



February 2023 Issue 27

# CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Inside this issue:

- Volunteer Profile: Greg Noble
- Horse Breed of the Month: Arabian Horse
- Education Corner: Protective Gear for Horses – Horse Blankets
- Welcome, Diane!
- Cheff Updates
- February Fun Fact
- February Birthdays

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: GREG NOBLE



Archie and Greg

Most of you do not get to see the Physical Therapy program in action at Cheff, but our February volunteer of the month is part of the PT team—Greg Noble.

Greg was born in South Bend, Indiana, but raised in Las Vegas, Nevada. How was it, being raised in Las Vegas? “Interesting”, said Greg. I can only imagine!

After high school, Greg enlisted in the Army where he served our country for 28 years. During those 28 years, he served in 5 conflicts, finally retiring in 2016. During his time in the service, he worked as a truck driver, tank crew member, and a combat engineer.

Upon his retirement, Greg decided to go to college and use his GI Bill benefits. He got his bachelor’s degree in Sociology with a minor in

Communications. He later returned to school to get an associate degree in Business Management.

An avid animal lover (but more specifically, cats), Greg is also an artist. He paints and draws using acrylics, charcoal, etc. He finds it to be therapeutic, and when I asked what he does with the pieces when he’s done, he said “when I’m done, I’m done with it. I put it in a file”.

What brought Greg to the Cheff Center? He is a close friend of Kim Densch, the horse handler for the Physical Therapy team. He started volunteering back in July of 2022 and has logged over 167 hours since! He was a vital part in getting the Cheff Center cleaned and ready for Shindig—he was here every day, all day, doing whatever was asked of him. He also volunteered during regular class sessions but switched completely to the PT team mid-fall last year.

Being the Physical Therapy “Barn Dude”, Greg helps bring the horses in, get them ready for clients, cleans the barn, and helps with anything that the PT team needs. He finds working with the horses to be incredibly therapeutic, and just loves it.

We are very happy to have Greg as our “Barn Dude” in PT, and hope that he will continue to work with Char (PT), Kim, Jake, Rene, Mitch and Betsy (the PT team) for years to come! Thank you, Greg, for all that you do and have done!

# HORSE BREED OF THE MONTH: ARABIAN HORSE



*Arabian Horse*

With a distinctive head shape and high tail carriage, the Arabian horse is one of the most easily recognizable breeds in the world. It is also one of the oldest breeds, originating in the Middle East between 4,000 to 5,000 years ago on the Arabian Peninsula; archeological evidence resembling modern Arabians dates back 4,500 years.

Through the centuries, Arabian horses were spread across the world by war and trade, where they were then used to improve other breeds. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Arabian was the earliest improved breed of horse, valued for its speed, stamina, beauty, strong bones, intelligence and gentleness; their influence is found in almost every modern breed of riding horse.

The Arabian is a compact, relatively small horse with a refined, wedge-shaped head, wide-set large eyes, large nostrils, and small muzzles. It has a short back, usually with only 23 vertebrae vs. the usual 24 for other breeds. They have a broad chest, high tail carriage, and an arched neck and brows. The horse averages about 15 hands high (60 inches) and weighs from 800 to 1,000 pounds.

The Arabian developed in a desert climate and was prized by the nomadic Bedouin people, often being brought inside the family tent for

shelter and protection from theft. Selective breeding for traits, including an ability to form a cooperative relationship with humans, created a horse breed that is good-natured, quick to learn, and willing to please. The Arabian also developed the high spirit and alertness needed in a horse used for raiding and war. This combination of willingness and sensitivity requires modern Arabian horse owners to handle their horses with competence and respect.

Arabians can be black, bay, chestnut, gray and roan. Although many Arabians appear to have a "white" coat, they are not genetically "white". This color is usually created by the natural action of the gray gene, and virtually all white-looking Arabians are actually gray. Regardless of the coat color, an Arabian horse's skin is always black.

The Arabian is one of the top ten most popular horse breeds in the world and are now found worldwide. Arabian horses are a versatile breed well known for their agility, endurance, and speedy maneuvers which help them in winning professional competitions. They have excelled in several equestrian fields from performance in endurance riding to Western pleasure, reining, cutting, saddle seat, and many different disciplines and competitions.

