



# CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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August/September 2022 Issue 23

**THE NEWSLETTER RETURNS IN OCTOBER!**

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: GRETCHEN ALLISON



Art and Gretchen

Gretchen Allison, our volunteer of the month, lives nearby on 42nd Street and frequently passes by Cheff. After Gretchen retired from Pfizer, she noted that Cheff was looking for volunteers; she had volunteered at other places but liked working with horses, so she signed up at Cheff. That was in 2019, just before the break for Covid.

Gretchen is married and has two grown children, along with a cat and a dog.

Gretchen sees her children often; she has close relationships with them as well as her parents and three brothers who live in southwest Michigan.

Gretchen and her husband recently bought a house near her childhood home on Donnell Lake, west of Three Rivers, where they plan to move full-time in the next few years.

Gretchen worked for 35 years at Pfizer (Pharmacia, Upjohn) before retiring. She has a bachelor's degree in chemistry and worked in quality assurance and quality control. For part of that time, she led large laboratories in several locations that tested Pfizer products for quality requirements.

Gretchen also worked closely with Pfizer manufacturing facilities worldwide to ensure they met regulatory requirements; that meant she traveled a lot both within and outside the U.S. to Western Europe, Asia, and other locations. She enjoyed experiencing the culture of other countries so different from our own; this could at times pose challenges such as language barriers and resistance to change that needed to be overcome.

Gretchen enjoys an active life - running, hiking, snow skiing, and gardening. She also enjoys spending time at the lake, swimming, and boating.

Gretchen grew up in southwest Michigan in Vandalia on Donnell Lake, about an hour from Cheff. Her parents still live there as well as two siblings. Gretchen has lived on 42nd Street for about 28 years on their 14-acre property, where they enjoy the tranquility of the rural area.

One of Gretchen's childhood friends lived on a farm and had a pony, and later a horse, which she and her friend would occasionally ride. The Shetland pony was stubborn when she rode him, so "I can't say that was a very enjoyable horse experience"! Many years later, she started hunter jumper/riding lessons at nearby Pine Meadow Farms and enjoyed riding there for over 15 years. Gretchen still volunteers there periodically.

Gretchen has several nephews with disabilities including Down syndrome and autism and is comfortable interacting with folks who have disabilities; she finds it interesting to learn more during training about other disabilities with which she is not familiar.

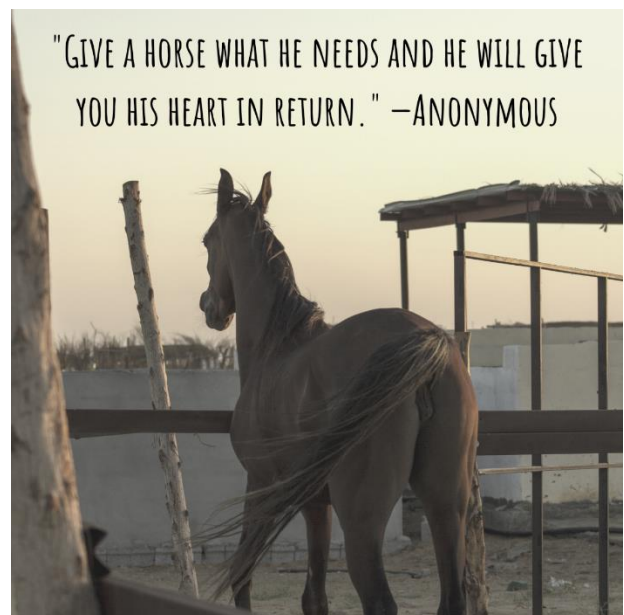
Gretchen enjoys working with the Cheff horses and being around the barn. She tries to make sure newer volunteers feel comfortable.

She has worked mostly with Art and Tina, enjoying them both, even though they have such different personalities.

Thanks so much, Gretchen, for your work at Cheff, we appreciate you!



# HAPPY & SUMMER!



# HORSE BREED OF THE MONTH – THE BELGIAN WARBLOOD



The Belgian Warmblood is a relatively new breed of warmblood horses that evolved in Belgium in the last century.

