



CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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February 2024 Issue 37

VOLUNTEER PROFILE: KAREN NEELEY



Phillip and Karen

We would like to introduce you to our February Volunteer of the Month, Karen Neeley.

Karen grew up with three brothers and two sisters. She attended and graduated from Gull Lake Schools. (Fun fact: Karen and Sara Putney went to school together and have known each other since kindergarten!) After graduating high school, Karen went to Davenport College, and got her bachelor's degree from the University of Phoenix in marketing. She spent many years working in reprographics and multimedia but spent the past 25 years at Kellogg's in market research.

Karen came to the Cheff Center after she retired in 2023 as she wanted to do something helpful and

productive with her free time. She had previously volunteered at Cheff with work groups from Kellogg's, and since she lives very nearby (and loves horses), she thought Cheff would be the perfect place to spend some time. Lucky for us, she can help with many classes, as well as the Veterans, Read and Ride, orientations, etc.

Karen and her husband, Jeff, have been married for 35 years, have three sons, and a grandchild, Waylon, who is now 3 months old! Thankfully they are close by, so Karen and Jeff get to see their sons and their grandchild often.

Bourbon Trail Hunting is a hobby of Karen and Jeff's. (Bourbon lovers travel our country and other countries trying to find the "unicorns," or hard-to-find bourbons.) They have been to Kentucky, Tennessee and Ireland and found gems on the shelf among their other travels in the U.S. They are planning a trip to explore Scotland with friends, looking for many more adventures in their search for their unicorns. Karen prefers the outdoors, planting flowers, gardening, playing pickleball and biking.

Karen loves being part of the Cheff volunteer team, working with the horses, getting to know and see the clients grow and change, and just feels good about helping others. Her favorite horses are Phillip, Blue and Simon, each for their very different personalities.

We are so happy that Karen came to Cheff, and hope that she will be with us for many years to come!!!



WELCOME, KATIE AND SAM!



Sam D

Sam D originally hails from Chicago, and now attends WMU for the Occupational Therapy Doctorate program. She is with us to complete her capstone project (working with Read and Ride, selecting a handful of students from there to examine sensory processing and their behaviors towards reading). She will complete 560 hours and will be here full-time until she completes her project, at which time she will present it to staff and her professors prior to graduating this April. She will be strictly observing during the Read and Ride classes but will also be helping in regular TR classes as time allows. After she finishes her doctorate, Sam plans on working in the pediatric occupational therapy field or may become a Certified Hand Therapist for adults. Sam and her husband live in Kalamazoo and are the proud owners of two horses and two cats. She is a runner, enjoys yoga, is an avid reader, and loves to spend time riding her horses.



Katie M

Katie M is with us for 400 hours (roughly until April) and will be working toward her Horse Management degree at MSU. She would eventually like to become a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor. She had previously worked at a therapeutic riding center in Colorado and hopes to return there after becoming certified. Katie will be participating in classes as both a side walker and leader, helping in the barn with the herd, as well as observing classes. In her “spare” time (which, she adds, is not much due to school and class schedules), Katie enjoys reading, she loves to sing, and enjoys riding horses.

You will see these two a lot around the barn and the instructors’ office, so please help them to feel welcome and comfortable here with us.



*Happy
Valentine's
Day!*

HORSE OF THE MONTH: ROSIE

Meet Rosie, an 18-year-old mare who arrived at the Cheff Center in October last year.

Being an American Paint Horse (APHA), lovely Rosie is now the newest member of our Paint group, which also includes Blue, Monte, Phillip, Simon, and APHA/AQHA Winston.

She stands 15.3 hands tall and weighs about 1,100 pounds. Her coat is sorrel overo, meaning an overall sorrel color (a brownish orange to light brown, often with a lighter colored mane and tail), with an overo pattern (any white pattern that isn't tobiano). In Rosie's case, this pattern is seen in her white belly spot. She also has an adorable blaze and four matching white socks.

