



Photography by Rebecca Bauer

WHITE FAWN FARM

Restoration and Joy Through Equine Assisted Therapeutic Programs

BY REBECCA BAUER

When guests travel down the long paved driveway and reach the house and barn, painted a matching sky blue with white trim, something changes in the air. White Fawn Farm sits on twenty tranquil acres that have become a place for restoration and healing through the undeniable magic of horses. The name was inspired by the owner's sightings of a rare white fawn and her spiritual message of awareness, kindness, and renewal.

For owners and founders of White Fawn Farm Equine Therapeutic Center, Cheryl and Randy Farrar, the vision began 16 years ago in California. Cheryl a life-long horse lover, discovered the amazing benefits of therapeutic riding for children with disabilities and began a program on their small ranch. "These young people's lives were changed positively forever. I remain in contact with the families we served, these now young adults are prospeing

in part due to their interaction with our horses," said Cheryl.

"In 2011, Randy and I followed our dream to live in a community that would embrace a therapeutic riding and driving program, and where we could afford to purchase more land than was possible in California." That dream eventually led them to Bear Creek Road in Thompson's Station. The support of full-time careers, her in IT management and Randy in

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the music industry, has made it possible to purchase the right property and build, one small, patient step at a time, what is now a program serving a dozen students each week – and, quickly growing.

White Fawn Farm is a certified Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH, Intl) center that enriches the lives of families dealing with disabilities and other life challenges through personalized equine-assisted therapeutic programs, which include riding, carriage driving, and Equine Assisted Learning. What sets them apart from many other centers is they are open to adults and children who have aged out of other places, typically by age of 17, and their siblings. Carriage driving is not

as widely offered by centers like this but is a beneficial and fun alternative to riding.

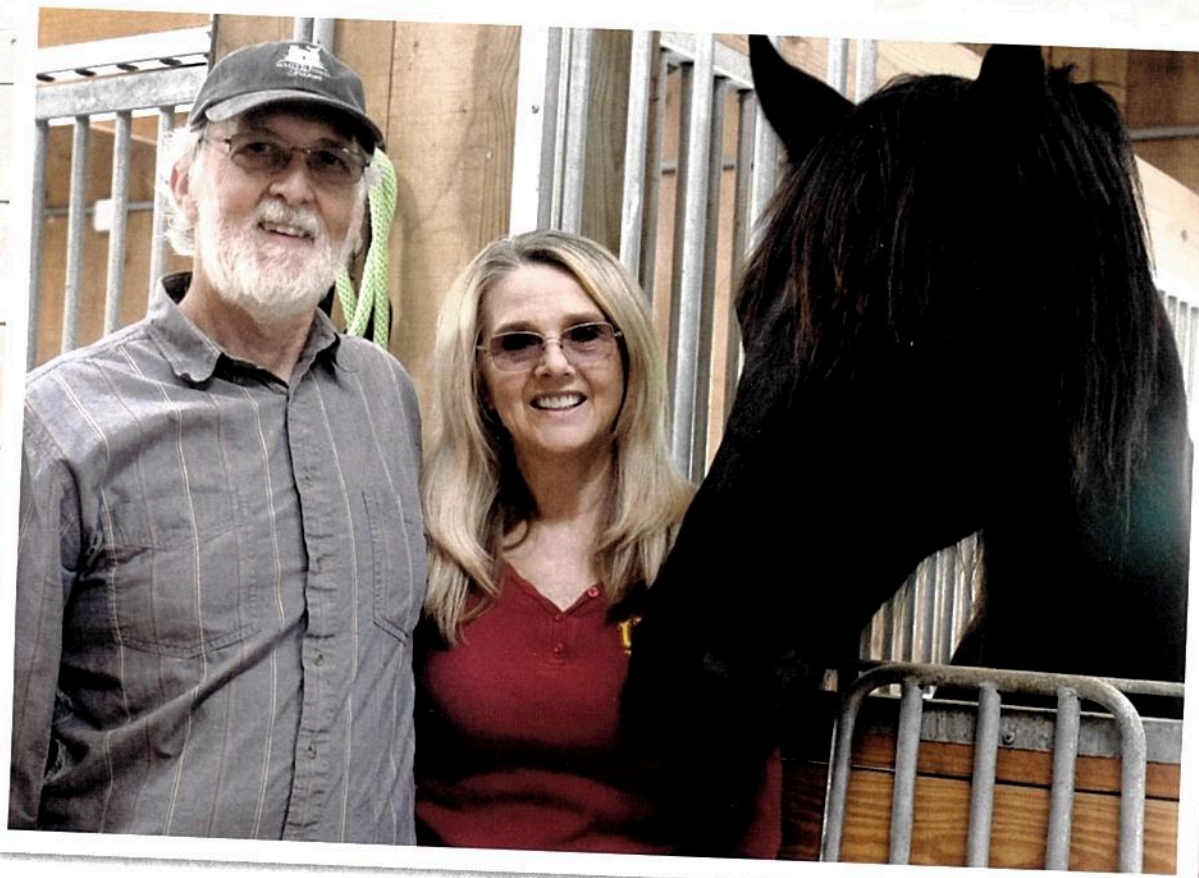
Participants may exhibit one of many conditions (Autism, Multiple Sclerosis, ADHD) leaving them faced with learning disabilities, physical weakness and limitations, social challenges, depression, and anxiety. Therapeutic riding offers a chance to improve physical stamina, gross and fine motor skills, self-esteem and self-confidence. The recreational and social aspects of these activities create an atmosphere of joy and pleasure while learning new skills during the interactions with therapeutic horses.

