



August 2021 Issue 12

# CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: EMILY BECK



Tina and Emily

Emily started as a Cheff Center volunteer in Fall 2019, during her initial year as a student at Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine.

The school's Active Citizenship program gives first- and second-year medical students an opportunity to work with a local organization and hone skills such as advocacy, leadership, and communication. When Emily saw Cheff on the list of agencies participating in the program, she knew it was for her.

She had grown up with horses and was familiar with the concept of equine-assisted services but had not yet seen activities like therapeutic riding in person. She found she really enjoyed being at Cheff, so after completing the service-learning program, she stayed on as a Cheff volunteer.

Now a third-year student, Emily has reached the point in medical school when the format transitions from primarily a classroom setting to clerkships, where students work as part of a healthcare team in the community, including at Borgess and Bronson hospitals. Each clerkship focuses on a particular medical specialty. Emily's done a clerkship in family medicine and is currently in psychiatry, with several more to come.

Minot, ND, is Emily's hometown. She and her sisters got their love of horses early on from their mom, who had grown up with horses herself and showed Appaloosas. Emily was in 4H and did some showing of Appaloosas and quarter horses. She also had a nifty job over a few summers taking care of several retired show horses.

From Minot, Emily went on to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, where she majored in neuroscience. She then went on to apply to medical school and was invited to interview at Homer Stryker School of Medicine, which was her favorite on the interview trail. She was

accepted into the class of 2023, and that's what brought her to southwest Michigan.

Next year, Emily and the other students in her class will apply for medical residencies that begin after graduation and last several years. She is not yet 100% decided on her focus area but is leaning toward a surgical specialty with a subspecialty in pediatrics. She plans to continue at Cheff while she's in the area as much as her varying schedule allows.

What are some of Emily's favorite things about volunteering at Cheff? She's really enjoyed being able to team up with the same client and horse over the course of a session or longer and build a connection, something many of us volunteers can relate to.

She worked with one young rider, for instance, who didn't speak for several classes, but Emily continued to encourage him and ask questions. One week she happened to ask about his favorite food, and he replied enthusiastically, "French fries!" It was a special moment and led to more conversation. "It's neat to see a change like that and to get to be part of it," she noted.

Emily said it is meaningful to see the overall impact for clients of therapeutic riding and related services like hippotherapy (where a horse's movement is used as a treatment tool in physical therapy and other therapies). It's a useful background for students like her going into a medical profession – to keep in mind for future patients who might benefit from these services and for helping increase general awareness of these options and their value.

Being a Western rider in North Dakota, one thing that was new to Emily at Cheff: English tack! She has found all the Cheff horses great to work with and has spent the most time with Garth and Tina. "Garth is a real sweetie," she said. She has observed him being purposely accommodating to his riders. She's been teamed up with Tina frequently since Cheff reopened this year.

On a personal level, Emily says getting to hang out with the Cheff herd is a nice reminder of home and helps her not miss it as much as she might.

Thank you so much, Emily, for including Cheff in your schedule and for sharing your enthusiasm and expertise with all of us. We glad you're here and wish you the best in your medical studies and future career!



IT'S SUMMER ...



REMEMBER TO  
WEAR YOUR  
SUNSCREEN!

# HORSE OF THE MONTH: WINSTON



Winston the Wondrous!

In January of 2016, a beautiful 15.2 HH chestnut gelding named Winston arrived at Cheff. He arrived from Brighton, on the east side of the state, where his previous owner had hoped that Winston would be a dressage horse - but Winston had other ideas and dressage just wasn't his thing.

Winston, a 19-year-old, 1100-pound brown-eyed beauty is double registered with the APHA/AQHA\*. When Winston came to Cheff he was a solid chestnut but as he ages, he is developing charming white spots called Birdcatcher spots. (If you'd like to know more about Birdcatcher spots, check out our Fun Fact this month).

Winston can be a little pushy at times with his face and he doesn't like it very much when his girth/cinch is too tight – can you

blame him? When Winston thinks his “belt” feels too tight, he will bob his head up and down to let you know! Winston loves to go on trail rides, but he isn't a big fan of mud! But he is definitely a fan of peppermint oatmeal treats, they are his favorite!

Winston is one of our horses that requires chiropractic, massage, and acupuncture treatments. To help these treatments remain effective for as long as possible, he's hoping to get a size 81 Back on Track Mesh Sheet for before and after classes. He would also love any donation towards his back treatments.

Next time you're in the barn, make sure to stop and say hello to Winston!

