



November 2023 Issue 35

# CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: ELLEN SPONSLER-ANDRASI



Ryan and Ellen

Meet Ellen Sponsler-Andrasi, our Volunteer of the Month for November.

Ellen grew up in Parma, MI, where her family raised livestock animals (pigs, chickens, rabbits, sheep, and cows) but didn't have horses. She had always wanted horses, so to get her horse fix, she volunteered at a riding program—Sitting Tall—which is similar to the Cheff Center program. For seven years she spent most of her

childhood Saturdays working in the barn and with the horses.

After high school, Ellen attended Western Michigan University and got her degree in special education. She teaches at Plainwell Middle School where she has been for the past eight years. Prior to that, Ellen worked at Michigan International Speedway in the sign department and worked as a substitute teacher.

In her spare time, Ellen enjoys spending time with her husband Aaron and two miniature schnauzers, Tuck and Cooper. She also enjoys tent-camping, gardening, and crocheting.

Her favorite horse at Cheff? Ryan. She likes his pace, he keeps her on her toes, and she enjoys his personality.

She loves volunteering at Cheff for several reasons—working with Cheff clients is very different than what she does at Plainwell Middle School. She also feels that working with the horses is personally very therapeutic and looks forward to her time here every week. (That seems to be a common sentiment from many, many volunteers! We are very fortunate!)

Thank you, Ellen, for choosing the Cheff Center to spend your spare time—we are happy you did!



# HORSE OF THE MONTH: BLUE



Blue

Say hello to one of Cheff's newest herd members: Blue!

Blue arrived at Cheff in August, coming from a show barn where he was shown by a young girl until just a few years ago.

Blue is a handsome 16-year-old American Paint Horse (APHA), who stands 15.1 hands high, and weighs about 1,000 lbs. Blue has a unique characteristic – his left eye is bright blue!

Blue is known as one of the "chillest" personalities in the arena and in the barn, although he tends to be much more dominant in the herd and while out in the field. And when it comes to treats, Blue never met a treat he doesn't like!

Blue does require front shoes for support to keep him comfortable and in good condition.

Welcome, Blue, we're glad to have you!



Daylight Saving Time Ends  
on Sunday, November 5, 2023



**November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**Veterans Day**



# FAREWELL TO BARB AND DAVE

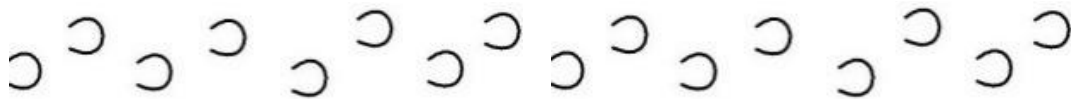


Dave and Barb with Princess

After volunteering with the Cheff Center for over 11 years and 2,000+ combined volunteer hours, Dave and Barb Eshuis have decided to retire. It is not a decision they made lightly and their hearts will always be with Cheff, the horses and our clients.

Dave and Barb started volunteering in 2012, and not only led horses in classes, but maintained our flowers and gardens, trained new volunteers as part of the orientation team, and have been incredible mentors and role models for both our volunteers and clients. Their positive attitudes brought smiles to everyone's faces whenever they were here.

Although we will miss them very much, we would like to wish them the best of times in their "second retirement"!



*"There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others."*

*~ Mandy Hale*

## Equine Chiropractic

You are probably aware of chiropractic as a type of medical care for humans. It's most commonly used to address back and neck pain, and other musculoskeletal conditions. What's less widely known is that chiropractic is also used to treat animals, including horses, for similar ailments.

Chiropractic is a type of "complementary" medicine, meaning it is a practice that developed outside of mainstream medical care, but is now used together with – or as a complement to -- conventional medicine in certain situations. Acupuncture and massage therapy are other examples of complementary treatments that are used in both human and veterinary medicine.

