

HoofBeat



A Note from Susie

Freedom Farm is celebrating 12 years! Thank you for joining me on this journey and this opportunity to share with you some of the happenings at Freedom Farm. I am excited as Sue, Carly and I plan the 2012 Program. I would like to invite you to visit **freedomfarmMN.org** for monthly updates and would be honored to have you come to Freedom Farm to see first hand how our program is positively impacting so many lives.

Thank you for your part in the success of Freedom Farm. We measure our success by the positive changes in a rider and the program itself; Seeing riders achieve their goals and return year after year (some 8, 9 & 10 years) with gained confidence, improved

speech, stronger & more relaxed muscles. Quality, trained horses being donated. 125 trained volunteers actively involved on a weekly basis and celebrating many years of volunteering. A growing program for women veterans returning home from war. Needing additional staff to allow for program growth. Donors from our community & corporate partners seeing accountability & continuing as a Friend of Freedom Farm, supporting us financially and with involvement in facility improvements.

Dreams for 2012 include: An insulated indoor arena. An updated or new office area. The Lake Ida School House renovation. 'The Path', an outdoor path for safe outdoor riding.

I am looking forward to

seeing what God has planned for us and am happy to have you along for the ride.

Susie Bjorklund
Founder



*Susie & Scott
celebrate 10 years
of riding*

Riders... are what it's all about

We will have 60 riders each week for our sessions in 2012. We are excited to get more riders off our waiting list.

Continue to check out the 'Rider's Stories' page on our website. A new story of what riding means to Katie has recently been added. The story about Brett and 'Doc' will be featured in STRIDES Magazine in April.



*Allie riding 'Stella'
with volunteer Janith*

More stories will be added this year, sharing with you what it means to experience the *freedom of balance, the freedom of movement and the freedom of expression, at Freedom Farm.*

January 2012

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Staff... passionate, dedicated & growing

We are excited about our successful program and the growth we are encountering. Sue is in her 8th year with Freedom Farm and along with Susie, is very excited and grateful for the addition of Carly Koxvold coming this year. Carly has been mentoring with Susie and is in the process of becoming a certified therapeutic riding instructor.



The three of us attended the PATH International Conference, Lexington, KY, in November. Susie is now certified as a PATH Instructor Mentor and a PATH Equine Specialist, working with equine facilitated learning or psychotherapy sessions.

Susie, Carly & Sue with friends from 'Riding on Angels Wings', hosts for PATH Region 6 conference in March.

'Healing with Horses'... giving back to those who have served us

Our program for women veterans has gained national attention. General Tim Coussalter has visited Freedom Farm on 2 different occasions. We are proud to have contributed to the passing of the National Defense Authorization Act signed into law this January.

In November, one of our women participated on a panel at the PATH National Conference about her experience serving, as a veteran, and how Freedom Farm has helped her. She and Susie will be speaking at NDSU and the Path Regional 6 Conference in March. We have had many therapeutic riding centers inquire about the success of our program and we are proud to share.



General Tim visits Freedom Farm and rides 'Tango' with Susie and participants.

Fundraisers... thank you!

Freedom Farm has a strong donor base and with your support, Freedom Farm continues to grow and continues to keep lesson fees minimal for our families. This is made possible with your donations to the 3 fund raising events held each year.

- **The Polo Event** is held in July at BlackBerg Ranch just outside of Watertown. We hope for blue skies and sunshine to enjoy the day with good friends. There is great food, carriage rides, a petting zoo with pony rides, face painting, a kids craft tent, a junior polo match and the main event, a professional polo match filled with lots of action, traditional divot stomp & hat contest. If you have never experienced polo ~ don't miss it this year - July 14, 2012!



- **The Riding Celebration** is the perfect time for visitors to see what therapeutic riding is all about. The event raises funds to support the equine angels who make this therapy possible. Featured is a horse show, meet the horses and a trophy ceremony. This year's riding Celebration is September 22, 2012.
- **The Annual Appeal** letter features a special Rider Story mailed to all our Friends every December.

Your support is appreciated!

