



CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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December 2022/January 2023 Issue 26

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: SAM GYGAX



Sam and Garth

Introducing our December Volunteer of the Month, Sam Gygax!

Sam started volunteering with Cheff in July of 2022 and has been an essential part of not only our regular classes, but with the entirety of Shindig (prep, the event, and cleanup), Read and Ride classes, and other activities outside of classes. She is also the niece of our resident photographer, Gary Yonkers, so she might be here at other random times helping Gary with photo shoots, etc.

Sam was born in South Korea and adopted by her parents when she was four months

old. She has an older brother who was also adopted from South Korea. They grew up in Portage, MI, and Sam graduated from Portage Central High School.

Having always had a passion for serving people and communities, Sam has been attending Kellogg Community College's Law Enforcement Program since August 2022 and will graduate in June of 2023 with her Law Enforcement Certificate. When asked why she was drawn to law enforcement, she said that she could talk forever about the many things you can do in LE outside of just enforcing the law—building community and public relationships, listening and having conversations with people who might be having a difficult time, and helping people feel safe in whatever situation they might be in or dealing with.

Recently she had the experience of riding along with an active police officer and driving on their driving course, which was very exciting! She is considering going to the Michigan State Police academy after she completes her current academy, but she hasn't quite made up her mind yet.

Sam came to us as part of the Service-Learning program that Cheff partners with

at KCC. After completing her hours, she continued volunteering because she loves watching the clients grow and change, interacting with the other volunteers, and learning the different horses and their personalities. She also enjoys learning about the equipment used here and anything else that comes along with working in the barn. When asked if she has a favorite horse, she could not choose, noting that all of them are so different, she loves them ALL!

We are so thankful that Sam came to volunteer with us, and we hope that she will help even after she becomes Officer Gygax or Trooper Gygax! Thanks for all your time and help, Sam!



**THE HOLIDAY
SEASON IS A
PERFECT TIME
TO REFLECT ON
OUR BLESSINGS
AND SEEK OUT
WAYS TO MAKE
LIFE BETTER FOR
THOSE AROUND
US.**
TERRY MARSHALL



HORSE OF THE MONTH: JOSEY



Pretty Josey

Let's give a big welcome to Josey, a wonderful new addition to the Cheff herd!

Josey is a 13-year-old Paint mare, generously donated by Diane Tomes, who stands about 14.2 hands high. In her previous life, Josey was a 4-H horse, part of an equestrian team and lesson horse.

Josey is a sweet, quiet girl. She is best friends with Monte and has fit into the group quite well. She likes to go slow in class and can give Garth and Winston a run for their money on who can be the slowest!

Josey is not particular about snacks...she loves them all. And she is a big fan of gentle grooming.

For Christmas, Josey is hoping Santa brings her funds towards some new front shoes and U-Gard from SmartPak.

Welcome to Cheff, Josey!



Congratulations to our own Ashton and her new fiancé, Joe, on their engagement! Their dog, Sadie, looks very pleased!

The newsletter is taking a break over the holidays – see you in 2023!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Horse Family - Part Three: Donkeys & Wild Asses & Zebras! Oh, My!



This is the last part of our series on the horse family. To recap, in the October and November newsletters, we looked at how the horse family, scientifically known as Equidae, is classified and how it has evolved through many now-extinct species over 55 million years.

The modern Equidae family consists of horses, donkeys, wild asses, and zebras, all part of the genus *Equus*, and representing a total of seven different species and numerous subspecies. Last month we looked at the horse species, *Equus ferus*. Now we'll check out the remaining six species, which make up the rest of the living horse family.

Donkeys and Wild Asses

What comes to mind first when thinking about donkeys? Perhaps it's our friend Archie, the donkey at the Cheff Center!

Read on for an overview of the three living wild ass species and to see where domesticated donkeys like Archie fit into the picture.

1. African Wild Ass

Scientific name: *Equus africanus*



Archie, the domesticated donkey
(*Equus africanus asinus*)

As the name would suggest, the African wild ass is found in Africa, specifically in arid desert parts of northeast Africa, including Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea.



Somali wild ass
(*Equus africanus somaliensis*)

There are two living subspecies: the Somali wild ass and the domesticated donkey. Sources vary on whether a third subspecies, the Nubian wild ass, exists in very small numbers or is actually now extinct.

The Somali wild ass is the smallest of the wild equids and has a striking look, with a tan/gray coat, white belly and zebra-like stripes on its legs. It is, unfortunately, *critically endangered*, with less than 700, and possibly as few as 150 or 200, in the wild.

In contrast, there are around 40 million domesticated donkeys worldwide, with a wide variety of breeds, colors and sizes. Domesticated donkeys are sometimes classified as their own species, *Equus asinus*, but more frequently they are considered an African wild ass subspecies, namely *Equus africanus asinus*.

2. Asiatic Wild Ass

Scientific name: *Equus hemionus*

The Asiatic wild ass, sometimes called onagers, originally had a wide range from the Middle East to eastern Asia. It's now primarily found in central Asia, including Iran, Pakistan, India and Mongolia.