What is chiropractic treatment? The American Association of Equine Practitioners defines it as "a form of manual therapy that uses controlled forces applied to specific joints or anatomic areas to cause a healing response." (From AAEP - [Equine Chiropractic: General Principles and Applications.](#))

A basic concept in chiropractic treatment is that the joints of the spinal column have a natural flexibility and range of motion. If there is disfunction or restricted mobility in one or more of these joints, the adjacent nerves, muscles and tissue may be negatively affected. In turn, this can cause pain and other problems throughout the body.



An equine chiropractic adjustment in progress.

To restore mobility to restricted spinal joints, a veterinarian or chiropractor uses their hands (and sometimes a device) to perform an "adjustment" on each of the problem areas. An adjustment is a quick, controlled thrust or push in the area of the joint.

What are the signs of spinal joint problems in an equine? Here are some examples ... (there are many others):

- Back, neck or tail pain
- Muscle stiffness
- Difficulty getting up and down
- Changes in posture or topline
- Discomfort being saddled
- Difficulty bending to one side
- Uneven pelvis or hips
- Uneven muscle development

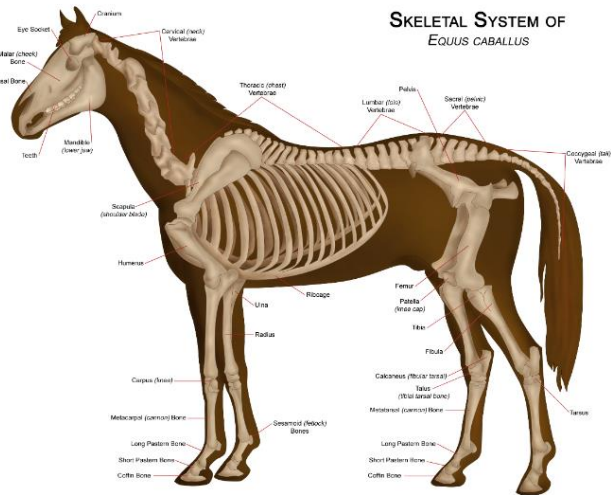
What causes spinal joint restriction? It can result from many situations, including injury, poor saddle fit, the type of work or athletic activity a horse performs, and an equine's individual conformation problems. Lack of exercise can also contribute to the problem; for example, if a horse is restricted to a stall or traveling via trailer for an extended period.

An important thing to keep in mind about complementary therapies like chiropractic is that they are additional tools for medical professionals to use but are not replacements for conventional medical

care. So, when symptoms appear like those listed above, it's important first to get a veterinarian's assessment and decide from there on the appropriate treatment.

The International Veterinary Chiropractic Association explains it like this: "Veterinary chiropractic treatment does not replace traditional veterinary medicine; however, it can provide additional means of diagnosis and treatment options for spinal problems as well as biomechanical-related musculoskeletal disorders." (From IVCA - [What is Chiropractic Care?](#))

Who performs equine chiropractic care? In the U.S., the typical starting point is to be a veterinarian with a DVM degree (doctor of veterinary medicine) or a chiropractor with a DC degree (doctor of chiropractic) and then do additional training and testing for certification in veterinary chiropractic care. Two certifying agencies are the American Veterinary Chiropractic Association and the International Veterinary Chiropractic Association.



The spine is a focal point of chiropractic treatment. See a larger version of the diagram [here](#).

At the Cheff Center, chiropractic care has been part of the herd's medical program for some time. Cheff's veterinarian is certified in chiropractic and acupuncture so can provide both kinds of therapies, as needed. Chiropractic sessions are scheduled every eight weeks and cost about \$100 per treatment.