Rosie came to Cheff from the same owner who is leasing Blue to us. As it turns out, Blue and Rosie never lived together. Rosie was leased out for the past four years to a young lady who did 4-H, equestrian team, and open shows. Prior to that, she was a walk/trot horse on the APHA show circuit.

In class, Rosie has a very forward walk and a slow jog. As instructor Emily describes it, "Her jog is slower than her walk!" She likes a soft hand and is learning to be more comfortable in the mounting block, as she tends to get a little nervous.

Because of her age and breed, Rosie is on joint support treatment. She doesn't have a current diagnosis; instead, this is a preventative measure to make sure she stays sound and healthy as long as possible.

As far as treats are concerned, Rosie's attitude is: "It's all good." She's happy with any and all of the usual snacks.

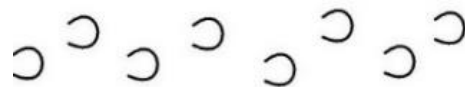


Rosie, aka "Rose Z Oshiek" (her registered name)

We're so glad to have talented Rosie in the herd and hope you get a chance to hang out with her sometime soon!

For more on Paint horses and the overo coat pattern, see:

- *American Paint Horse breed profile in the [May 2022](#) newsletter (p. 3).*
- *Horse color patterns article in the [Oct 2021](#) newsletter (p. 6).*

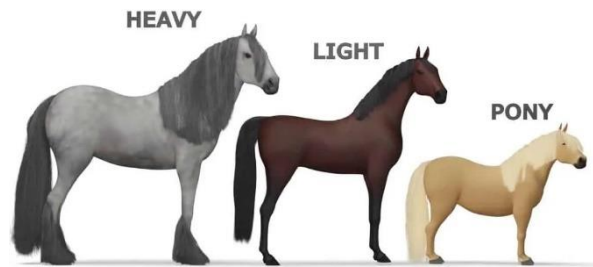


"In the end, we don't know what horses can do. We only know that when, over the past thousands of years, we have asked something more of them, at least some of them have readily supplied it."

~ Jane Smiley

Ponies, Light and Heavy Horses

Horses are bred for various reasons - speed, strength, agility, temperament, or maybe for all these things. These different horse breeds can be grouped into three main categories according to their weight, body build, and height: heavy horses, light horses, and ponies.



Heavy breed horses are also commonly called **draft horses**. The origin of the heavy horse is not clearly known, but some hippologists believe its ancestor was from the cold plains of Northern Europe, while others think it was from the forests. In any case, it is believed to originate from the wild Nordic pony, which adapted to survive in wet and cold climates and could thrive on coarse vegetation of poor nutritional value. Although much smaller, the Nordic pony's physical characteristics (heavy type of body build) are similar to the heavy horse.

Selective breeding over thousands of years has led to heavy horses that are large, strong, and gentle — ideal traits for hard labor. For many years heavy horses were used to perform hard work such as plowing, logging, mining, and pulling heavy loads. In warfare, they carried heavily armored knights and pulled heavy war equipment into battle. Today they are mostly used for driving (pulling buggies), showing, and pulling competitions. The modern heavy horse is also reappearing as a pleasure horse and is commonly seen in trail rides and parades. In some locations in the world, however, they are still used in small farms and forestry where mechanized equipment cannot be used. Also, with the emerging trend of fossil fuel-free agriculture, some farmers are using heavy horses to perform their farming activities.

Heavy horses have the following distinguishing characteristics:

- Tall, usually standing from 16 to 19 hands high (1 hand equals 4 inches).
- Heavy, typically from 1,400 to 2,000 lbs.
- Strong, with heavily muscled loins and hindquarters, and a heavy bone structure, ideal for heavy work.
- Broad, short back with rounded withers.
- Upright shoulders which create a short, upright movement with maximum traction for pulling.
- Relatively short, sturdy legs that give better leverage when pulling.
- Long hair called feathering on their lower legs.

Examples of heavy horses include Clydesdale, Shire, Percheron, and Belgian Draught.