There are four living subspecies – Mongolian wild ass, Turkmenian wild ass or kulan, Indian wild ass and Persian onager, which are all considered either *endangered* or *near threatened*. As with many at-risk species, habitat loss and hunting have contributed to the reduced numbers.

The Asiatic wild ass is larger than the African wild ass, with an adult weighing 600+ pounds. Its coat is a reddish- or yellowish-brown, mixed with lighter areas. This species is known for speed, being able to reach 44 mph. That's pretty fast, especially considering its legs are shorter than those of a modern horse.



Indian wild ass
(*Equus hemionus khur*)

3. Kiang

Scientific name: *Equus kiang*



Eastern kiang
(*Equus kiang holdereri*)

The kiang, also known as the Tibetan wild ass, is the largest of the wild asses and has the highest population. Their habitat includes Tibet, Nepal, India and Pakistan, where they live in both low lands and alpine regions.

This species has a reddish-brown, woolly coat that adapts well to a cold climate. There are three subspecies: the eastern, western and southern kiangs. These subspecies together total 60,000-70,000 kiangs in the wild, giving them a conservation status of *least concern*.

Zebra

Many people are not that familiar with the wild asses of Africa and Asia described above, but everyone knows the zebra, right? A lesser-known fact about the zebra, though, is that there are three living zebra species and numerous subspecies.

1. Plains Zebra

Scientific name: *Equus quagga*

The plains zebra is the the most populous zebra species, with perhaps 500,000 existing in the wild in Africa, from Ethiopia down to northern areas of South Africa. Its conservation status is listed as *near threatened*, however, because some of its subspecies have severely reduced numbers.



Burchell's zebra – note the shadow stripes
(*Equus quagga burchellii*)

The six living plains zebra subspecies are: Burchell's zebra, Grant's zebra, the maneless zebra, Chapman's zebra, Crawshay's zebra and Selous' zebra. The latter subspecies is *critically endangered*, with only about 50 Selous' zebras remaining.

Among the plains zebra subspecies, stripe patterns vary widely. Some have shadow stripes -- thin stripes in a lighter color in between the wider black stripes. Burchell's zebra is particularly known for this.

2. Mountain Zebra

Scientific name: *Equus zebra*



Cape mountain zebra
(*Equus zebra zebra*)

Mountain zebras include two subspecies: Cape mountain zebra and Hartmann's zebra. The former is found in South Africa, primarily in Mountain Zebra National Park, while the latter resides in Namibia and southwest Angola.

Mountain zebras are smaller than the other types of zebras and have adapted to mountainous terrain. For example, they have narrow hooves for agility and hearts that can handle the lower oxygen of higher elevations.

A couple observable characteristics of the mountain zebra are: 1) their stripes typically do not cross their belly, and 2) they have a loose flap of skin along their throats called a *dewlap*. There are about 7,000 mountain zebras in the wild, which represents a positive expansion from their dangerously small population in the 1930s-1950s. Even so, the species is still considered *endangered*.

3. Grévy's Zebra

Scientific name: *Equus grevyi*

The Grévy's zebra population has been in rapid decline over the last few decades, with around 2,500 remaining in the wild currently. This zebra lives in parts of Kenya and Ethiopia. It has no subspecies.

Grévy's zebra is the largest zebra; they can be similar in size to an average horse, weighing close to 1,000 pounds and measuring 15 or more hands. Its stripes are narrow and quite evenly spaced.

This zebra is notable for being named for Jules Grévy, who was president of France in the 1880s. One of these zebras was given to President Grévy and his name stuck with the species.

Visiting the Equids

If you are interested in seeing some of the wild equid species without leaving the US, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' [zoofinder](#) may be of use to track them down – it lets you locate accredited zoos by zipcode. Select a zoo near where you'll be and then check out their website to see which horse family residents they may have.

There are [Grant's zebras](#) at our nearby Binder Park Zoo; it will reopen for the season in May 2023.

Wild asses seem to be less common at US zoos than zebras are. One option to keep in mind, if you're headed to California, is the San Diego Zoo and its extensive conservation program for the [Somali wild ass](#).

Sources and More Info

[Primer: Equids](#) by Orlando, *Current Biology Magazine*, Oct 15, 2015

[The Horse: A Natural History](#) by Busby and Rutland, Princeton Univ. Press, 2019

[Zebra](#) by Plumb and Shaw, Reaktion Books Ltd, 2018.

Wikipedia: [African wild ass](#) / [Asiatic wild ass](#) / [Kiang](#) / [Plains zebra](#) / [Mountain zebra](#) / [Grévy's zebra](#)

[IUCN RedList](#) (conservation status of species)

Two fun San Diego Zoo videos of the Somali wild ass

[Somali Wild Ass Foals Born - YouTube](#) (2 min)

[Welcome To The Herd, Little Somali Wild Ass! - YouTube](#) (30 sec)

Photos – Wikimedia Commons; cropped

[Somali wild ass](#) | [Indian wild ass](#) | [Kiang](#) | [Burchell's zebra](#) | [Mountain zebra](#) | [Grévy's zebra](#) | [Grévy's zebra](#) (face)



Grévy's zebra, above and below
(*Equus grevyi*)



CHEFF UPDATES

JANUARY IS “EDUCATION MONTH”!