While other countries had warmblood horses for quite some time, Belgium did not create the Belgian Warmblood Horse until the 1900s. In an effort to protect the purity of Belgium's draft "Brabant" horse, the government essentially banned all breeders from developing any horses that would be used under saddle. However, with the increased interest in riding horses recreationally, as well

as the increased mechanization in the 1950s, the government relaxed its restrictions on breeders, and the Belgian people were finally able to catch up with the warmblood breeders in other countries.

In 1955 the National Breeding Association of the Saddle Horse studbook was created and efforts to breed an athletic leisure horse began. The Hanoverians and Holsteiners from Germany, along with the jumping horses from France and the Netherlands, served as the foundation stock of the future Belgian Warmbloods. In the meantime, the breeders from Belgium could also selectively breed new bloodlines through studbook selection.

Over the decades the Belgian Warmblood has been improved with Anglo-Arabs, Thoroughbreds, and established European warmbloods from Gelderland, Normandy, and Hannover. This careful mixture of the best European blood with 1,000 select broodmares laid the foundation for some of the top athletes in the world of horse sports today. Their goal was to create a warmblood breed that would be an exceptional jumping horse, with dense bones, strong quarters, and powerful limbs, instead of a horse that was built for speed, with delicate limbs. Careful breeding has resulted in a courageous and spirited, yet pleasant and willing mount to suit both pleasure riders and international competitors. The Belgian Warmblood is one of the best jumping breeds in the world.



*Belgian Warmblood Jumper and Rider*

Because Belgian Warmblood horses were mainly developed from equine breeds that were known for being hard workers with intelligence and a sensible disposition, these horses feature the same traits. Also, because these horses are intended to be used as performance animals, they are better suited to those riders who have at least a moderate level of experience working with horses. The rider should know how to be in charge of this horse, as it will have a strong personality.

The Belgian Warmblood is an intelligent, compact, and muscular horse. Belgian Warmbloods range in size and substance but should be correctly built, with a rectangular frame, big outlines, and good basic paces. Stallions range between 16-17 hands, while mares may not be bred unless they are at least 15.1 hands.

The chest should be a deep, and narrow to medium width, with well-sprung ribs. The head should be handsome and well carried with defined facial features, and dark eyes. The neck will be narrow, and the shoulders will be muscular and laid back. The croup should be short and sloping, the back will be proportionate to the rest of the body, with strong legs and quarters. Hooves are sturdy, large and sound.

Generally healthy, they have no known breed-specific diseases. The Belgian Warmblood features a coat that's finer than that of other breeds. The most common coat colors are chestnut, bay, brown, black, and grey. Pinto markings can occur, although they are rare.

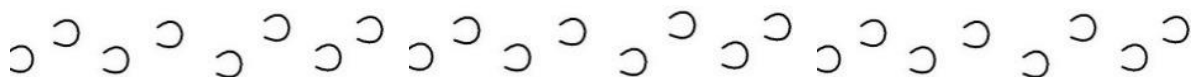
Under the care and guidance of the right owner and rider, the Belgian Warmblood Horse is a pleasure to work with, as it is willing to learn, multi-talented, and bright. These animals are loyal and gentle, despite their strong and athletic body, and they are tenacious and willing to work.



*Harry, Cheff's Own Belgian Warmblood*

For more information on this breed:

[Petguide-Belgian Warmblood Horse](#)  
[Belgian Warmblood \(horse-canada.com\)](#)



# WELCOME, KIM AND CHLOE!



Chloe, Tina, and Kim

We would like to (belatedly) introduce you to two new faces around Cheff—our intern, **Chloe Bartlett**, and our new barn worker and Hippotherapy person, **Kim Desch**. You have probably seen Kim around for a couple of months, and Chloe has been here since May. You may have met them and worked with them by now, but we would like to tell you a little more about them.