Here's more on how chiropractic care has aided the Cheff herd. Special thanks to instructor Emily for providing this summary:

- **Winston and Monte** receive both chiropractic care and acupuncture. See the [October 2023 newsletter](#), p. 3-4, for more on their treatment and on equine acupuncture in general.
- **Blue** was a show horse on the APHA circuit in his previous life and had regular chiropractic work. It was crucial to keep him comfortable and in alignment due to the job he was doing. If he was out of alignment in his back, pelvis or neck, he wouldn't be able to perform as he should.
- **Scoobie** has had chiropractic work done in the past with his previous owner.
- **Simon** has had chiropractic work done. Simon has navicular in his left front. Due to naturally favoring that leg, he becomes tight in his left shoulder and, at times, off in the right hind due to changes in his pelvis. Over a period of time, just like humans, if a horse does not move symmetrically, his body will naturally start to compensate, causing muscular and skeletal changes. By doing regular adjustments, we help keep Simon's body where it needs to be.
- New to our herd, **Phillip** is on the list for upcoming chiropractic work. He tends to be short-strided in his right hand but isn't lame, so we think he might be "stuck" in his pelvis or perhaps took a fall that caused some change in position of the joint. By doing a chiropractic adjustment, we can make sure Phillip's hips are aligned and can also check to see if he is "stuck" in his hock or stifle joint.

- **Harry** is newer to chiropractic work at Cheff. He has been treated the past couple times due to showing discomfort when his saddle is being adjusted/tightened. It turns out he was out of alignment in his sternum and his ribs, which causes a lot of discomfort for both saddling and riding. After he was adjusted, he had a couple days off and then had a much better outlook on life! We are starting to notice some of these behaviors return, so he is on the list for another treatment.
- **Garth** is a sturdy animal. We have had him scanned for any soreness throughout his back; so far, he has only been adjusted once during his time at Cheff.
- **Art** is another sturdy animal. He has had minimal issues with his back and has only been adjusted one or two times.
- **Emma** does very well maintaining, so is not usually on the list for chiropractic work.
- **Tess** carries a lot of our heavy and unbalanced riders; she tends to be out in her mid/low back as well as her pelvis. She had a fall a couple years ago that caused some damage to her right stifle joint. If you are behind her and watch her walk, her right hind twists to the outside. This makes it difficult to keep her pelvis aligned; then, when her pelvis is out, that affects her back, which affects her neck. When one area of the body is sore and out of alignment, the body compensates, which can cause troubles in other areas. By keeping Tess as a regular for our chiropractic work, this helps to keep her as comfortable as possible.
- **Ryan** is newer to our herd and hasn't had chiro treatment yet at Cheff. We will put him on our list for chiropractic assessment. He isn't showing any outward signs of discomfort, but because he carries heavier riders, we will want to make sure that it's not affecting his skeletal system.

### Sources and More Info

- [Complementary, Alternative, or Integrative Health: What's In a Name?](#) National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, a division of the U.S. National Institutes of Health.
- [Chiropractic Care for Horses](#), Univ of California Davis, Veterinary Medicine, Center for Equine Health.
- [The Benefits of Chiropractic Care](#) and [Equine Chiropractic: General Principles and Applications](#), American Association of Equine Practitioners.
- [Complementary Therapies for Horses](#), TheHorse.com.
- [What is Veterinary Chiropractic?](#) International Veterinary Chiropractic Association.
- [American Veterinary Chiropractic Association](#).
- Images from Wikimedia Commons: [Adjustment](#) | [Equine Skeleton](#)

### Video

- [Equine Acupuncture and Chiropractic Exam with Dr. Sarah le Jeune](#), 4 min. video; [chiropractic portion](#) begins at 1:09. Univ of California Davis, Veterinary Medicine, Center for Equine Health.

*If you would like to contribute toward the costs of the herd's medical program, you can do so [here](#). Donations of any size are always appreciated and make a difference. Thank you.*





# MEET MADISON K!



Tess and Maddie K

Meet Madison (Maddie) Kalinosky—she will be interning with us as she schools to become a therapeutic riding instructor.

Maddie grew up in Pennfield and graduated from Pennfield High School. After graduation, she worked in a medical office in the records department, worked in a daycare center with 2 ½ to 4-year-old children, and has recently started working in a large and small animal veterinary clinic. As you can imagine, she is very busy balancing work and her internship and schooling, but she is very happy to be doing so.

