weakness and had just been down right freezing cold.

How exhausting!

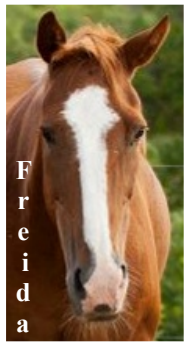
I breathed in deep, and in time with my exhale, I felt the spirit of God placing his strength in my heart.

Letting go of today, and the assumption that I deserve all things to go well, as I serve the Lord, a flood of thankfulness poured over me, and with perfect peace, I wept.

Through tears, I watched the flames dance across the wood, and I gave praise to the Lord, whose grace is sufficient for me.

*"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 2 Cor. 12:9*

## A BRAVE NEW MARE BY FREIDA MAY



Freida

Dear Friends, as promised in the last newsletter I have spent time looking into the rumors regarding the construction of shelters and stalls

I was in the northern pasture, with my little buddy Hero and my girls, Sissy, Precious, and Ruby, when I witnessed first hand the SDYR people tried to bring in the first of two new shelters. We all had a good laugh as we watched their truck get stuck and then start to slide down our hill. Eventually, the people had to hand carry the shelter and place it in the lower pasture for us.



At first, we were very skeptical about this new structure, but the temperatures dropped, the winds picked up and before long we all found it quite comforting.

The shelter for the southern pasture was placed without incident, however Gem, Taz, Sampson and Solomon could not be coaxed in for several weeks.

The winter weather was becoming pretty hard for both me and my little buddy Hero. The others in the herd didn't seem to notice how cold and how strong the winds were, but Hero and I stood in our new shelter, shivering. It wasn't long before both of us were moved to the Eastern paddock and barn. After the shock of being relocated wore off, I took some time to investigate my new surroundings and I'm able to confirm that yes we do have stalls in the barn, and yes they are really nice!

I was one of only three horses that were invited to spend my nights inside the newly built stalls; others in the herd

may say that the barn is only for the weak and the old, but I'm pretty sure they're just jealous.



It was up in the barn, that I met her, a new horse, renamed Merida for her bravery and will to survive.

Even in her current emaciated state, Merida is stunning. A beautiful sorrel with a perfect star. Her face had a look of royalty and strength and her enormous dark eyes were clear and kind. She's tall and has long legs that once were the strong, fast legs of a race horse.

As barn mates, Merida and I quickly became like sisters and Hero filled the role of the sometimes annoying little brother.



One day, when the high was only -12 and the winds were strong from the northeast, the three of us spent the day inside the barn, it was on that day that Merida shared with us her story. A story that longs to be retold but never relived.

Merida was abused!

She was forced to stand, deep in her own feces, with tie-out ropes that tangled tight around her legs and wrapped around her neck, painfully cutting into her flesh. There was no longer a sign of grass and although water was occasionally brought out it was often just out of reach. Merida

was not alone in her suffering. She was tied with a another mare, and sadly had watch her baby suffer as she was unable to reach out and care for him.

At first her story was hard for me to believe, mostly because I have been loved all my life, but her story is true and she has the bony body and rope sized scars to confirm it.

Her small herd of three had been talked about within the vet and humane society communities in West Central Minnesota, however, when folks would drive by the farmstead, they couldn't see the horses, and they lacked enough 'cause' to bring in the police and file an official complaint.

What started out as a race horse breeding business ended 7 months later in a near death experience for the small herd. Shortly after the mares were bought, the owner was arrested and deported. His girlfriend now responsible for the care of the horses moved the two mares to a boarding facility south of town. But the fees weren't paid, so the horses were delivered to her home and tied up in the backyard. Sometime in July Merida gave birth to a son. The little colt was left untied so as to have access to his mom. It only took a few weeks before he started to wander away from the mares tempted by the nearby pasture grass. After he had been found in rode by a neighbor he too was tied in the yard.

It was October when a call was made to a nearby horse owner regarding three horses who were for sale because a 'friend' needed to get rid of them.

A visit was set up to see the horses and it was upon that visit, the horrific, criminal conditions in which these horses were kept was discovered and thanks to God, the abuse was exposed.

Calls were placed and folks stepped in and stepped up, taking a stand against the ungodly conditions these horses had suffered in. Bernice one of the rescuers resourced Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch's similar ministries pages and placed emails out to horse rescue programs in Minnesota and eastern South Dakota asking if anyone had a place for these horses in need.