Kim is a local, having grown up in Battle Creek. She graduated high school and started at Kellogg Community College, but then decided she wanted to go into the armed forces. She joined the Air Force and became an A10 (airplane) crew chief. She was stationed in Arizona on active duty for four years. She stayed an additional year and then headed back to Michigan.

Once back, Kim went back to school at Western Michigan University, attended the police academy at Kellogg Community College, and joined the Air National Guard. She graduated WMU and the police academy at the same time and went on to become a police officer first in Kalamazoo and then in Van Buren County. She served

for eight years and then decided that the police force was not what she wanted to continue doing.

Shortly after Kim quit the police force, Covid struck. Fast forward to 2022, she saw an ad for the Cheff Center, and the rest is history! Kim has been riding and training horses for as long as she can remember, and she makes a great addition to the Cheff team!

Chloe grew up in Greenville, MI, where she still lives. She started riding horses and got her first horse at age 13. She decided that she would like to be a Therapeutic Riding Instructor and is attending Lake Erie College for Equine Therapeutic Horsemanship and Equine Management.

Chloe started interning with us in May of 2022, and has completed her intern hours, but you may still see her around the barn and arena as she continues to donate her time to us until she goes back to school in mid-August. She did suffer a broken foot when Willy stepped on it, so she you may have seen her with her therapeutic “boot” for the last several months, but her foot has healed nicely, and she no longer has to wear it.

Playing piano is one of her favorite pastimes, and she has a twin brother, younger brother, two cats and two dogs. Monte is Chloe’s favorite horse, and she loves being here because she loves how it influences everyone from the riders to the volunteers and the caregivers.

We will hope to see Chloe back here in the future, but in the meantime, we wish her well at school and will enjoy her while she’s here!

# CHEFF UPDATES

## HERD UPDATE:

Gunny had his eye removed and is back to work - he recovered beautifully! 😊



### We have two new horses on trial!

You may have seen **Simon**, the handsome 16-year-old APHA gelding with the striking blue eyes,



and **Bella**, the beautiful red mare on loan from Ashton.



**STILL LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD HORSES!** Classes are full and we could use a horse or two to fill in the herd. If you know of any potential steeds, please take a look at [What we look for in a horse](#) to see if they qualify.

**SHINDIG** – is set for August 26<sup>th</sup>, but we still need **lots of volunteers** to make this a success!



For the week of the event, we need a total of roughly **40-50 volunteers** to clean, decorate, set up before the event; volunteers to help with registration, auction tables, and generally making sure things are tidy and people are happy during the event; and afterward, for cleanup.

Shindig is the Cheff Center's biggest fundraiser annually, raising nearly **one-third** of the income needed to run our programs in one evening of fun! If you would be willing to volunteer, please call or email [Sara Putney-Smith](#).

**CLASSES ARE ON BREAK** - August 22 through September 5; Session #5 starts Tuesday, September 6.

**REMINDER** – Our next Volunteer Orientation is August 20, from 10AM - 1PM

# August Fun Fact

Indigenous relay racing, a fast-paced and perilous display of horsemanship with a long history steeped in primarily Plains Indian cultural significance, has long been popular in the U.S. and is gaining momentum in Canada.

The sport, which goes by the name Indian relay, is much like an Olympic relay race, except instead of a team of runners taking turns, these races feature one rider who switches between three different horses. The actions of every team member must be coordinated perfectly and carried out at top speed; it's a major accomplishment just to finish a race.

Races begin with up to eight athletes riding bareback around a track at full speed, holding on by sheer strength and skill. Once around, the riders barely slow as they leap from their horses to a second horse to continue the race. The "mugger" of the team must catch the first horse as the rider finishes a lap or the team risks disqualification, the "setter" steadies the second horse for the rider to mount, and a back-holder controls the third horse as it waits its turn. After a third chaotic changeover, the riders race toward the finish line, topping speeds of 40 miles per hour. Teams compete against as many as four others during a race.

The history of the Indian Relay goes back well over 100 years, but the roots of the sport go back even further. To one tribe, the relay's games simulated war trials; to another, a buffalo hunt; a third views it as a way to outrun the wild horses, enabling their capture.