There are six known genetic disorders in Arabian horses. Two are inevitably fatal, two are not inherently fatal but are disabling and usually result in euthanasia of the affected animal; the remaining conditions can usually be treated.

- Severe Combined Immunodeficiency (SCID) - Similar to the "bubble boy" condition in humans, an affected foal is born with a complete lack of an immune system, and thus generally dies of an opportunistic infection, usually before the age of three months.

- Lavender Foal Syndrome (LFS), also called Coat Color Dilution Lethal (CCDL) - Foals are unable to stand at birth, often have seizures, and are usually euthanized within a few days of birth.
- Cerebellar abiotrophy (CA or CCA) - An affected foal is usually born without clinical signs, but at some stage, usually after six weeks of age, develops severe incoordination, a head tremor, wide-legged stance and other symptoms. Mildly affected horses can live a full lifespan, but most are euthanized before adulthood because they are so accident-prone as to be dangerous.
- Occipital Atlanto-Axial Malformation (OAAM) - This is a condition where the vertebrae in the neck and at the base of the skull are fused or malformed. Symptoms range from mild incoordination to the paralysis of both front and rear legs.
- Equine juvenile epilepsy, or Juvenile Idiopathic Epilepsy, sometimes referred to as "benign" epilepsy, is not usually fatal.
- Guttural Pouch Tympany (GPT) occurs in horses ranging from birth to 1 year of age, more common in fillies. Foals are born with a defect that causes the pharyngeal opening of the eustachian tube to act like a one-way valve – air can get in, but it cannot get out. With medical management and antimicrobial therapy, or possibly surgical intervention to correct the defect, foals that are successfully treated may grow up to have fully useful lives.

Cheff's lucky enough to have our own part-Arabian, the beautiful and sweet Tina!



**Several people have asked about how best to fulfill some of the items on our horses' wish list. You can either purchase the items yourself and bring/send them to Cheff, or you can donate funds for Cheff to purchase the item. Thank you!**

**Archie:** Granola Bars and fly spray  
**Art:** Full Sized Bitless Bridle and fly spray  
**Emma:** sunscreen and fly spray  
**Garth:** financial contributions towards his joint care and fly spray  
**Gunny:** Diaper Rash Cream and financial contributions towards his Adequan injections  
**Harry:** U-Guard pellets and a slow feed hay pillow  
**Harvey:** financial contributions towards his Senior and Joint Care funds  
**Josey:** U-Guard pellets and a slow feed hay pillow  
**Monte:** horse-sized halter and Buteless Pellets.  
**Simon:** horse-sized halter and Osteo-Max by 100x Equine  
**Star:** Beet Pulp  
**Tess:** Smart Bug-Off Ultra and Coat Defense Spot Drying Paste  
**Tina:** SmartPak Smartflex Senior and TriCare ointment.  
**Winston:** donations towards his chiropractic, massage, and acupuncture back treatments, Adequan injections, Buteless Pellets

# EDUCATION CORNER: PROTECTIVE GEAR FOR HORSES – HORSE BLANKETS

## Blankets

With at least a few more weeks of winter to go, we'd like to take a close-up look at horse blankets and how they help equines, like the Cheff Center herd, stay warm, dry and comfortable.



*Blankets need to be snug enough to stay in place and flexible enough so everyone can keep up with herd.*

We hope this article will provide some useful background info, especially for volunteers who are less familiar with blanket basics and the numerous options and styles available.

### Types of Blankets and Sheets

Blankets come in a range of weights, from light to heavy, depending on how much fill material – i.e., stuffing -- they contain. As you would expect, the heavier the blanket, the more warmth it provides. The lightest ones, which have no fill material at all, are typically called *sheets* rather than blankets.



*This turnout blanket has a high-neck design and comes in two weights: medium (220g of fill) and heavy (360g of fill).*

Weight categories break down something like this:

- No fill = sheet
- Up to 100 grams of fill = light blanket
- 150-250 grams of fill = medium blanket
- 300+ grams of fill = heavy blanket

In-between blanket weights are called medium-light or medium-heavy.

