



# AROUND the FIRE

NEWS FROM CRYSTAL PEAKS YOUTH RANCH

WINTER 2008

## *Christmas Greetings*

*Dear Family,*

*During this special season, we wish for you to rest in the fact that the greatest gifts we can give each other... cost nothing at all. Yet, their value is beyond any currency known to man. This Christmas, we wish you love, hope, peace, friendship, laughter, faith, joy and salvation. All this is made possible for each of us because a King, long ago, was born in a manger.*

*From all of us here at Crystal Peaks, Merry Christmas!*

# Perspective of a

# HERO

BY KIM MEEDER



Again, dear family, you have blessed us mightily. Your outpouring of sympathy, support and goodwill during our loss of Syngin has gone the distance within our hearts—thank you for that. Yet, because of our Lord's great faithfulness, I wish to give you an 'update' on how He truly *can* make something beautiful from our deepest pain.

As a direct result of Syngin's extended intensive care, we have had the opportunity to become deep and dear friends with the doctors and supportive staff at Bend

Equine Medical Center. It took all of us, together, to alternately lean on each other to make it through such a difficult event.

Because of bearing this searing fire together and the ensuing encouragement that followed, an abiding friendship was forged. Out of our horrific loss, something unexpected has happened... something *remarkable*.

After nearly 14 years of equine rescue, I thought that I had seen it all, sadly... *I was wrong*.

On October 18, Troy and I were contacted by those in charge of recovering a small horse that was found by hunters, wandering in the high wilderness of the Cascade Mountains. Evident by his halter and dragging lead rope, the bay Arab gelding was clearly not wild. Instead, while he was being transported to Bend Equine Medical Center for emergency treatment,

he was kind and gentle, quietly submitting to those who were trying to care for him. Based on what little information that could be gathered, it was estimated that he had been wandering for several weeks. Even for a young, small horse, he looked to be about 200 lbs. underweight and was *incredibly* dehydrated.

Once at the hospital, it was confirmed... his wounds *were* severe.

An injury on the back of his left front cannon was so festered with rampant infection that its rotten stench filled the emergency room. A makeshift bandage of green vet wrap had grown into the leg and effectively become a tourniquet, destroying much of the flesh below it. Once the layers of caked blood, puss and bio matter were removed, the tendons of his leg were clearly visible.

Even more troubling was the fact that his left eye was completely destroyed and hanging out of its socket. There was also a very ominous looking depression wound behind his left eye. His head, neck, shoulder and front leg gave further evidence of the severity of his injuries, as they were heavily crusted with his own blood.

As bad as his eye injury was... his head injury was much worse.

X-rays revealed the UNTHINKABLE.

This gentle, little horse with the kind spirit it had been shot in the head—TWICE!

His x-rays clearly showed where someone had shot him through the left eye with a solid bullet, and then shot him again behind his left eye with a hollow point. The trajectory of the second bullet traveled through the top of his lower jaw, shattering it, and continued on to penetrate his skull as it exploded into nearly three dozen—inoperable—fragments of jagged shrapnel. Compounding his plight even further, his blood tests showed that he had lost fully HALF of his blood volume.

It was hard to believe, looking at him for the first time, that he had survived for an undetermined amount of time with a horrifically infected leg wound, a broken jaw, a destroyed eye and lethal blood loss, all with two exploded bullets scattered throughout his head. If this wasn't bad enough, he was also left to wander in a dense, high altitude forest while dragging a lead rope. Any one of these things should



have destroyed him. Yet, here he was, standing before me, blinking inquisitively at my presence with his one remaining eye. I was overcome with the thought that... *it was a complete MIRACLE he was standing at all!*

It appeared that someone felt his leg

wound was just too much for them to deal with or perhaps they thought that it was a fatal wound. Inexplicable, they believed that loading up their friend and driving him to a remote location to be destroyed... was their best option. A 'best guess' is that the offender shot him through the eye and realized that their ammunition was not powerful enough and then shot him again behind the left eye with a hollow point bullet, designed for nothing less than maximum damage.