Some horse breeds have one or more heavy horse characteristics but are traditionally considered to be light horses, such as the Friesian, Freiberger, and Irish Draught. Additionally, there are heavy ponies such as the Haflinger and Fjord.

A light horse is the type of horse with a conformation suitable for riding or driving. As the name suggests, they are lightweight and, therefore, capable of more action and speed than heavy horses. All light horses have their most remote origins in the Arabian horse from the Middle East and the Barb horse from North Africa. Other breeds of heavy horses and ponies were added to the light horse breeds during their evolution, leading to the huge diversity of light horse breeds that we know today.

Light horses are used across a wide range of disciplines, a few of which are:

Show Jumping - riders guide horses over a course of obstacles and the winner is the one that completes the most obstacles without faults in the fastest time.

Racing - horses can be ridden or driven over a certain distance, and the winner is the one that completes the course first. There are different types of horse racing, such as flat racing, endurance racing, jump racing, or harness racing.

Dressage - a kind of ballet on horseback, combining power, beauty, and precision. In dressage competitions, the riders must execute certain predefined movements and are judged on the accuracy, suppleness, and overall balance of horse and rider.

Eventing - an equestrian triathlon consisting of dressage, cross country, and show jumping over three days. The winner is the one that has the highest score overall.

Barrel Racing - a rodeo event where the rider needs to complete a clover leaf pattern around three preset barrels. The winner is the one who completes the pattern in the fastest time.

Polo - team sport where players score by driving a small ball into the opposing team's goal using a long-handled mallet. The winner is the team that has the highest score.

Trail Riding - an outdoor activity where horses are ridden on natural trails. A trail ride can be an informal activity done by one person or a group of people. It can also be a competitive event, which tests the trail riding ability of the horse and rider.

Light horses have the following distinguishing characteristics:

- Medium height from 14.2 to 17.2 hands.
- Medium weight from 900 to 1,400 lbs.
- Long and flexible neck to keep them well-balanced when running and maneuvering.
- Sloped shoulders creating smooth movements that give a comfortable ride.
- Back is not too broad with clearly defined withers to allow the saddle to be easily fitted.
- The "true ribs" (first 8) are flat to let the saddle lie behind the trapezius muscle.
- The "false ribs" (last 10) are rounded and well sprung allowing for lung expansion.
- Long, thin legs designed for speed.

Although light horses have the characteristics mentioned above, there are variations depending on the type of light horse. The different types of light horses include **Stock, Sport, Baroque, and Gaited**. For more about these different types, check out this article about the [4 Types of Light Horses](#).

Examples of light horse breeds include:

- Thoroughbred
- Arabian
- Quarter Horse
- Tennessee Walking Horse
- Morgan horse
- Mustang



Ponies were originally developed as working horses to help humans in farm work, for pulling loads in coal mines and forestry, and for transportation. Ponies have defining characteristics; they tend to be small and stocky, with a thick neck, wide chest, and a round body with dense bones. They are very strong for their size and robust, being able to survive in harsh environments, with heavy body hair, and a thick mane and tail. Their legs are proportionally short to the body, with strong hooves, and a short, choppy stride. Later, ponies were crossed with light horses such as the Arabian, which made them more suitable for riding.

The main difference between horses and ponies is their height. Horses are at least 14.2 hands tall at the shoulders (a.k.a. withers); ponies are shorter than 14.2 hands. However, not every small horse is considered a pony. The definition can become blurry because height is not the only characteristic that defines a pony.

Tradition also plays a role in defining whether an animal is a pony or a horse. If, for centuries, an animal that has the typical characteristics of a pony was always called a horse, then it will still be considered a horse today. For example, the Icelandic horse and the Fjord horse can actually be slightly smaller than 14.2 hands while still being called horses. All polo mounts are called ponies because this discipline originated in India with the Manipuri pony. Since then, all the breeds that participate in this sport are referred to as ponies.

