



“The Miracle of Horses”

By Marsha Lindsey
Camelot Student

Editor’s note: Marsha came to Camelot and began riding as a student in October 2007. Since 2008, her skills as a therapist have enriched lessons for a select few. This is a story of perseverance and determination, a story of not taking no for an answer and having the guts to slay the dragon of doubt from within!

Hippotherapy is defined as a form of physical, occupational, and speech therapy in which a licensed therapist uses the characteristic movements of a horse to provide carefully graded motor and sensory input. The movement of the horse is a means to a patient treatment goal.

All I ever wanted to be was a physical therapist. When I started my first job at the Long Beach VA in California, I was ecstatic. However, in my fourth month as a new PT, I started having violent episodes of vertigo as well as horrible ringing and pressure in my ears. In the beginning, the episodes were few and far between so I tried to ignore them (kinda hard to do since during every episode I ended up on the floor completely incapacitated for about two hours). Denial is a powerful thing. After five different specialists told me the same thing, I had to accept my diagnosis: I had

Meniere’s disease. Meniere’s is a poorly understood inner ear disease that usually strikes in your forties and fifties, yet I was in my twenties! It typically strikes one ear and is progressive, ultimately leading to total deafness. The associated vertigo is usually controlled with meds. In my case I had it in both ears and the intractable vertigo was not responding to medications. I was told I would be completely deaf and bedridden within a year, maybe two. I was also told no one as sick as I was could possibly work and I should go on disability... SAY WHAT? I told my doctor that was NOT an option. I was referred to the world-renowned House Ear Clinic in LA and became their prized lab rat for 18 years. I let them do whatever new surgery was available as long as they promised it would keep me doing the work I loved. I had four inner ear surgeries in less than five years. The severe vertigo improved, but I was left with significant balance issues and constant dizziness. I kept working, but I struggled. In 1992 I was the sixteenth person in the United States to have a vestibular nerve decompression. My desperation led me to try an experimental brain surgery and it worked!! For the next 10 years I had virtually no symptoms. During that time I became fascinated with equine assisted



Marsha with student and volunteer Lynne LoCascio

photo: Mary Hadsall

therapy and went back to school to get my special training in hippotherapy and as a therapeutic riding instructor. I fell in love with this new way to treat severe disabilities. I started my own hippotherapy practice in Huntington Beach, Calif., in 2001. Just months after I had a solid patient base and my practice was doing well, disaster struck. While trying out a new horse to use in my practice, I was thrown. Although I did not hit my head, the impact damaged my hip and neck, and the severe vertigo returned with a vengeance. Back to surgery I went, fully believing that in a month’s time I’d be good as new and back at work. Nothing could have been further from the truth. After a week in intensive care, I was finally released home, completely incapacitated. The surgery had left me with damage to my vestibular, cochlear, optic, and facial nerves. My balance was so severely affected I couldn’t walk independently, even with a walker. I needed at least one

Marsha's story: The Miracle of Horses

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person at my side to keep me from tipping over. My vision was affected to the point I could not ride in a car, watch TV, or read without becoming ill. I started PT but was unable to tolerate it (it turned out the electronic flicker of the fluorescent lights in their office made me sick). So I took matters into my own hands and became a patient at my own hippotherapy practice. I was horseback riding just five weeks after my brain surgery! Unfortunately, I was unable to keep my business going and also had to give up riding since there was no place close for me to go. Ten months after my surgery, my famous doctor said he was sorry, but there was nothing more he could do. I had to accept that I would never be able to drive, work, read, or walk normally. (*Wrong, Dr. Smarty Pants!*). It has been a very, very long road, but by refusing to accept my doctor's prognosis and pushing every envelope there was to push, I have an amazingly full, crazy, independent life (in the last five years I have skydived, parasailed, flown a glider plane, stand up paddled, kayaked, and tried sailing... next year scuba diving in the Galapagos Islands). The secret to my miraculous and continued recovery has been therapeutic horseback riding. Although my improvements are literally measured in minutes, 12 years after my brain injury, I am still making progress. As a healthcare clinician, I would never have thought this was physically possible. With the right attitude and a strong desire, the human body can do things that defy medical understanding. I now walk independently, safely drive limited distances, and can tolerate fluorescent lights as well as most visual stimulation for more than two hours. I work several hours a week and volunteer at Camelot. As of this year I am now able to read a book! Mary is my Camelot instructor and we push my limits every week. I never in my wildest dreams could have imagined I'd STILL be making progress, but it is all thanks to Camelot and the miracle of horses.∞



Merlin's Muse

By Mary Hadsall, Executive Director

My students are my greatest inspiration. When my professional life as a therapeutic horseback riding instructor began on September 11, 2001, little did I know just how much my world would be turned upside down!