\* APHA/AQHA - (American Paint Horse Association/American Quarter Horse Association)





## August Fun Fact

*Birdcatcher spots are named for the Irish-born Thoroughbred stallion Birdcatcher (1833), who displayed white flecks of hair along his flank and above his tail. A horse may have only one, or a cluster of dime-sized spots that pop up spontaneously on the body of horses of practically any solid color, although they occur most frequently in chestnuts. These spots may occur as the horse ages, or they may occur and disappear throughout a horse's lifetime.*

*Sometimes the markings seem to move around a bit, vanishing and reappearing elsewhere on the body. They may also disappear entirely over time. However, unlike other white hairs that can appear from ill-fitting tack or leg wraps that rub, these marks have no relation to injury or skin damage. No formal studies have been done on this rare coat characteristic to link them genetically to a specific breed, but they do tend to run in families.*



*“The essential joy of being with horses is that it brings us in contact with the rare elements of grace, beauty, spirit, and freedom.”– Sharon Ralls Lemon*

# EDUCATION CORNER: FLIES!

Last month we talked about summer issues that affect horses, mainly how heat can be detrimental to horses. This month we are going to highlight another issue that plagues horses (and people in the barn!) mostly during the summer but can be an issue in spring and fall as well: Flies!

We all know how annoying flies are in the barn, but did you know there are many different types of flies that love to be in the barn?

## House flies



The most common flies around stables, house flies are non-biting flies that feed on facial secretions, wet feed, and manure. They are also found around the sheaths of horses and can be very annoying in large numbers. House flies eat both liquids and solids, but to eat solids they vomit onto the food and their saliva liquifies the solid, allowing them to suck the liquid up. Female house flies lay eggs in manure, carrion, garbage, and other decaying organic matter. The best way to control house flies is manure management, elimination of breeding sites, and fly control products including on-animal sprays, feed-through (a larvicide given to the horse in its feed which is eliminated in its manure, preventing larvae from developing), scatter baits (a granular product that you “scatter” in and around fly-infested areas) and non-insecticidal traps.

## Face flies



Also non-biting flies, face flies also feed on the facial secretions of the horse. Face flies can transmit pathogens such as pinkeye in cattle. Adult female flies gather around the face, muzzle, and eyes, and are incredibly annoying to the horse. They lay eggs in fresh cow manure because the larvae cannot develop in horse manure, then may travel several miles to feed on horses. For that reason, when treating an area for face flies, any nearby cattle pastures should be treated as well. To control face flies, the most effective methods are on-animal fly sprays concentrated on the face and head, and fly masks.

## Stable flies



Stable flies are blood-feeding flies that often feed on the legs of horses. They have a piercing, sucking type mouth and their bites are quite painful. Stable flies tend to bite the legs and bellies of horses. These biting flies are often responsible for transmission of equine infectious anemia and anaplasmosis (a tick-borne pathogen that can cause fever, depression, limb swelling and lack of coordination in horses). Female stable flies lay their eggs in decaying organic matter and aged manure. The best way to control stable flies is with proper manure management, elimination of decaying organic matter (grass clippings, wet straw, etc.), and on-animal fly sprays (especially on the legs and belly). Residual sprays can be sprayed on manure and on shady sides of barns where flies rest, and feed-through products can help prevent larvae from turning into adults.

## Horse and Deer flies



*Horse Fly*



*Deer Fly*

Horse and deer flies are grouped in one family. Females feed on blood and have knifelike mouth parts which cause extremely painful bites that result in bloody feeding sites, while males mostly feed on pollen or nectar. They lay their eggs in vegetation around water and the larvae are often

aquatic or semi-aquatic. They do not spend long amounts of time feeding (biting the horse) so they are extremely difficult to control. On-animal fly sprays are somewhat effective but must be reapplied frequently. There are many traps available that will help reduce the number of flies, but complete elimination is quite difficult.

## Horn flies



Horn flies are small flies that mostly feed on cattle, but can be found around horses, goats, and sheep. Both males and females have piercing mouth parts and feed on blood. You mostly will find horn flies on the backs, shoulders, and sides of the animal. They may

feed up to 40 times a day. Because they feed so often, they often remain on the back of their host day and night, only leaving when disturbed by the host or to lay eggs. Females lay eggs in fresh cattle manure only as the larvae will not develop in horse manure. Horn flies may be controlled by using horse-friendly insecticidal sprays, but because horn flies often travel from cattle fields to horse pastures, it is important to spray the nearby cattle field as well.

## Mosquitos



Mosquitos have long, thin bodies with a long, sharp, sucking mouth part. Like the horse and deer flies, adult males feed on nectar and pollen while the females feed on blood. Mosquitos lay their eggs on the surface of standing water or where flooding tends to occur. Mosquitos are quite dangerous for horses as they can transmit Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), Western Equine Encephalitis (WEE), and the West Nile Virus.