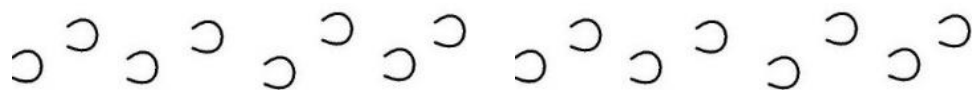
Some people may think that a pony is a baby horse because of its small size, but, of course, this is not correct. A baby horse, known as a foal during its first year of life, may be the same height as some full-grown ponies, but the two can be distinguished by their different proportions, especially in the legs. While a pony's legs are typically short relative to its body size, a foal's legs are notably long relative to its overall size.



You also might think that a miniature horse is really just a pony — but it's actually more complicated than that. According to the American Miniature Horse Association, horses can only be up to 34 inches tall at the withers to be considered miniature - so mini horses are often smaller than ponies, since ponies can be up to 14.1 hands tall. Miniature horses aren't typically used for riding or work (unlike ponies), since they can easily be injured due to their small size. Many mini horses are good pets or therapy animals.

For more information:

- [The 3 Types of Horses by Size & Build \[Heavy, Light, Pony\] \(horsesandus.com\)](https://www.horsesandus.com/the-3-types-of-horses-by-size-build-heavy-light-pony/)
- [Horse Breeds: Identifying Ponies, Light Horses and Heavy Ones \(thefarrierguide.com\)](https://www.thefarrierguide.com/horse-breeds-identifying-ponies-light-horses-and-heavy-ones/)
- [Types Of Horses: What's The Difference Between Ponies, Light Breeds and Heavy Breeds? - DodoWell - The Dodo](https://www.dodowell.com/types-of-horses-what-s-the-difference-between-ponies-light-breeds-and-heavy-breeds/)
- [7 Differences Between Foal and Pony with Table - Animal Differences](https://www.dodowell.com/7-differences-between-foal-and-pony-with-table/)
- [The Difference Between Miniature Horses and Ponies - Horse Illustrated](https://www.horseillustrated.com/the-difference-between-miniature-horses-and-ponies/)



CHEFF UPDATES

WE ARE SAD TO ANNOUNCE THAT PRINCESS PASSED AWAY SUDDENLY around the 28th of January. We are not sure what the cause of her death was and are awaiting the results of the necropsy report from MSU. Because she was not being used in classes, the clients will not need to be aware of her passing.



GIRLZ IN THE BARN is back, running on Mondays from February 5th – March 18th, 4-6PM. In this fun program, tween and teen girls work on improving communication, regulating emotions, and enhancing their problem-solving skills, and spend their time riding and doing off-horse activities.

ROUND
UP &
DONATE!



ALL TICKET SALES GO TO
THESE AMAZING LOCAL CHARITIES:
THE AUDREY HENSLEY
FAMILY FOUNDATION
AND CHEFF THERAPEUTIC
RIDING CENTER



HELP US RAISE MONEY FOR CHEFF AT LOUIE'S 18TH ANNUAL CHARITY GUMBO COOK-OFF!

We are fortunate to have been chosen (again!) by Louie's Trophy House to be the recipients of some of the proceeds from the Gumbo cook-off! We have been asked to staff the cook-off with volunteers to help check guests in, clear tables, keep the tent clean/clutter free, etc. There will be two shifts: 10AM-1:30PM and 1:30-5:00PM.

Volunteers will receive free entry, gumbo samples after your shift, and if you like, a cocktail or two.

You get to listen to the live music and people-watch to your heart's content! A good time is had by all, and it's a bustling day full of fun! Let Sara know if you are interested in helping!

Sunday - February 25, 2024

Louie's Trophy House

629 Walbridge St. Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Doors open at 11AM | Gumbo from 12-5PM

FAREWELL, ASHTON!

Our instructor, Ashton, has moved on to another therapeutic riding center closer to her home in Grand Haven. We wish her the best of luck with her new endeavor!