## IN THE BEGINNING

It was time for SDYR's very first horsemanship session. The volunteer staff arrived early, preparing the horses and planning session details and praying. We prayed we'd be a blessing to the kids we'd meet and for soft open hearts to greet them with.

Tiffani bounced into the barn several steps ahead of her slightly more timid friends. Her smile was wider than her little body was tall. Tiffani was the type of child that can do more in one hour than most of us can do in a day.

With rapid fire speed she introduced herself, shot out question after question, and before any of us could catch up with her, she had picked a job, picked a horse, picked her mentor, and looked around at all of us wondering what in the world was taking everybody so long.

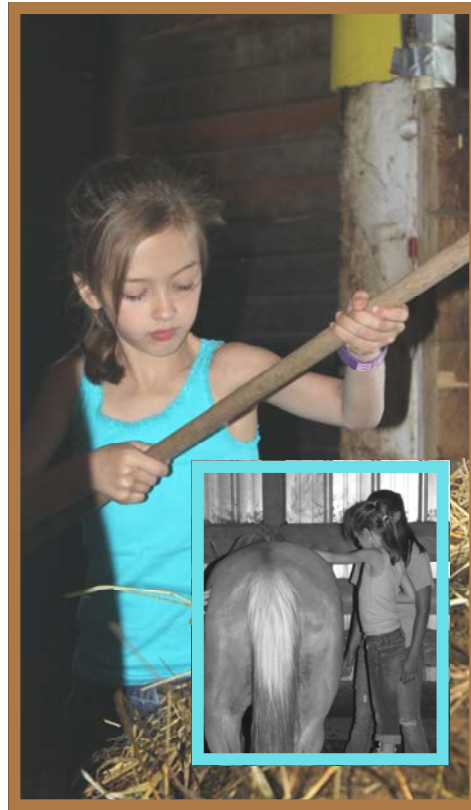
Tiffani and her mentor Jocelyn, were the first to grab a wheelbarrow and manure forks. With no concern for the filth or the smell they set to raking, with a pace and determination that put the rest of us to shame. Looking up, she paused for just a second, "Caryl" she said, "I've never raked up poop before, but I'm *really* good at it!"

"Yes you are Tiffani" I smiled.

"I've never even been to the country before, It was a long drive, but I like it!" Without a breath she glanced over at Jocelyn and in her best country drawl said, "My barrow is full, lets go!"

With all the strength of a super hero, she pushed her 'barrow' out of the barn and over to the dumping spot. Jocelyn's and Tiffani worked together to tip the front,

down and throw the handle up. They shook their barrow until all the poop was out, and they shook themselves until they were laughing so hard they could hardly breath. Jocelyn taught Tiffani how to be safe around her new friend Precious. How to groom her, saddle her and ride her. Tiffani loved to ride, but she love, loved to get out the paints and pamper Precious with the cleaning and painting of her hoofs.



Each week Tiffani came to the ranch with the same energy and the same wide smile. Always the first in the barn and the first to greet her horse. She tackled every task with an infectious passion, and whether she was working playing, riding, or painting she was usually giggling.

Every child that we meet has a special 'gift' that they bring to the ranch. Tiffani's gift was to draw the silly out in us. Helping us shed our grown-up dispositions, seize the day and play like a child.

On the last day of our sessions, our happy busy Tiffani was quiet, and serious. She did her chores, but not with the same care-



free energy as usually. She knew it would be a long time before she would see her friend again and she was pretty sure no one cared for Precious like she did. "Who's going to take care of Precious when I'm gone?" Tiffani asked, "You have to promise me that you'll take good care of her until next summer." Not wanting to wait for an answer, she walked her beloved friend over to their grooming spot. The barn fell silent as Tiffani began to sing a sweet goodbye song.

Tiffani loved Precious, and Precious loved Tiffani right back. I watched, honored to be a witness, while Precious stood with her head lowered, nuzzling at Tiffani's shoulder giving her kiss after kiss. Tiffani tearfully sang the song she had written especially for their goodbye.

My heart smiled as I watched Precious, a once abandoned horse now loved so deeply, by a child whose was all too familiar with those same pains. They stood nose to nose, caring for each other from the inside out, two hearts forever touched by the other.