Blankets and sheets also come in two types:

- *Turnout blankets and sheets* are designed for outdoor use; they are water-resistant or waterproof and are typically more durable than those intended for indoor use only. Turnouts are meant to withstand pasture activities like rolling around, running and brushing up against fences and bushes.

The waterproofing is useful in rain and snow conditions, of course, and also provides protection when a horse lies down on wet ground.

- *Stable blankets and sheets* are intended for use inside the barn and for travel in a horse trailer, so are not waterproof. Since they are worn by horses in controlled environments, they don't need to be as heavy-duty as turnout versions.



*This stable sheet is a very light cover; it's made of polyester and has no fill.*

The two types can be used together. For example, a turnout sheet can be used on top of a stable blanket to add a waterproof layer.

### Materials

Blankets and sheets are typically made from synthetic materials like nylon, polyester and polypropylene. Fabric made partially from recycled plastic can even be used (see example at right →).

The insulating fill material that goes between the outer cover and inner lining is usually made of polyester.

*Ripstop* fabric, such as ripstop nylon, is something to look for in a blanket or sheet; this technology uses a reinforced weave that resists tearing and minimizes rips when they do occur.

*Denier* is a textile industry term that refers to the density of the individual fibers used to create a woven material. The higher the denier, the sturdier the material. Horse blanket denier ratings range from around 100 to 1600, and sometimes higher.

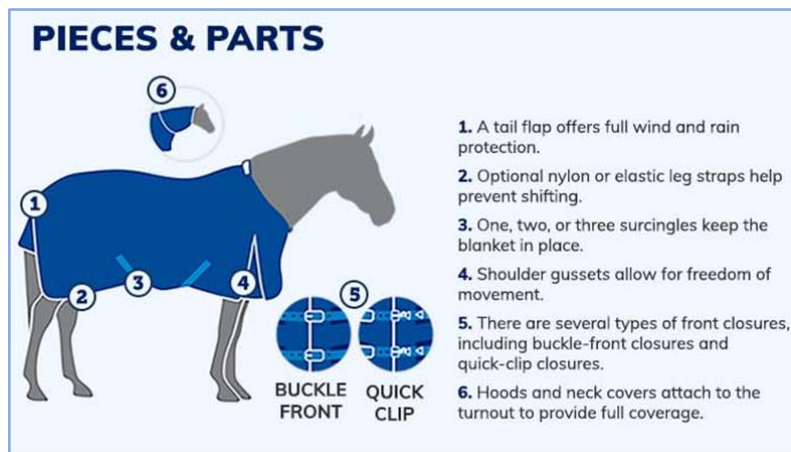
Denier may seem like a purely industrial concept, but it's often included in vendor catalogs so shoppers can easily compare the durability of one blanket with another. Denier ratings are sometimes written using an abbreviation like *1200D*, meaning a denier rating of 1200.

### Parts of a Blanket

The diagram below, from SmartPak Equine's excellent [blanketing guide](#), shows the component parts of a typical blanket or sheet:



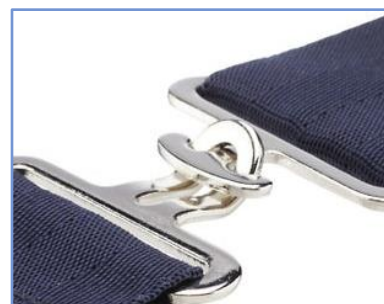
A heavy weight 900D [WeatherBeeta Green-Tec turnout blanket](#) with neck cover, made, in part, from recycled plastic.



1. Tail flap
2. Elastic leg straps (cross between rear legs and connect to underside of blanket)
3. Low-cross surcingles (aka "belly straps")
4. Shoulder gussets
5. Front closures
6. Neck cover (aka "neck rug" or "neck blanket")

Surcingles – also called belly straps – typically use connectors called *T-hooks*, as shown at right. →

Front closures sometimes use T-hooks, too.



← For extra warmth, add a *neck cover*, as shown at left. These are also called neck blankets or neck rugs.

Horse blankets themselves are sometimes called *rugs*, a term that stems from the UK.