Authorities believe that the impact of the second bullet knocked him unconscious and he fell to the ground. Bleeding profusely from his wound, it was presumed that during this time, he bled out half of his blood volume. Thinking he was dead, the perpetrator left the scene. Miraculously, the little horse woke up. Somehow, summoning the strength to stand, he lurched to his feet and staggered away.

*Continued on page 4*







Yet, even though his wounds are grave—he is not. Because of his indomitable spirit and will to keep fighting for his life, he was initially called ‘Trooper.’ True to that title, he is continuing to make meaningful progress in his efforts to heal. It is estimated that he will be well enough to come home to Crystal Peaks sometime around Thanksgiving. Because of the severity of his injuries, his recovery will be long and intensive. The staff, volunteers and kids who come to the ranch are not only up for the challenge of caring for a critically ill horse... they can’t wait until he comes home.

Instead of ‘waiting,’ they are going to him! Since the moment it was determined that this special horse was going to be coming home to the ranch, I have packed dozens of kids into my truck and ferried them to the equine hospital. Each ‘well wisher’ comes armed with the same sweet hope, each is determined to help this wounded, little soul KNOW that he is greatly loved.

I visit my new friend nearly everyday. During the times that we are alone together, I often brush him, or softly sing when he seems in pain or sometimes sit quietly in his ward with a notepad in my lap. In these past days of spending time with my wounded boy, I have become very aware of something remarkable about him. He is courageous, he is a survivor, he has fought HARD to live, to keep going. Most horses would have perished when faced with *just one* of his symptoms. Yet, he survived what many would believe to be unthinkable odds. The more I ponder our gelding, the more I realize how remarkably symbolic he is... of so many of us.

At some point in nearly each of our lives, we go through “horrible, unthinkable” times. We feel as if we have been led out into the wilderness, perhaps by those we loved and trusted, badly beaten and left for dead. We stumble away, wandering within the desolation of loneliness, unable to help ourselves, unable to stop the

‘hemorrhaging,’ unable to find our way home. Our horizon begins to fade into gray. Death looms.

Yet, it is within this very place, within our darkest night, our deepest wilderness, our greatest despair, when our hope is bleeding out... if we call on *His* name... He comes. Jesus comes into the wreckage of our heart, our blackest place, our wasteland of hopelessness... and *He leads us home.*

Like a wounded soldier returning from battle, or a little horse from the mountains, we too can choose to fall into the welcome arms of the One who loves us. We, like the soldier or horse, might not look the same on the outside. When we come home from our ‘battle in the wilderness,’ we might be scared or disfigured, we might carry the marks of our wounding. Yet, as a small boy here at the ranch has so honestly and eloquently stated about Syngin, “He knows that I love him. I told him that I don’t mind the scars on the outside... it’s the inside that I love.” It’s not what the outside looks like that makes him a ‘hero,’ it’s the inside, it’s the heart... that’s what makes a REAL hero.

Perhaps this season finds you in a difficult place, a private ‘wilderness.’ If so, this is what I know is true; we can never be too wounded for the Lord to heal. We can never be too lost for Him to find. We can never be too broken for Him to love back to life. We can never fall so deep into despair, that His immeasurable love for us—EACH of us—is not deeper still. There is no such place of sorrow, no such wilderness of pain... that He cannot find us, help us stand up and lead us home.

Because this little horse is so symbolic of this beautiful truth, we hope that you will be pleased to know that we have decided to rename him in honor of those serving our country in the military and all others who have chosen, within their wilderness, to reach for the hand of the Lord and together—step by step—begin our journey home.

Although, he was once known as ‘Trooper,’ he is now... our ‘Hero.’

From the CPYR

# PHOTO ALBUM



Feeding our herd is a team effort at Crystal Peaks!

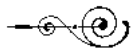


Young Natalia daily overcomes many trials associated with Cerebral Palsy. Her infectious smile beams while she is here on the Ranch, especially as her family cheers her on.

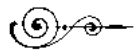


Hay Olympics... how high can you fly?





# PURPOSE IN EVERY INCH



BY TROY MEEDER



## WOW! WHAT A YEAR!

So much has happened in such a short amount of time.

As Americans, we cheered when Michael Phelps made Olympic history. We grieved as floods and hurricanes threatened our friends and neighbors. We watched in amazement as the financial markets of the world began their dizzying rollercoaster ride. Yes, 2008 was a tremendous year of surprises, challenges, victories and defeats. With the transition of a new administration and president, we are all eager to see what awaits us in 2009 and beyond.

