

# *Hannah's Legacy* BY KIM MEEDER

“One of our horses has just died... can you help us?” the urgent plea came from a woman who had owned two horses but had recently lost one due to intentional poisoning. She continued to explain, “Seven horses in our local area have already died... my girls and I do not wish to be without our remaining horse... but we cannot bear loosing her in this most cruel and agonizing way. Because we believe the poisonings are happening at night, the only way that we can fully protect our horse is by putting her in our garage...”

As soon as we were able, Chris and I made the forty mile trip to check out this sad situation. All we knew about the horse was that she was a small, pony-ish, five year old mottled gray mustang from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation. We were told that since the death of her best friend, the little mare was showing uncharacteristic fear, spookiness and deep sorrow. We were also made aware that the neighboring colt with which she shared a fence and

was also a close friend, had died from poisoning as well.

Upon our arrival, the extremely kind woman who had asked for our help, led us out into their nearly empty corral. During the daylight, they where turning the little horse out for some fresh air. When we first saw the gray mare, she was laying down. ‘That’s no pony...’

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# Hannah's Legacy

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I thought as we quietly approached her. A bit startled by visitors, the young horse rose to her feet... giant feet! It was immediately clear that this 'little' mustang was at least 14.3H with the bone structure and wavy mane and tail characteristic of a draft crossed breed. She turned to look at us with the large, slightly crowned head of her apparently massive ancestors. Her owner laughed a little and stated how a couple had recently come to purchase this mare... until they saw her head. In not so careful terms, the potential buyers made it known that this horse was far too 'unlovely' for them to consider purchasing.

After evaluating the mare, on the drive home Chris and I both agreed... we were completely smitten with this sweet horse and would bring her home as quickly as we could make a space for her on the ranch. In the days before we brought the mare home, because her name was the same as a horse we already owned, many new names were suggested, but none felt like a perfect 'fit.' On the ranch, we take naming horses very seriously. It is a title that they will hear often, a banner of honor under which they will live. Amongst our herd, every horse's name has special meaning to each individual, often something to be aspired toward.

It wasn't until the day that we brought the gray mare home that something remarkable happened. The ranch received a message about a young woman named Hannah. She was a very inspirational 18 year old who had a tremendous impact on everyone who knew her. Through the written voice of many others, Hannah was always known for being as beautiful on the inside as the outside, to always have a smile on her face and one of the things she loved most in life was riding horses with her family and friends.

On February 24, Hannah was in an automobile accident... and died.

Because of Hannah's great love for others through and with her horses, it was Hannah's parents wish that instead of flowers to remember their daughter, they chose instead for donations and gifts to be sent to Crystal Peaks.

In profound honor and sadness, I just sat in my office and held the picture of this beautiful, remarkable young woman that I did not have the privilege of meeting. All I could do was pray, 'Lord, I know that You have a purpose in this... even though it is hidden at this time. You have proven within my own life that out of unthinkable loss... You can raise up unthinkable purpose... unthinkable joy. Lord, let this truth rain into the hearts of her parents, brother and family...'

Not long after receiving the first initial message about Hannah, another message came from her uncle, who was also the family attorney. In great gentleness and respect, he asked if it might be possible to, some day... name a rescued horse... after Hannah.

With great enthusiasm, we relayed the message back to Hannah's family that the horse had arrived the day before and was already here... what she now needed the most was a name... the *right* name.

As we have every year since the ranch began, the entire staff met last week to pray over the facility, over the coming season and over the back of each horse. It was with united joy that we officially welcomed "Hannah" to the ranch.

In the days that followed, as I sat in my office and read even more forwarded information about Hannah's

life, I learned that she was fortunate enough to drive her very favorite car... a mustang. I couldn't help but smile to myself.

Throughout the eleven years that the ranch has been involved in horse rescue, which has included approximately 300 horses, this is our first rescued *mustang*. God knows us so well. How completely fitting that it would be a mustang who would carry the honor of Hannah's name and keep her memory and legacy alive.

Speaking of legacy, the memory of Hannah Dunn will soon be multiplied. We are proud to announce that our new mustang mare named 'Hannah' is due to have a baby in June.

Since the right name for this foal is so valuable to us, perhaps you, as our extended family, would join us in submitting a few of your own ideas of what might be the best name for this very special delivery. Please send your suggestions to [CRYSTALPEAKS@CPYR.ORG](mailto:CRYSTALPEAKS@CPYR.ORG), subject: Hannah's Legacy.

# Ranch Fellowship

BY JULIE LOVE



Even in the chill of the oncoming winter, there was a warmth in the air as I looked around our barn, full of life, on that November evening. Many had gathered, despite the freezing temperature outside, to join together for our monthly Ranch Fellowship. For most, it is the highlight of the month.