### Sizes and Fit

To determine a horse's blanket size, measure from the center of the chest, along the side, and back to the center of the tail. It helps to have two people do the measuring, especially for a full-size horse, as shown in the picture below.



*Measuring blanket size*

This measurement, in inches, is the horse's blanket size.

Blanket and sheet sizes typically run in two- or three-inch increments. For example, a blanket might come in sizes 66, 69, 72, 75, 78, 81 and 84. If your horse's measurement falls between the sizes available, vendors recommend rounding up to the next larger size.

Blankets and sheets need to fit properly, otherwise they may rub or create painful pressure points. Two common problem areas to watch are the point of the shoulder and the withers.

The Horse website provides an instructive, [three-minute video](#) showing how to measure for a blanket and how to identify fit issues.

## Using Blankets at the Cheff Center



*Who needs a blanket? The answer depends on many factors, including breed.*

When does a horse need a blanket? It depends! There is no one-size-fits-all answer.

Many factors contribute to the cold tolerance of an individual horse – things like body condition, age, health, the thickness of their natural winter coat and whether their coat has been clipped, type of horse (draft vs light).

For an overall look at how horses handle cold weather, check out the article *Horses and Winter* in the [Dec 2021/Jan 2022 volunteer newsletter](#) (see p. 7-10).

At Cheff, our instructors and barn staff know the herd well and make the call on when to blanket up an individual horse. Blanket lists and other turnout info are usually written on the white board in the barn. So, all you need to do as a volunteer is check the board or ask an instructor.



*Sometimes a Clydesdale does need a blanket!*

Here are a few other guidelines for working with horse blankets at Cheff:

- If you do not have experience with blankets, please have an instructor or barn staff member give you a run-through. Using this equipment safely and effectively is very important for volunteers and horses, so please ask!
- Check blankets for excessive dirt on the underside that may rub against the horse. Also, note any broken, ripped or missing pieces and parts. Please show these issues to a staff member before the horse goes outside to see if a fix or blanket swap is needed.
- It's important that the blanket be properly secured on the horse and that straps and closures are not too tight and not too loose or droopy. This is a safety issue. If you're unsure or something doesn't seem right, don't hesitate to ask! Instructors and barn staff are happy to assist.

In an upcoming newsletter, we'll be thinking about warmer weather and topics like fly gear!

### Sources and More Info

Blanketing Guides: [The Horse](#) / [SmartPak Equine](#) / [Stateline Tack](#)

Photos from Cheff and also [thehorse.com](#) / [smartpakequine.com](#) / [statelinetack.com](#)

(Please note: The Horse/thehorse.com requires a free account.)

# WELCOME, DIANE!



Diane and her daughter, Grace

You may have noticed a new face behind the lobby desk or walking around Cheff here and there. This is the new addition to the Cheff team—Diane Cox. She will be helping support the Administration and staff, as well as working on outreach within the community.

Diane grew up in Battle Creek. After high school, she went to KCC and then moved to Kalamazoo where she was the lead singer in several bands. She and one of her bands moved to Tokyo to play in night clubs near the city for 6 months. They ended up staying for 2 years!

Diane returned to Kalamazoo and worked at WRKR (107.7) in 1994 where she was a radio personality for the overnight show. Three months after being at WRKR, she was asked to do the morning show and became part of the “Mike, Diane and Scotty Bud” show.

Diane moved to Pittsburg to be a radio personality on a show there. She lived and worked in Pittsburg for several years before returning to Battle Creek, where she returned to the WRKR morning show team.

Prior to Covid, she made a career change and began working for a title company in Battle

Creek. Thankfully she was able to work from home during Covid and had continued to do so until recently, when she joined Cheff.

Diane has two children, both of whom attend Michigan State University. Jude is studying Computer Science and Engineering, and her daughter, Grace, is studying Musical Vocal Performance. Max and Ruby are the two rescue dogs that are keeping her company as her children are (obviously) away from home.

How did Diane come to be at Cheff? Her daughter, Grace, was in 4-H at Eastfork Farms, our Executive Director Tara’s former farm. Tara and Diane became friends, and the rest is history! Diane has been the MC at Shindig since 2008 and has worked many other fundraisers throughout the years.