Susie & Freedom Farm rider, Abby (Hat Contest Winner) at the Polo Event.

Volunteers... sharing time, talent & love

Freedom Farm volunteers are beyond AMAZING! We are blessed with 125 dedicated, giving volunteers. The success of our daily program relies on these individuals for the safety of our riders while riding and grooming, getting horses ready for each class, our annual Polo Event, Riding Celebration and help with various mailings and office work.

At the 2011 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner we recognized Sandee Gould, who has been with us for 10 years! And 12 volunteers for 5 years of service. They volunteer to help the

riders, but often get more than they feel they give.

The Dinner was a great night honoring ~ *Volunteer of the Year, Brian Frauendienst (pictured)* ~ Couple of the Year, Tom Quirck & Nancy Mangum ~ Horse Handlers, Paula LaVigne & Sarah Smith ~ Above and Beyond, Crissy Oestreich ~ Corrie Stevens once again aced the Freedom Farm trivia.



Volunteer trainings for the spring session - check the website in February & watch for the email reminder! Choose one and let us know when you will be here.

Lake Ida School House... a retreat for many

Susie has attended numerous county meetings to obtain The Lake Ida School House for Freedom Farm. The details have been worked out. **Westwood Professional Services** donated the survey required for us to move forward. **RoseMary, from McMonigal Architects, LLC**, has donated the design plans.

NOW we are ready to move forward. Money is needed to hire contractors to complete the renovation/addition or contractors able to donate their labor to complete the renovation/addition.

The Lake Ida School House at Freedom Farm will benefit many. It will be used for:

- our families for a day retreat. So many of our families are unable to "get away".



- our 'Healing With Horses' program. Currently this group meets in the office every week as there is not a warm space large enough to accommodate them.

- special groups coming for a day program. We would like to have special groups on a more frequent/scheduled basis, such as homeless children from the city. The school house would be the perfect spot for a picnic lunch and

a scenic and safe place for them to work on their horse craft no matter what the weather.

The possibilities of reaching out and helping more people is endless with the completion of this building. Please contact Susie if you have any questions or are able to help with the renovation/addition. 952-955-2505

Blessings... we count them every day

- Paddock fencing donated by Cargill
- Work Day with employees from Eaton Corporation
- Eagle Scout, Thomas Hertzog, constructed an outdoor sign & bench
- Work Day with employees from Horizon Milling
- St Paul Lutheran Church Sunday School project
- Susie had the opportunity to speak at West Central Christian Seniors, Howard Lake American Legion, and Cargill
- Westwood Professional Services and McMonigal Architects donating their services for the renovation of the Lake Ida School House
- An amazing Polo Event! Our sponsors and guests blessed Freedom Farm with their support, despite the wet & muddy conditions. This event really let the spirit of so many generous individuals shine.
- The customers from Stone Ridge Equestrian who donated tack and horse grooming tools for our riders during their Customer Appreciation Event.



Freedom Farm

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Freedom of balance
Freedom of movement
Freedom of expression

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
FREEDOMFARMMN.ORG

Horses... our angels

We have developed a good reputation with horse owners as a farm that provides individual care for each horse. We have acquired many horses that could have been sold but the owners have chosen Freedom Farm for the quality of care and knowledge that their horse will be loved and have great purpose.

This year we will work on having each horse fully funded through sponsors, allowing other funds to support program development. We are blessed to have many generous individuals who have chosen a specific horse to sponsor. Each person is listed in our arena and on 'The Horses' page of our website. To date \$24,000 of the needed \$38,500 has been raised.

Freedom Farm retired 2 horses from our program this year. **Snickers** worked as a therapy horse for 7 years. Freedom Farm volunteer,

Patti, has given Snickers a great retirement home on her farm in



Snickers

Watertown. Snickers is enjoying his rides around the pasture and lots of love from her grandchildren.

Larry also worked for us 7 years. Larry is now living at Black-Berg Ranch in Watertown, just

being a horse in his spacious pasture with lots of friends.



Larry

It is an ongoing process searching for horses to accept into our therapy programs. We are looking to add 3 new horses for 2012.