Classes run from 5:30-7:30PM, dates are below. Let [Sara Putney-Smith](#) know if you plan to attend.

Jan 4—Disabilities and Diagnoses (25 people)

Jan 11—Horse Behavior and Body Language (25 people)

Jan 18—Leading and Mounting (15 people)

READ & RIDE RETURNS ON THURSDAYS

We're excited to have our readers back! If you'd like to sign up for this rewarding and fun program, please contact [Sara Putney-Smith](#).

Dates for the upcoming session are:

February 9, 16, 23

March 2, 9, 16

THE NEXT VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION IS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 21 FROM 10:00AM-1:00PM. Invite any friends and family that might be interested! The link to register is: [VOLUNTEER PORTAL](#)

DON'T FORGET THE DEC. 12 HOLIDAY SELF CARE WORKSHOP -

For more information, check out this link: [Getting Through The Holidays 12/12 | Facebook](#)

KALAMAZOO GROWLERS CONCESSION STAND HELP NEEDED

for WMU Football, Hockey and Basketball home games! Volunteer shifts are approximately 4-6 hours and count toward volunteer hours of any kind, including WMU student volunteer hours. See the games for free and Cheff gets \$80 per person! Bring your family and friends and make it a party!

If interested, please call or email [Sara Putney-Smith](#) so she can keep track of volunteers/hours.

ALWAYS LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD HORSES!

Cheff is always looking for great horses to join the herd, especially now that there have been a few retirements. If you know any potential candidates that might qualify, please take a look at [What we look for in a horse](#) to see if they have what it takes.

December Fun Fact

The Pack Horse Library Project was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) program that delivered books to remote regions of eastern rural Kentucky in the Appalachian Mountains between 1935 and 1943.

Unlike many Depression-era New Deal projects, the plan required help from locals. "Libraries" were any facility that would step up, from churches to post offices. Librarians manned these outposts, giving books to carriers who then climbed aboard their mules or horses, panniers loaded with up to 100 books, and headed into the hills. The books, magazines, Sunday school materials and textbooks they carried usually came from outside donations, requested through the local parent-teacher association. As word of the campaign spread, books came from half of the states in the country.

The couriers took their job as seriously as mail carriers and crossed streams and steep hills in wintry and flooded conditions, on rocky trails that could be difficult and dangerous; riders dealt with feet "froze to the stirrups" or would walk the route when it was too steep, or if their animal was injured or died. Book carriers provided their own horses or mules, some of which were leased from local farmers. They earned \$28 a month—around \$500 in modern dollars. Most of the people involved in the Pack Horse Library Project were women, and often were the only person in their family who was then earning an income.

During its height, there were around 30 different pack horse libraries serving around 100,000 people in the mountain areas and 155 schools. The book women were oftentimes the only guest at the cabins they visited, and school children eagerly anticipated their arrival. The project helped employ around 200 people in rural Kentucky. The project ended in 1943, when the WPA stopped funding the program.

See the links below for more information on the packhorse librarians; there are also several fascinating books on the topic.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pack_Horse_Library_Project

[The Pack Horse Librarians of Appalachia \(ket.org\)](http://www.ket.org)

[Horse-Riding Librarians Were the Great Depression's Bookmobiles](#)



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Christopher C

Riley F

Karolina J

Katherine N

Jared S

Mark E

Taylor G

Marissa L

Michelle P

Alison T

Gillian E

Ginger H

Barb M

Rene S

Lynn W



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Erika A

Claire D

Karsyn J

Alexandria N

Rhianna B

Abby D

Paige M

Bonnie P

Ashley C

Julie G

Kathryn M

Claudia W

Cheff gets a large discount on horse-related products!

If you would like to get more bang for your buck, you could make a [DONATION](#) to Cheff and we will gratefully use it where most needed!

Amazon Smile

Anytime you order online from **Smile.Amazon.com**, the Cheff Center can receive benefits. Support us each time you shop at **no** extra cost through Amazon. To find out more, visit:

<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about>

Harding's

Harding's customers - if you join their Community Rewards program and select the Cheff Center as your organization of choice, we receive a rebate based on your purchase amounts. Please let your friends and family know—every penny helps! For more information, click on the link below.

<https://www.hardings.com/savings-and-rewards/community-rewards/>

Rite Aid

Rite Aid is one of Cheff's partners and extended their shopper rewards program to us. Please consider signing up as a Cheff Supporter, it's just one quick form: [RXfundraising.com - Support Your Cause!](https://www.rxfundraising.com)

Do you have any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?

If so, you can contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, at sara@cheffcenter.org

Newsletter Contributions by: Emily Fields, Ann Lindsay, Ashton Maguire, Morgan Meulman, Sara Putney-Smith, Marianne Stier

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