As a ranch, we understand how valuable this time is – a time that we gather as a family to eat some grub, worship our Lord, and hear simple truth spoken from the Word. It is our desire,

not to replace the local church, but to cultivate a time where people can come together, feel loved, and receive truth that the world tries so hard to dilute and weaken.

Our main focus here at Crystal Peaks is to care for kids, but in caring for the families, this automatically benefits the children. We are grateful for this opportunity to provide a time where families can take a break from their busy lives and just rest a bit in the presence of each other and the Lord.



We also love having visitors with us during these times. If you are planning a trip out to Bend to take a tour of the ranch, call us and see if it might be on one of the weeks that we hold Fellowship. We would love to have you join us!

I am looking forward to this Spring, as things begin to thaw out and our renewed times together begin again. The faces and hearts that gather in our barn have truly become my family here in Oregon and I am thankful for the warmth and friendship they bring to my life.



Yes! I would like to help Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch fulfill their mission

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# FROM HOSS

BY TROY MEEDER, CO-FOUNDER

## *Raising the Barn... Again*



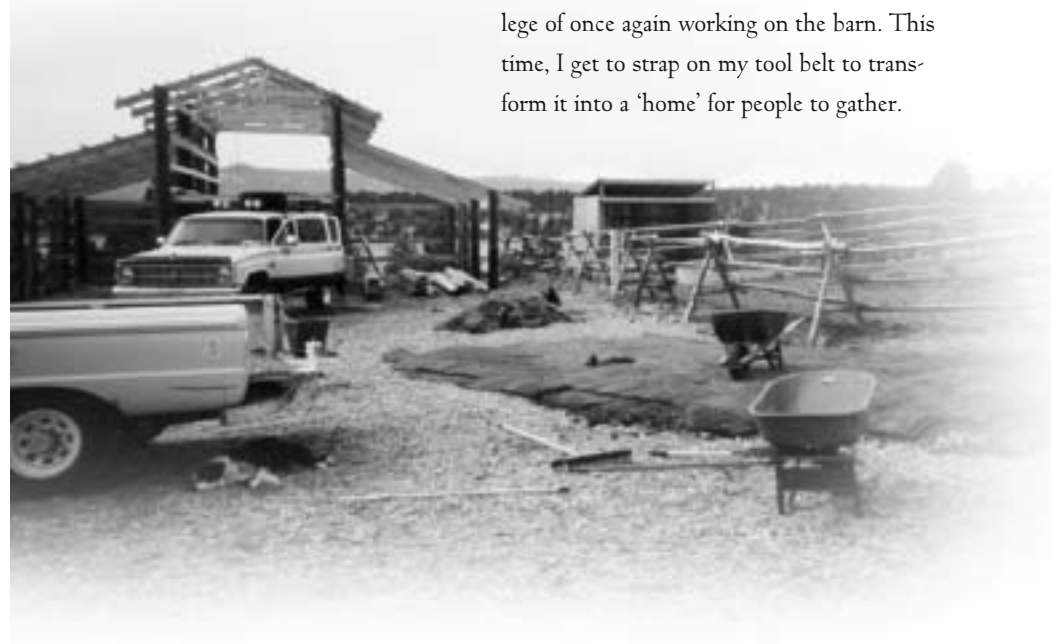
As a fledgling carpenter, I have always been so impressed with those gifted individuals that could build things straight. My efforts have usually seemed a bit lacking with few walls being plumb, each plagued by uneven cuts. As with most 'do-it-yourselfers' in need... when the job looms larger than your abilities, sometimes you just have to step up and try.

It was January. I clearly remember many years ago, digging the first holes that would hold up the telephone poles as part of the foundation of our 'barn to be'. Without the finances to hire professional help, I fully realized that the meager skills I possessed... would have to do. I had never built anything this large before and I would not be very honest if I didn't admit that I was a bit intimidated by the prospect.

Armed with a post hole digger, a level and some carpenters string, I marked out the places for the remaining fourteen holes to be dug. With donated poles from Pacific Power, lumber from a few local lumber brokers and a whole bunch of sweat and blisters, our first

barn began to take shape.

Almost all of the nails and screws used to assemble the barn were gathered from the trash piles of local construction sites. The cement used to set the poles came from benevolent concrete haulers that needed to dump their excess. My trusty old pick-up became my ladder, material hauler, flashlight and block and tackle puller. On many evenings I could be



found hammering late into the night with the AM radio serenading the darkness with a local country music station. Day by day, I came to realize that it is truly amazing what one soul can do with plenty of caffeine, a few tools, some crooked lumber, a strong wife, determination and certainly most of all... faith that calls us to keep trying.