We're in exciting times!

As I contemplate what is to come, I am filled with anticipation as to what awaits us 'just around the bend.' What are God's plans for those who seek to serve families

and horses within a little cinder pit just outside of Bend, Oregon?

This past season, friends came from all over the world to attend one of our two annual Information Clinics. In part, because of these clinics, Crystal Peaks has been instrumental in the formation of 100+ new ranch ministries worldwide. This year, we were again blessed to host over 5,000 visitors and provide one-on-one sessions for hundreds of young people. During the warm days of summer, our bi-monthly Ranch Fellowships swelled to over 250.

Meeting on the grassy hill that looks across to the Cascade Mountains, we shared a simple meal, sang worship songs together, and as a family, received a message from God's Word. Horses were rescued





and the resulting interactions with kids, changed many lives.

We have been blessed beyond measure.

As we turn towards the future, many of you have written, emailed and called asking for an update on our potential property purchase. For those who might be unaware, several months ago a very special piece of land came up for sale. It consists of 144 acres that directly borders the Ranch's eastern boundary. Currently, Crystal Peaks is land locked with the exception of this one adjoining parcel. This beautiful piece of property would offer us the latitude to greatly expand our ministry while always maintaining the original existing ranch. While the land seems the perfect fit for us, the listed price of 2.8 million is a staggering commitment. In light of the current economic challenges facing all of us, we wish to be exceedingly wise in how we handle funding that is entrusted to us.

With this responsibility in mind, our primary objective is to continue to protect and build the ministry God has already provided. We have full understanding that growing too quickly can be a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' and can, therefore, lead to complete ruin. We will continue to pray for, and pursue, this potential expansion. However, at this time, we feel that conservative stewardship is in the best interest of this ministry as a whole. The gifts given that were intended for the purchase of property have been set aside as 'designated

funds.' These resources will remain, in trust, for any future land or expansion purchases.

In 1995, when Crystal Peaks first opened its gates, we committed this place to the Lord and to His kids. Over these past 13 years, 40,000+ children and families have come, free of charge, seeking a place of health and healing. This ministry has never been about buildings or property. CPYR's primary focus has always been to support the children and horses that call this place 'home.' While we certainly would love to have the space to expand and offer more to those who grow, heal and play here, the Board of Directors and I have felt strongly that to encumber this ministry with debt of that magnitude could financially overwhelm what God is choosing to do here at this time.

The 144 acres are still for sale. Will we someday see our kids and horses on the rolling hills behind us? I hope so, but in the mean time, we all rest securely in the fact that God knows. Until then, this little 9 acre cinder pit will continue to serve families and horses with purpose in every inch. It's true, we are blessed beyond measure. Your faithfulness to this ministry has allowed us to touch the lives of hundreds of thousands all over the world. Words of gratitude could never be enough.

*From all of us – the kids, staff,  
Board of Directors, Kim and I, we say  
THANK YOU!*

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

Please use my donation for:

- Where it is needed most
- For the Children
- For the Horses
- Potential Property Expansion
- Endowment Fund

### Payment Method:

A check payable to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch or CPYR for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send donations to: Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch,  
19344 Innes Market Road, Bend OR 97701.

You can also make your donation at  
[www.crystalpeakseyouthranch.org](http://www.crystalpeakseyouthranch.org)  
with your credit card or PayPal account.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Make my donation a gift!

In honor of:

\_\_\_\_\_

In memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_

For Christmas

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_





# 2009 CALENDAR

If you are interested in receiving a Calendar, you can request one online in our Store, <http://store.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org>, or you can also mail back the tear-off with a suggested donation of \$5.

Because of popular demand, we have assembled a Monthly Wall Calendar for those of you who wish to have a small piece of Crystal Peaks a little closer to home. It is our desire to further the message of hope throughout the year by sharing with you these seasonal vignettes of encouragement.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch Co.  
(541) 330-0123  
19344 Innes Market Road  
Bend, OR 97701  
[www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org](http://www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org)



NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BEND, OR  
PERMIT # 3