OUR NEXT VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION IS MARCH 23RD FROM 10AM-1PM.

Please make sure to invite your friends, family, and co-workers to attend!

FUN FACT

When the Kentucky Derby takes place on Saturday, May 4th this year, it will mark a major milestone: the 150th running of the world-famous race.

Over this long history, African Americans have made extensive contributions to the development and success of the Derby and the overall sport of horse racing in the U.S. However, this important story is not widely known, especially outside of the racing and Thoroughbred industries.

Before the Civil War, Black men and boys were a backbone of horse racing, working as grooms, farriers, trainers, and jockeys. In the South, most were doing these jobs as enslaved persons.

In 1865, the Civil War ended, and the 13th Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the U.S. From then into the early 1900s, African Americans were a prominent force throughout horse racing. Some were stable owners. Many Black jockeys became celebrities and were paid accordingly. They dominated at the track during this period, as shown by the following highlights of the Kentucky Derby:

- The first Kentucky Derby, run in 1875, was won by African American jockey **Oliver Lewis**, riding Aristides.
- In the inaugural Derby, 13 of the 15 jockeys were African Americans.
- Black jockeys rode winners in 15 of the first 28 runnings of the Derby, 1875-1902.
- **Isaac Burns Murphy**, who was born into slavery in 1861, was the first jockey to win the Derby three times – in 1884, 1890 and 1891. Murphy was a racing superstar and one of the best jockeys of all time. In 1955, he became the first jockey [inducted](#) into the National Racing Hall of Fame in Saratoga Springs, NY.
- **Jimmy Winkfield** won the Kentucky Derby in 1901 and 1902, one of the few jockeys to have back-to-back victories. To date, he's the last African American rider to win the Derby. Winkfield is also a Hall of Famer, [inducted](#) in 2004.
- The renowned trainer **Ansel Williamson**, born into slavery in 1806, trained two 1875 winners – Aristides in the Derby and Calvin in the Belmont Stakes – and many other first-place finishers. Williamson was [inducted](#) into the National Racing Hall of Fame as a trainer in 1998.



Oliver Lewis



Isaac Murphy

Opportunities for Black jockeys in the U.S. decreased dramatically by the early 1900s. The U.S. Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision in 1896 ushered in the

“separate but equal” doctrine; decades of Jim Crow laws of segregation and discrimination followed.

African American jockeys were forced out of the racing industry in various ways. Sometimes their licenses simply were not renewed. Other times there were threats or actual violence at the track.

Some of these riders left the field altogether; some stayed in racing, but switched from the high-profile, lucrative position of jockey to behind-the-scenes jobs. Others, like Jimmy Winkfield, found respect and opportunity abroad. Winkfield moved to Europe, where he was a successful jockey in Russia and France, and later a trainer.

Again, this societal change was reflected in Kentucky Derby history: after 1921, no African American jockey rode in the Derby until 2000, when Marlon St. Julien broke the 79-year gap, riding Curule to seventh place. A few Black jockeys have been in the Derby since St. Julien, but, so far, no winners. Jimmy Winkfield, with his 1902 ride, remains the last Black jockey to win the Derby.

After being overlooked through much of the 1900s, the record of African Americans in horse racing is now receiving more attention. Libraries, museums, and other organizations are educating the public on this significant part of U.S. history (see sources list below). Groups such as the [Ed Brown Society](#) are providing internships and scholarships for young people of color to experience the industry and consider it as a career path.