I asked Diane why she wanted to work at the Cheff Center. Her response was that she wanted to be at a place that does so much good for so many people and loves working at a place that she feels very passionate about. We are glad you are here, Diane! Welcome to the Cheff Center!





## CHEFF UPDATES

**HERD UPDATES:** Josey is being treated for stomach ulcers for approximately 2 months.

**MENTAL HEALTH WEEK** runs from June 26-30; more information will be provided as soon as the program is finalized.

**READ & RIDE VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED for Thursdays, February 16-March 23, from 9am-11:30am.**

**READ & RIDE SUMMER CAMP RETURNS JUNE 19-23!**

Classes run all day, every day that week, with morning and afternoon sessions. More information to come! If you'd like to sign up for these rewarding and fun programs, please contact [Sara Putney-Smith](#).

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR LOUIE'S TROPHY HOUSE GUMBO COOKOFF!**

This **FUN**draiser cookoff will be held February 26 - local restaurants compete with their gumbo, you get to vote for your favorite, and Louie's restaurant donates a portion of the proceeds to Cheff Center, along with other non-profits.

As a volunteer, you may help run the doors, clear tables, or basically lend a hand wherever needed. You get in for free as a volunteer, and can enjoy the food, live music, etc. It's not necessary to be a current volunteer with Cheff, so invite friends, family, etc. if you want! Hours spent at Louie's count toward volunteer 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.

**CHEFF IS OFFERING ANOTHER WOMEN'S SELF CARE WORKSHOP** on Monday, February 27th from 5:30-7:30pm; the cost is \$50/participant. For more information on this fun, relaxing, and productive workshop, click on: [Women's Groups – Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center \(cheffcenter.org\)](#)

**We are sorry to report that Amazon is ending its AmazonSmile program by Feb 20, 2023. All purchases made before the program ends will still provide donations to the Cheff Center and other participating charitable organizations. As part of the wind-down, Amazon will be giving an additional, one-time donation to each organization equivalent to three months of what the organization earned through AmazonSmile in 2022.**

**If you're thinking of any purchases through AmazonSmile, now is a great time to get in on the final days. THANK YOU VERY MUCH to all volunteers and other supporters who have helped Cheff through this fund-raising program!!!**

## FEBRUARY FUN FACT

In August of 2020, Kurt, a critically endangered Przewalski's horse, was the first successfully cloned foal of its kind born at The San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

The Przewalski's horse is a stocky wild Mongolian horse with a dun-colored coat and a dark brown erect mane, considered extinct in the wild; it is the only true wild horse and thought to be the ancestor of the domestic horse.

The species survived for the past 40 years almost entirely in zoos around the world, and nearly all the surviving horses are related to 12 Przewalski's horses born in native habitats. Ongoing reintroductions of the horses into their native habitats have established several herds in grasslands in China and Mongolia to maintain genetic variation.

Kurt is the clone of a male Przewalski's stallion whose DNA was cryopreserved 42 years ago in the Alliance's Wildlife Biodiversity Bank; his surrogate mother is a domestic quarter horse.

Kurt was named in honor of Dr. Kurt Benirschke, who joined the zoo's research committee in 1970, and worked as the director of research from 1974 to 1986; he died in 2018 at the age of 94.

For more information: [Safari Park Welcomes Przewalski's Horse Foal About Kurt - Revive & Restore \(reviverestore.org\)](#)



Kurt and his surrogate mother



Kurt and friend, Holly

## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Alisha B

Jacqueline K

Linnea O'N

Sarah S

Nick Y

Carla C

Michael M

Lauren P

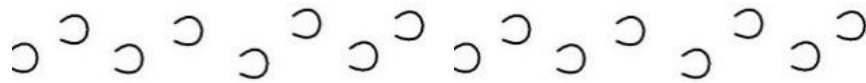
Kaela V

Paul E

Aaliha M

Holden R

Emma 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**

UNTIL FEBRUARY 20, 2023, whenever 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/support-your-cause/)

## **Any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?**

If so, you can contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, at [sara@cheffcenter.org](mailto:sara@cheffcenter.org)

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

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