- EEE--Horses that contract EEE show symptoms within 5 days of being bitten. Symptoms of EEE include fever, a sleepy appearance, muscle twitches of the head, neck, shoulder, and flank, and a weak and staggering gait. There is no cure for EEE once contracted. The mortality rate for EEE is 75-95%, with horses who survive suffering permanent neurological damage. Horses may die as quickly as 3 days after becoming symptomatic.
- WEE--Transmitted from birds (via mosquitos) to horses and humans, WEE can cause inflammation of the brain. The symptoms of WEE may include depression, anorexia, lethargy, fever, tremors, paralysis, weakness, and incoordination in horses. The mortality rate for horses infected with WEE is around 20-50%, much lower than that of EEE. There is

no cure for WEE, and some horses may have long term deficits. Neither horses nor humans are contagious to others when affected by WEE. (Humans infected by WEE often have mild symptoms 5-15 days after being bitten which will usually resolve themselves in a short amount of time. Those with a more severe case may need to get medical support treatment).

- **West Nile Virus—WNV** is similar to EEE and WEE, affecting the neurological functioning of the horse. WNV causes inflammation of the brain or lining of the spinal cord. Symptoms of WNV usually appear between 5-15 days of being bitten, and although they are infected, they cannot transmit the infection to other horses or to humans. The mortality rate of 33% is slightly lower than those of EEE and WEE, although survivors may also often have permanent neurological issues.

To control mosquitos, any standing water should be eliminated in and near the barn. Waterers should be emptied and cleaned out every few days to interrupt the larval mosquito development. On-animal sprays are quite effective, as are insecticide barn misting systems. There are also growth regulators and biological control products that can be placed in standing water to kill mosquito larvae. Masks and blankets also aid in preventing bites.

### **Biting Midges**



Often called punkies or no see-ums, these are very small blood-feeding flies that can be present in thousands on an animal or human. They are mostly active in the early morning and at dusk. As with mosquitos, the eggs are laid near or in ponds, marshes or stock tanks and develop in muddy areas. The biting midge can cause “sweet itch” in horses, a chronic and seasonal skin irritation caused by a hyperreaction to the fly’s saliva. Biting midges do not cause diseases in humans, but can cause welts, rashes, and allergic reactions to their saliva. The best ways to control biting midges is with on-animal sprays, and to control their breeding grounds, just as with the other flies previously mentioned.

At Cheff, you have probably seen Tess and several of our other horses fully geared up with fly gear for protection. Different types of fly gear may be:

- **Fly Masks**—These can range from a mask over just the eyes to complete masks that cover the eyes, ears, and nose (not the mouth).



- **Fly Sheets**—Fly sheets are sheets that cover the withers, back and rump of the horse, and most of the belly. There are detachable neck sheets that you can attach that cover the neck up to the head.
- **Fly Boots, Turnout Socks and Leg Guards**—These can range in size and coverage, but basically, they cover the legs to prevent flies from biting the legs.



The flies highlighted in this article are the most common found in barns and pastures, but of course there are many others. To find out more about flies and horses, you can check out the following websites:

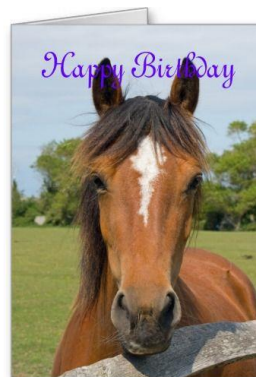
[www.horsehealthproducts.com](http://www.horsehealthproducts.com)

<https://extension.psu.edu/equine-insect-pests>

<https://thehorse.com>







## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Mark B

Samantha C

Lisa D

Sarah H

David ML

Austin M

Anna V

Sophie B

Joyce dJM

Rachel F

Tam H

Jewel MM

Maya Q

Shelly W

Erin C

Alyssa DV

Kelly G

Janet LF

Jacob MM

Kevin S



## Amazon Smile

Please remember that when you order online from **Amazon.com**, the Cheff Center can receive benefits when you do. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and register—we are one of the 1000s of Charities that you can choose from, and we will get 0.5% of your qualified purchases! To find out more, visit: <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about>

And if you really want to help, ask your friends and family to do the same. We thank you in advance, as every penny counts for us, especially at this time.

## Have any horse-related equipment hanging around?

Cheff relies HEAVILY on donations- if you have any gently used horse equipment- saddles, pads, blankets, sheets, (even half bottles of fly spray), we'd love to take them off your hands!

## Harding's

For those of you who shop at Harding's, if you join their Community Rewards program and select the Cheff Center as your organization of choice, we will receive a rebate based on your purchase amounts. For more information, click on the link below.

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

Again, we thank you in advance, and please let your friends and family know—every little bit helps!!!

## Do you have any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?

Or, if you would like to write an article, please contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, at [sara@cheffcenter.org](mailto:sara@cheffcenter.org)

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