Upon completion, it was no secret that the walls were crooked, the roof uneven and nothing truly seemed to fit within itself. I laughed at how much this barn, at times, resembled my own life. Today, even though it was plagued with imperfections, it continues to faithfully stand. The wind, snow and rain have all taken their shots. One horse has actually eaten a countable number of boards. Yet, through many assaults our tall wooden 'friend' continues to hold fast, silently protecting countless tons of hay, grain, tack and tools.

Much has changed on the ranch since the barn was built. In our efforts to better serve the children and families that come here, the role of the barn has continued to change. Now, eleven years later, I have the remarkable privilege of once again working on the barn. This time, I get to strap on my tool belt to transform it into a 'home' for people to gather.



After moving out all of the feed and implements, for the past year the barn has been used instead as a place for the Ranch Fellowship. Once a month (soon to be twice) after a shared meal the walls reverberate to the sound of guitars, prayer and the sharing of the practical truth of God's word. Families come from all over the area to be a part of something very down-to-earth, yet profoundly appropriate. In this society of complexity, worry, untruth, fear... the old barn seems to welcome all, cradling everyone in wooden arms of uncomplicated truth, peace and safety.

We started the overhaul by replacing the original dirt floor with concrete. With regards to the new floor, I give special thanks to my good friend Roger Wood for helping us with his incredible talents and goodwill. This spring the plans are to finish the inside with insulation, siding, lighting and heat. Our goal is to create a place that is cool in the summer and cozy in the winter. In addition to our soon-to-be year round Fellowship, we hope to create a place for clinics, small groups, family oriented classes, arts and crafts, guitar lessons and whatever else the Good Lord might wish for us to provide for all those we serve.

Thanks to the continuing financial help of many, I'm looking forward to hammering that old barn through one more transformation. When digging that first post hole, I had no idea just what it would look like or even become. Who would have thought that simple boards and roofing could become the center of so much joy... of seeing so many lives change. If our old barn was asked the question, "If these walls could talk"... I can only imagine... with a smile... what it might say.



## *Eric Close*

From the very beginning, Eric and Keri Close have been strong supporters of Crystal Peaks. Often Kim and I have had the wonderful pleasure of spending time with our friends, planning and praying for this ministry. They have been faithful to everyone here in more ways that we could ever count.

In December of 2005, Eric was voted in as our newest Board Member. His knowledge of business, marketing and the non-profit industry bring years of practical experience to our team. However, probably his biggest contribution is the fact that he is an incredible father, dedicated husband, immovable man of integrity and a humble man of faith. In this day and age, those qualities far outweigh the accomplishments and letters behind a man's name.

Eric has been in the movie and television industry for over 15 years. Presently, Eric stars in the hit CBS Drama "Without a Trace." He is a graduate of USC with a BS in Communications and is presently working on the screenplay for a potential movie about Crystal Peaks.

Eric's wife, Keri, holds a Masters Degree in Clinical Social Work and they have two wonderful daughters, Katie and Ella.

# A Child's Dream Fulfilled

BY CHRIS WARNER

A day at the ranch can bring many things to those who participate, yet until you have truly experienced what it is like to grant a child's simple wish of riding a horse, climbing a haystack, or catching a lizard, our life remains incomplete. A great deal of my job revolves around doing exactly what the children require most, devoting time to just them.

It is amazing to see the expression on a small freckled face when you ask, "What would you like to do today?" More times than not, I get the shrug of little shoulders and a silly expression of "I have no idea." Engaging a child to dream and set their imagination free is such a fulfilling role for me. I love to see their creativity take

shape and their dreams become a reality. Things as simple as making jump ropes out of bailing twine or painting hand prints on their horse's rump can really impact a child's life. It is a time just for them to try out new things and make memories that will hopefully follow them into adulthood. What a blessing to tell my friends what I did at work today. I caught lizards, made a jump rope, painted a pony, and climbed a haystack.

Growing up, I always knew that my life would include horses. They filled my time so perfectly. Every moment I could, I was with my horses, and when I was in school, I was dreaming about them. So, I can completely understand a

child's dream to ride a horse.

This is one of the thousands of reasons that I feel so blessed to work at Crystal Peaks. Sharing my love for horses is such an amazing part of my life because it is through the common thread of loving horses that I can also encourage children in how God loves us.

It is such a testament of God's unyielding love for us that He has allowed me to work in a place that fills me so perfectly. My future definitely lies in His hands, but I am looking forward to my life serving here at Crystal Peaks. The horses, children, and many visitors have forever imprinted my heart.



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