The ranch was place where Tiffani could come and leave all the 'stuff' behind. She could lose herself in the chores, the games and in her new friendships. She could soak her mentor in the water wars, and laugh until she cried. She could rake up poop, and she could love a horse.

The next spring, registrations began and we were sad to hear that Tiffani would not be joining us. But, we all celebrated at the news that she had been adopted! She is doing well and living in the country.

## OPS REPORT: WINTER 2013



We are sad to say that one of our temporary equipment shelters did not survive *The Blizzard of February 18th*. We'll hopefully have a stronger structure in place for next winter. Thanks Erica Haag for helping with the clean up.



We have two of the old furnaces running and I'm very pleased to say the main building is now a sweet 67degrees!

**Another Note of Thanks!**

The Ranch thrives on the support of amazing volunteers who are a critical part of making all this work. To those who have donated funds and items, given their time, and offered their guidance to the Ranch, we thank you. To those who have yet to jump in...

WE INVITE  
YOU  
TO JOIN THE FUN!



We've had a several wonderful warmish winter days in March and the horses are gradually working into their new grooming, exercise and training schedules. With out exception all the horses are impressing us with their eagerness to get back into the swing of things.

## WORKING &amp; WISHING

Yes! Rain or shine, sleet, snow, hail, or freezing temperatures, the work goes on. Morning chores start at 11am and evening chores at 4pm M-TH. And Saturdays from 10-12 (chores and projects) and 1-4 (grooming and exercising) ...you're welcome to come for the day or for an hour or two.

Please RSVP at 701-330-9952 a minimum of one week in advance (2weeks for groups over 5) We'll have bottles of water, coffee, hot soup at noon, and a place to warm up! You may want to bring snacks or a sandwich.

## OUR WISH LIST:

- \*Horse Sponsors
- \*Hay
- \*Oats
- \*Sweet Feed
- \*Equine Senior
- \*Large wheelbarrows
- \*10 ft landscape timbers
- \*Treated 12ft 2x6s
- \*12ft & 8ft 2x6s
- \*Shoe shoes & cross country skis -all sizes
- \*Fishing gear
- \*Archery equipment

*We appreciate you considering our wish list.  
Feel free to ask us for more specifics  
(701-330-9952).*

## 2013 HORSEMANSHIP SESSIONS

Every child that we serve, will be paired with one leader who will chose an activity or horse that they feel will best encourage that child towards personal growth.

Sessions may include horsemanship, crafts, games, chores or other activities. Each session is unique and flexible but they all share the same idea of children and horses learning to love and trust each other.

SDYR is committed to providing a safe, and positive experience for children, horses and families in a peaceful yet active ranch setting.

Our session program is open to all children 5-17, serving both the healthy and those with special needs alike.

By God's grace and the generosity of the many who support this ranch, we are privileged to offer this and other SDYR programs completely free of charge!.



Call us @ 701-330-9952!

# REGISTRATION BEGINS APRIL 1ST

## A BRAVE NEW MARE CONT...

I'm proud to say that my SDYR was one of two ranches that responded, saying they would help.

This rescue was in full swing, but not swift enough for Merida's little colt OG (Oscar George, named for both his grumpy disposition and his curious nature. Fighting with the ropes that had wrapped tight around his body, his goal of freedom resulted in a nearly severed leg.

With severe damage to his ligaments and tendons, the rescue teams initial prognosis was not good. No one thought he would survive.

All three horses were taken to Buckingham Equine Center and placed in the care of Dr. Alex. The exams revealed all were lacking in weight and general health, both mares where in need of de-worming, both had hoof damage, and Merida's friend was confirmed pregnant.

All three had leg injuries from the tie out ropes. OG would need several surgeries and a "heel" in hopes that his hoof would re-attach and become normal again.

OG has been adopted by Bernice and although he's had his share of setbacks, everyone is hopeful for his recovery.

Blaze, Merida's sweet friend, has been adopted by a legitimate race horse breeder and is doing well.

Merida stayed with Dr. Alex for nearly a month and then spent a week with Bernice, as plans were made to bring her home.

November 17, Merida was driven to Alexandria MN, transferred to a SDYR trailer and 3 hours later was turning into the driveway of Stable Days Youth Ranch.



She made it home in time to enjoy a magnificent sunset! With her new family by her side she was safe, happy and full of hope.

*"The Lord watches over those who rely on his unfailing love. He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine. We put our hope in the Lord, He is our help and our shield and in Him our hearts rejoice." Psalm 33:18-21*

Next time, in Stable Stories... Spring training and coat shedding.