Ever since I was a little girl, I have always loved horses. Horses have always been a part of my life. The day that I taught my first lesson at the National Ability Center (located in Park City, Utah), I thought to myself, "*This is it! This is what I want to do when I grow up!*" On a day when the world was reeling from terrorist activities taking place in New York City and the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, I was keenly aware that there was so much good going on in the world, my world, at the very same time.

Thirteen years later, I am still enjoying teaching horseback riding lessons just as much as I did on my very first day at the National Ability Center. I am one of the lucky ones. I am passionate about my work and my students call me to rise to my highest good. In the face of their courage, I reflect their strength. In the face of their determination, I stand confident beside them. In the face of their patience, I take a breath and am patient as well. Therapeutic horseback riding takes teamwork—we are in this together and together we all grow.

Yes, my students inspire me, and I am so proud to be their teacher.∞

In Memory Of

**Patti Hodson
Burnard Slone
Helen Szychowski
Loretta Szychowski
Ted Szychowski
Rick Wallace**

In Honor Of

**Ralph Engler
Lou and Sharon Goldman
Michelle Guerrero
Claudia Rank
Mary Beth Walker**

Memorial gifts in any amount are a beautiful way to honor a beloved friend or family member, be they human or otherwise. We also welcome gifts in honor of birthdays or other special occasions. All such donations are acknowledged with a special card or email and a mention in our newsletter.

When sending in your gift, please include a brief note designating whom it is memorializing, and in which category you are submitting it. If you would like an acknowledgment card sent, please include the recipient's address.

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Coughdrop's Chatterbox

A Letter from the Editor's Assistant

foals stay with the mares. This baby business is complicated!

A few months ago, I had been hearing about something called “foal watch” and I had noticed cameras in the barn facing two stalls, but imagine my surprise when out popped a little foal! And about a month later, another! Thinking back on it now, I remember many months ago when there was much discussion during classes about how mares become pregnant and even a class when students participated in a veterinary procedure involving one of the mares. I should have been paying more attention when the students were learning to spot the signs of delivery, like waxing, and when the hay used as bedding was placed in the stall over the shavings.

Students and volunteers have been asking many questions about horse pregnancy, length of gestation, the birthing process, and how long the

I am not at all jealous of the attention paid to the foals. Students and volunteers are petting and watching those babies all the time, which gives me more time to snooze. There is lots of chatter about what the babies eat, when they receive vaccinations, deworming, hoof trimming, an even how and when their teeth grow!

I like to watch the foals being taught how to lead, and then I really show them how it's done when I'm hitched up to drive. Someday, they will be the ones working while I'm enjoying my retirement, but for now, they mostly play, nap, and eat. It sounds fun, but I'm glad to be past the baby stage.∞



Claudia R. (left), a Camelot student, with Joey and Lily, a CGC certified therapy dog, during a ground lesson

Ten Things I Learned from Being a Camelot Volunteer

By Joey Joseph

1. Give unconditionally.
2. Stay flexible and be ready for anything.
3. Do not marinate over mistakes.
4. Being proactive is the key to staying present.
5. Let go of control and allow others to experience.
6. Don't help unless asked!
7. Be a good listener.
8. Send love to all situations.
9. Trust and trust some more!
10. Compassion is the most powerful emotion.



Coughdrop conversing with Baby "B"

Nifty Bits



News from the Ranch

Welcome new students: Michael A., John B., Franny C., Laura D., and Richard V. **Welcome new volunteers:** Diane B., Susan B., William C., Iris F., Rico F., Jessica H., Jenny K., Caroline L., and Chantal R. (alumni)

Camelot is grateful for the generous support from the following: Jeanne and John Alspaugh, Ames Construction, Dick and Leslie Baranzini, Amanda Boggs, Davignon Charitable Fund, Andy and Muffy DiSabatino, Joyce and Ed Goljan, Harold's Cave Creek Corral, Dr. and Mrs. Henslee, the Hooves & Heroes Event Committee, Joey Joseph ~ Reiki for Horse and Owner clinic, K2 Adventures Foundation, Shirley A. Lowman, the Moore family, Peg Mulloy, Curt and Gerry Pinder, the Pinnacle Peak RMS group, the Riba family, James Shaw ~ Ride From Within clinic, Scottsdale Police Mounted Unit, the Strickstein family, the Trowbridge family, the Verdoorn Foundation, and Western Refining

Paladin's Ponderings

They say grandchildren are the reward for having children, and I'm here to tell you that it's true! I have two of my very own grandfoals, not by birth, but by proximity. As soon as I go out each morning, I head on down to the pasture to check on the baby boy and make sure he is doing his exercises. Sometimes I trot around the perimeter with him to help motivate him. I watch him kick up his heels and occasionally kick up my own!