Maddie started volunteering with Cheff in 2022 after doing some research on therapeutic riding. She wanted to see what it was all about and if it was something she wanted to pursue as a career. Since she started, she has logged over 125 volunteer hours on her own, and will be logging many more as she works toward her certification.

She has 25 hours of teaching to complete, as well as barn management and equine handling

skills experience. She teaches a class on Tuesdays, and then watches the remainder of the classes and observes the clients, the instructors, and the horses. She is intrigued by how the instructors pair the client with the horse and the tack used for that client. She is learning about the different disabilities our clients face by doing research on her own, but also speaking with our instructors who are, themselves, quite knowledgeable and happy to answer her questions.

In her spare time, Maddie is an avid rider—she rides saddle seat, Western, and English, and though she has only ridden for three years, she has competed quite a bit and become quite a good rider.

We are so happy to have Maddie here and are excited to know that she will someday become a therapeutic riding instructor!



## CHEFF UPDATES

### HERD UPDATES

Our two new Percherons, Princess and Boomer, are slowly getting ready to join classes. They are adjusting beautifully and getting used to the Cheff way of horse life.



Rosie

Rosie is doing very well in classes and is also adjusting well within the herd.

We now have a good-sized, healthy herd and are very thankful for that! With so many new horses, we look forward to bringing you articles about each of them individually, and hope that you will all have a chance to meet them soon!



Princess and Boomer

### HORSE BEHAVIOR & READING BODY LANGUAGE CLASS IS SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 20, FROM 6-8PM.

Ever wonder how horses communicate and why they do the things they do? Then this is the class for you! Part of the herd will be in the arena where you will observe, ask questions, and learn about their behavior/body language. Class size is limited to 12 per session, but this course will be offered again in January. Contact [Sara](#) to sign up.

### JANUARY IS EDUCATION MONTH!

Since Cheff is closed during the month of January, we always make January our education month. Below is a list of the classes being offered; if interested in any of these, please contact [Sara](#) to register.

- January 3 Leading and Mounting
- January 10 Emergency Procedures In and Out of the Arena
- January 17 How-To's with Tack and Commonly Used Equipment
- January 24 Client Diagnoses and Importance of Sidewalkers
- January 29 Leading and Mounting (held after new volunteer orientation)
- January 31 Horse Behavior and Reading Body Language

All classes run 5:30-7:30PM. The Leading and Mounting class will now be offered after each orientation.



## FUN FACT

The introduction of horses to Native American cultures had a profound impact on their way of life. Horses provided a means of transportation, increased mobility, and gave them a new way to hunt and survive; horses also became a symbol of wealth and power.

For the buffalo-hunting Plains Indians, the swift and strong animals quickly became prized. Horses revolutionized Native life and became an integral part of tribal cultures, honored in objects, stories, songs, and ceremonies. Horses allowed men to hunt buffalo more productively than ever before, to range farther, and to make devastating raids against other tribes. They relieved women of some onerous duties, such as lugging possessions from camp to camp.

It was previously thought that horses were first introduced to Native American tribes by European explorers, but after examining archaeological remains of horses, researchers suggest Indigenous peoples had spread the animals through the American West by the first half of the 1600s—before they encountered Europeans. The findings align with oral histories from Indigenous groups, which tell of interactions with horses prior to colonizers arriving in their homelands.



For more information:

<https://www.history.com/news/horses-plains-indians-native-americans>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/native-american-horse>

<https://horsecareadvisor.com>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/native-americans-spread-horses-west-earlier-than-thought>

# NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Aaron A

Jacky F

Carrie K

Claire P

Mohammad T

Matt C

Mady F

Ann L

Kennedi R

Dale W

Corbin F

Alexis H

Paige M

Runa S



## **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!

## **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](http://support.rxfundraising.com/CheffCenter)

## **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, Marianne Stier

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