*From Everyone Equine here at SDYR, I'm Freida May. Good Day.*

## FUEL FOR THE FIRE

A prayer, a hug, a call, a chore, a meal, our time or our money... each of us has something we can give to help others. When we place these gifts into the hands of the Lord, miracles will happen, and the fire will keep on burning.

***Yes! I would like to shoulder with Stable Days Youth Ranch to support children, horses and families.***

**I send me more information about:**

- Visiting the Ranch
- Horsemanship Sessions
- Volunteering

**Please use my donation for:**

- Where it is needed most
- To Mentor the Child
- To Care for the Equine
- I'm interested in the 'Horse Sponsorship' program

**Payment Method:**

A check payable to Stable Days Youth Ranch or SDYR for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send donations to:**

***Stable Days Youth Ranch  
17721 429th Avenue SE  
East Grand Forks, MN 56721***

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make my donation a gift**

- In memory of:
- In honor of:
- Please send a gift acknowledgement to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## HORSE SPONSORSHIP



*Merida, November 18th, and again on December 18th.*

For the horses who call this place home, we offer a safe haven, a gentle hand, and a life purpose. Our training and riding methods are based on natural horsemanship, which utilize quietness and patience to communicate leadership and love with horses in their own language, focusing on developing a trust relationship with these magnificent animals.

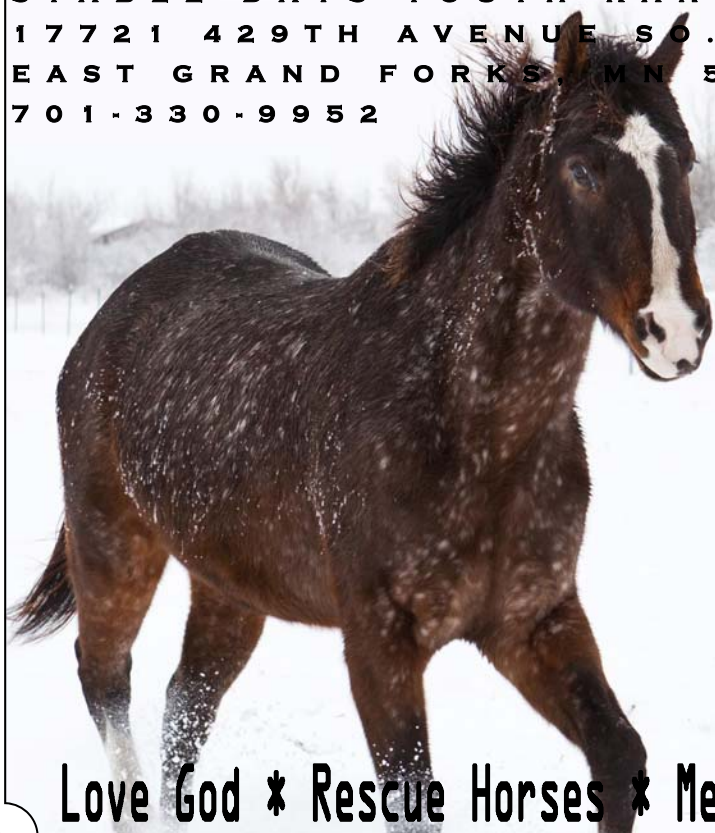
Our horses, some that were just in need of a new home, others, coming from backgrounds of abuse and neglect, are at the very core of what we do here at SDYR. These horses, all with their own unique stories of hardships and hope, are now loved

and cared for by children who themselves our vastly unique, but similarly looking for love, hope and a sense of belonging. Sponsoring a horse enables us to continue to offer this special program free to the children and families that visit SDYR.

*Please consider sponsoring one of these amazing horses.*

STABLEDAYS.ORG

STABLE DAYS YOUTH RANCH  
17721 429TH AVENUE SO. WEST  
EAST GRAND FORKS MN 56721  
701-330-9952



Love God \* Rescue Horses \* Mentor Youth \* Support Families

IN HONOR OF

Charlie, Gideon and Titus

REST IN PEACE ~ FALL OF 2012

*...And when the journey finally ends, we'll claim a great reward and find an everlasting peace together, with the Lord.*

*Dearest friends we are thankful for your faithfulness and service to us, you will be thought of often.*