Sources and more info (including a few videos):

- [The Heart of the Turf: Racing’s Black Pioneers](#) – a 2023 exhibit and excellent [eBook](#) from the Keeneland Library, Lexington, KY.
- [Black Heritage in Racing](#) – exhibit at the Kentucky Derby Museum, Louisville, KY, with 2021 [accompanying video](#) (4.5 min).
- [Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry](#) – a project of the International Museum of the Horse in Lexington, KY. The Chronicle is actively collecting info on African Americans working with horses in any way, not just the racing industry. [Accompanying video](#) (4 min).
- [Project to Preserve African American Turf History](#) – interesting organization that publicizes African American achievement in horse racing through art, film, and community events.
- [How African Americans Disappeared from the Kentucky Derby](#) Smithsonian, May 5, 2017.
- [In a Neglected Cemetery Lie Black Jockeys Who Helped Create the Kentucky Derby](#) LA Times, May 2, 2019, with great [accompanying video](#) featuring Lexington’s African Cemetery No. 2 (3 min).
- [Carmouche to be 1st Black Jockey in Kentucky Derby Since ‘13](#) AP News, Apr 28, 2021.
- Churchill Downs photo from Library of Congress; others from Wikimedia Commons.



Churchill Downs in 1901, the year Jimmy Winkfield rode the first of his back-to-back Kentucky Derby wins.



Jimmy Winkfield riding Alan-a-Dale. The pair won the 1902 Derby. (We believe this is Winkfield ... one source labeled it differently.)



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Matthew B

Jenielle DB

Jacqueline K

Linnea O'N

Holden R

Sarah S

Alisha B

Greta H

Michael M

Lauren P

Eva S

Alex S

Carla C

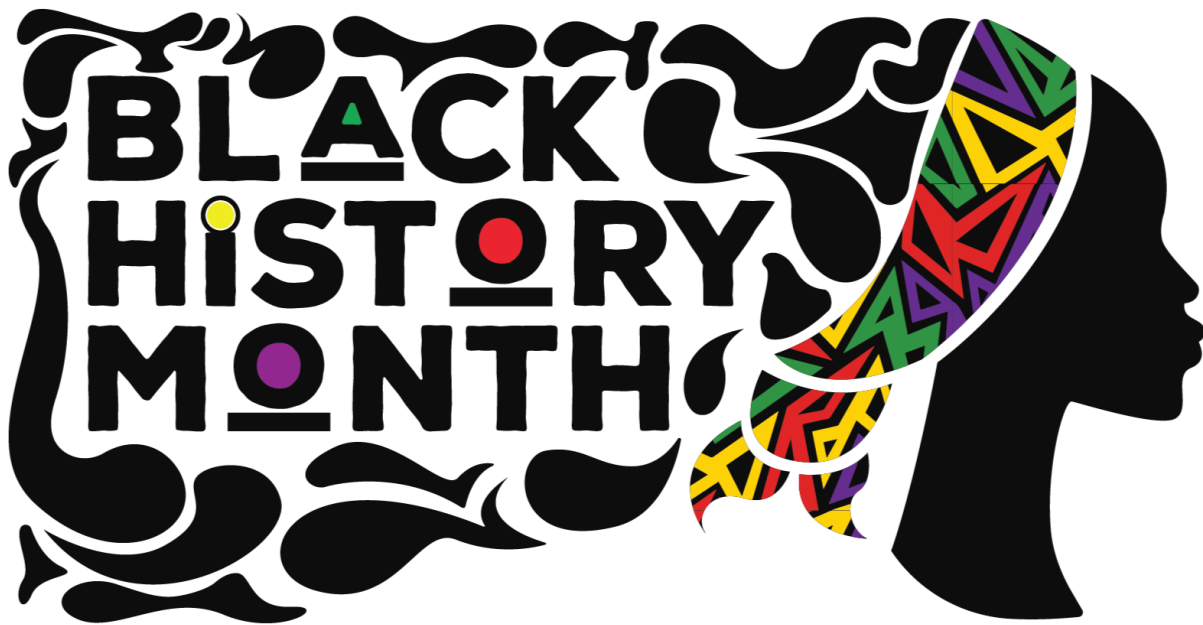
Jen K

Karen N

Connor P

Morgan S

Sadie W



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: <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. Simply register at: support.rxfundraising.com/CheffCenter

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!

Any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?

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

Newsletter Contributions by: Emily Fields, Ann Lindsay, Morgan Meulman, Sara Putney, Marianne Stier

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