One student stands out for Cheryl. “They are all beautiful, but there is something special about Lani (pronounced ‘Lonnie’).”

Lani Martinez, 6-years-old, wearing her favorite pink helmet, is moving through the concrete aisle of the barn in a motorized wheelchair fit to her size, steering with her dainty fingers on a single switch. She has Arthrogryposis Multiplex Congenita, a condition affecting her joints and resulting in a lack of mobility in all her extremities.

Lani began riding this past March and has undoubtedly come a long way in a short amount of time. With little core strength, she would constantly lean over. Side walkers next to her spent much of the lesson adjusting and straightening her back. The instructor would have her count to 5, then to 7, then to 10, giving Lani a goal to improve her posture. In a recent lesson, Lanie rode MaKayla, a

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22-year-old Welsh Cob who journeyed from the west with the Farrars and has gifted countless children these valuable moments. When lifted onto the horse, Lani grabs hold of the saddle horn and is sitting up straight as they ride through the arena and around cones and smiling at every turn.

Lani's mother, Estephania, drives from their home in Mt. Juliet each week and said, "In just four weeks we have seen so much difference, not just in her posture, but in her demeanor, she's happier, more willing. In school, she started noticing kids can do things she can't do; now she can do something many other kids don't get to do. We want her to have that confidence." She adds, "It's a beautiful environment. I want her to see the

beauty of nature and this is a perfect place. She's realized she can do things like this, even if it's different, she can do it. That's priceless."

The non-profit organization is about to take a blessed leap. Recently, Jerry and Sharon Clement, owners of the neighboring Take the Reins, an equine ministry for children, have announced their retirement. Though bittersweet, they are handing the reins over to White Fawn Farm as the two centers merge together.

"We want to honor them, they are such wonderful people and have a done a fabulous job for so long, Randy and I are grateful and honored for this opportunity to ensure that Take the Reins' legacy continues at White Fawn Farm," stated Cheryl.

The herd of horses will grow as

will the number of families that will be able to experience recreation and renewal at the Farrar's farm.

"I was given a dream many years ago and prayed that God would allow me to serve these special families. I could see a future where for some time each week they could have a beautiful, restful place to come and watch their children flourish, be restored and experience joy on suitable and beautiful horses. When I'm doing this work, I know it was a gift that I needed to share. I'm continually amazed how these horses can help these special children overcome some of their life challenges through interacting with our empathetic equines."

For more information on White Fawn Farm call 615-807-0117 or visit <https://whitefawnfarm.org>.