Then it's over to the pen to check on the baby girl. I won't bore you with my thoughts on nature vs. nurture, but those babies are as different as night and day! Baby girl horse considers her grandpa Paladin to be her best friend. She likes to flick her short tail and hop around a bit when I stick my head over the rail to say hi.

I try my hardest not to show preferential treatment and I honestly love both of those babies equally. The best part about being their grandhorse is being able to rile them up and then leave them with their mothers as I mosey on back to my stall for my afternoon nap.∞



Important Subscriber Information

In an effort to save resources, Camelot is now sending the newsletter electronically.

If you would like to receive a printed copy, please visit CamelotAZ.org to state your subscriber preference.

If you received a hard copy and would prefer an electronic version, please visit CamelotAZ.org and give us your email address.

A Heroes' Hero!

Jim Schultz walked through the Camelot gate in April 2011. Little did we know how much one man would impact the barn during morning chore time. Not one, not two, but—let me count them—three days a week Jim can be found out in the barn cleaning things up so Camelot is fresh and ready to greet a new day! He has taken on the role of “Volunteer Trainer” and is always happy to lend a helping hand with extra ranch projects, such as the construction of our pastures and the installation of arena mirrors. Jim is our go-to man when we need to get things done! Thank you, Jim, for your dedication to Camelot! He has told me more than once that he receives far more than he gives to Camelot and our horses. Jim, your heart must be very full as you give unconditionally! We are all grateful to have you on our team. In addition to volunteering at Camelot, Jim spends two mornings a week at a Cave Creek food bank. But if you ask him what he loves, he will tell you it's hockey, where he spends his free time watching, coaching, and playing!∞



Jim with his trusty sidekick Paladin!



a Camelot Fundraiser

STARRY KNIGHTS

Reach for the Stars at Starry Knights!

Western Refining proudly presents
Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship's
fifth annual

Starry Knights fundraiser!

Saturday, October 25

6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The Scottsdale Plaza Resort

7200 N. Scottsdale Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85253

Tickets:

Single ticket \$125, Camelot Student and Volunteer pricing \$85

Table (10 tickets) \$1,000

Buy early for our **OneTen thru Ten/Ten** special
(single tickets are \$110 if purchased by October 10)

_____	Single Ticket(s)	\$125	<i>Early bird pricing \$110 if purchased before October 10</i>
_____	Camelot Student and Volunteer Ticket(s)	\$85	<i>Special pricing for students and volunteers and their immediate families (maximum 4 seats)</i>
_____	Table (10 tickets)	\$1,000	
_____	Shoot for the Stars Raffle(s)	\$50	<i>\$50 ticket for a chance to win \$1,000! Winnings must be spent exclusively on silent or live auction items the night of the event and cannot be redeemed for cash.</i>

Charge my credit card, please.

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Or feel free to call 480-515-1542 with your credit card information.

Mail to: Camelot Therapeutic Horsemanship, 23623 N. Scottsdale Rd., D3-PMB 259, Scottsdale, AZ 85255

Donation Form



Every penny makes a difference, especially during challenging economic times. **One way to lend a helping hand is through the United Way Donor Choice Program that begins every September.** This fall consider having your charitable donation deducted regularly from your paycheck. Remember, no amount is too small to make a big difference!

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is Camelot a United Way member?

Camelot is not a member agency, which means we do not receive United Way funds, but we are a qualified nonmember agency.

What is Camelot's Valley of the Sun United Way number?

Camelot's agency number is 1003642.

What is Camelot's mailing address?

See below.

What is Camelot's Tax ID number?

Our 501(c)3 tax designation number is 86-0444470.

Can family members out of state donate to Camelot through United Way?

For those not in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area who wish to have Camelot as their designated donor choice recipient, you can receive more information about signing up from your local United Way staff member or local United Way agency.

Walk \$25____ Trot \$50____ Canter \$100____ Gallop \$150____
Other \$ _____
Please notify me annually on ____/____ (month/day)

_____ A partial contribution is enclosed.
Please send me a reminder for the balance due on ____/____

Please help us keep our records current!

Name & Address (only if there are changes)

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

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Charge my credit card, please.

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\$ _____
Amount

Credit Card Number Exp. Date 3 Digit Code

Name As It Appears on Card Billing Zip Code

Signature
Or feel free to call 480-515-1542 with your credit card information.

Did you know that donations can be made online at CamelotAZ.org?

Camelot is a nonprofit charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible. A receipt will follow for your tax records.