In the U.S., the All-Nations Indian Relay Championships are the culmination of 16 grueling competitions, typically held from June through September each year across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Minnesota. Tribal nations throughout these states put up relay teams and risk it all for the pride of tradition and the glory of the win.

More information is available on the links below:

[Watch | Facebook](#)

[Indigenous relay race steeped in tradition, cultural significance](#)

[Indian Relay — Keeping Indigenous American Culture Alive](#)

[Traditional indigenous racing at the Calgary Stampede | Reuters.com](#)

[Indian Relay Celebrates History and Culture Through Horse Racing](#)



## September Fun Fact

During the Beatles' famous American tour in 1964, Reed Pigman secured a contract with the Beatles as their charter service, shuttling the band back and forth to concerts on their tour. The only break Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Harrison, and John Lennon had during the entire tour was a few days before their last concert in New York, which ended their American stay.

Reed Pigman convinced the group that an old-fashioned American ranch lifestyle was the way to relax and spend these few precious days. So, in September of 1964, Reed Pigman flew the group in his little single-engine plane, landing on the grass runway at the ranch Reed owned on the Eleven Point River, for a short country hideaway. The Beatles made the ranch famous worldwide as the Pigman Ranch.

The Beatles crossing the Eleven Point River and hanging out at Pigman Ranch in Alton, MO back in 1964.



For more pictures:

[Beatles at Pigman Ranch 1964 American Tour - Bing video](#)

[♪ The Beatles riding horse at Pigman Ranch, 1964 - Bing video](#)



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Mark B

Erin C

Heather F

Janet LF

Morgan M

Chelseaa R

Katy W

Liz C

Alyssa DV

Tam H

Karen L

Carolyn P

Mallory R

Shelly W

Samantha C

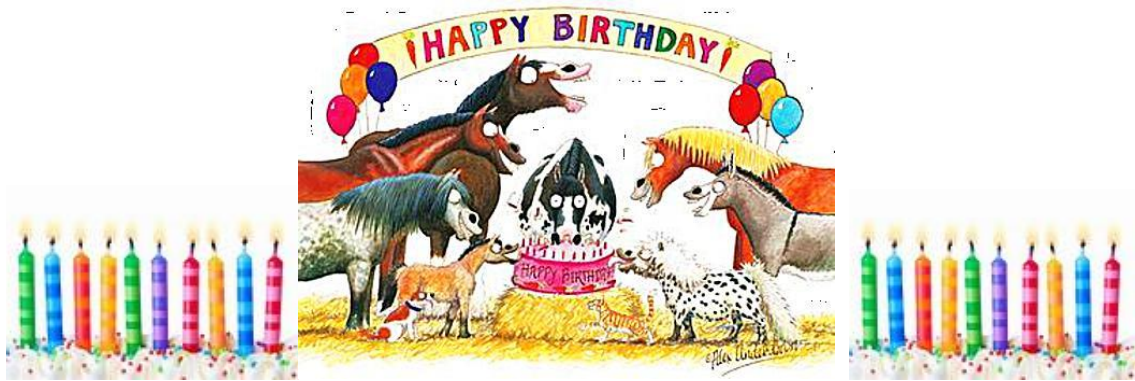
Liliana F

Mike J

David ML

Nikki R

Anna V



## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Riley B

Lilly J

Sarah S

Geri T

Kristin E

Charlie L

Kim S

Madison V

Katie F

Grace S

Carie T

Liz 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**

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. Please let your friends and family know—every little bit helps!!!

For more information, click on the link below.

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

## **Rite Aid**

Rite Aid has become 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](http://RXfundraising.com) - [Support Your Cause!](#)

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

If so, you can contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, at [sara@cheffcenter.org](mailto:sara@cheffcenter.org)  
Contributions by: Emily Kalin, Ann Lindsay, Ashton Maguire, Morgan Meulman, Sara Putney-Smith, Marianne Stier

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