



CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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December 2021-January 2022 Issue 16

The newsletter will return February 2022

DECEMBER VOLUNTEER PROFILE: NINA P



Sky and Nina

Our volunteer of the month this month is Nina P, who has the benefit of being both a rider and a volunteer—she gets to see two different sides of our program. Not many people can say that!

Nina began riding with us at in 2011 when she was 10 years old. When she turned 13, she began to

volunteer, and has been with us ever since (minus a year or two when she took a break).

Nina has lived in the Portage area all her life. She has an older brother, Henry, who also rode here for several sessions, and she lives with her mom and dad. They had a cat named “Tabby” who sadly passed away on New Years’ Eve of 2020 at the age of 18. They have a Black Goldendoodle named Peaches who is 3 years old.

Nina graduated from Portage Northern High School where she was part of the Conservation Biology class through the Kalamazoo Nature Center. They spent a lot of time outdoors at the Heronwood Research Center learning about nature and the native species of our local area.

She currently works at the Fountains nursing home in Kalamazoo. She is a waitress there and likes interacting with the residents. She really enjoys her job—it somewhat reminds her of being at Cheff, where you are working with people with varying levels of issues and disabilities.

Nina’s dream job would be to be a Therapeutic Riding instructor, and if not that particular job, she definitely wants to work with children and horses

in some capacity. She feels that having gone through (and continuing to work on) her own issues, she has a lot of insight and could help others work on theirs.

Nina's favorite thing about volunteering is meeting other clients and volunteers, making connections with them as well as with the horses. Her favorite horses are Sky (whom she rode for many years), and Awesome, who she thinks is just "adorable"!

Nina feels like Therapeutic Riding and volunteering have really helped her in several ways. She has become more self-aware — "there's more to life than being in your head". She feels that making the bond with the horses has helped her break down her walls and come out of her shell, and it is also helping her work on her trust levels with others and the horses.

We are very happy to have Nina as a volunteer and a rider, and we hope she will stay with us for many years. Thank you, Nina, for everything that you do!!!

**The next Volunteer
Orientation is February 5,
from 10AM – 1 PM.
If you know anyone that
would be a great
volunteer, please
encourage them to come!**



New Year Wish by Stephanie Laird



JANUARY VOLUNTEER PROFILE: MICHELLE PETERSON



Art and Michelle

On any given Wednesday evening, we have a pretty regular volunteer team, one of those people being Michelle Peterson.

Michelle grew up in Lansing, played tennis and was in the marching and symphonic bands in high school. She ended up in Kalamazoo at Western Michigan University where she majored in Biomedical Sciences and minored in Chemistry. She earned her master's degree and began to work for Upjohn (now Pfizer) as a Biochemist. Michelle switched gears mid-career and is now at Stryker Instruments managing the Critical Sciences teams in Kalamazoo, Ireland, and Germany.

Michelle and her husband Mike live in Richland and have a 16-year-old Husky/malamute that they rescued when he was a little over 1-year-old. Her stepson recently graduated and is currently attending KVCC.

They are quite an active couple and actually met while competing in a triathlon! In the past they have competed in ultramarathons, triathlons, mountain biking, and long-distance adventure races. These days they mostly spend their summers on Gull Lake kayaking and paddle boarding, and then in winter switch to cross country skiing and downhill skiing. Michelle also enjoys reading and recently has taken up painting.

Having volunteered at several other non-profits, Michelle heard about Cheff through other volunteers in the community. When she and Mike moved to Richland it was the perfect time to start volunteering here. Her favorite thing about volunteering? "It always feels great to give your time for someone else...it is always rewarding to see how far some of the clients have come over time, especially when they work with the same horses and volunteers". She is also in awe of the horses, as "they are such perfect role models for patience and kindness".

As for her favorite horse(s)? She couldn't pick just one! They are all so different with different personalities and quirks! She loves Awesome for his expressiveness, but also mentioned Art and Emma. Of course, Archie was on her list as well!

We are so thankful that Michelle has chosen to spend her volunteer time with us at Cheff! We certainly hope that she will continue to volunteer for years to come. 😊



HORSE OF THE MONTH: SKY



Sky, with the start of his winter coat

Arriving in January of 2019, Sky, a 19-year-old APHA gelding has been a wonderful addition to the Cheff herd. Sky already had experience since he was used in a lesson program prior to coming to Cheff.

Sky is one of those horses that always must have a best friend. Sky's current best friend is Willy. They make quite a pair, since Sky, at 15.2 hands high and 1100 pounds, is much smaller than Willy (1893 pounds and 18 hands high). Must be Sky's sweet eyes that wins him all his friends!

Sky has a very sweet and easy-going personality, however he can and will have his own opinion at times! Sometimes, during class, he just likes to line up for dismissal, and other times he decides to stand backwards while waiting in line for classes to begin - especially when horses are being turned out! Just like Gunny, Sky's favorite treat is almonds.

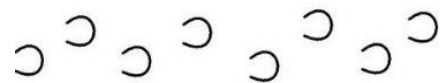
Sky has some ongoing leg issues, severe arthritis in his right pastern joint (also known as ring bone) and requires maintenance and special care to stay happy and pain free. He is on daily pain medication and receives monthly injections as well to help keep him comfortable. He would love to have [donations](#) towards his medications as well as Back on Track Polo Wraps to help stay healthy and sound.



Peekaboo!



Sweet Sky



CHEFF HERD UPDATES

ART UPDATE: Many of you may have noted that Art hasn't been in any classes for a couple of weeks now. This is because he has been diagnosed with Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis (EPM), a neurological disease that attacks the central system. EPM isn't transmitted horse-to-horse, it is the result of ingesting a protozoal parasite in hay or water contaminated by an infected opossum's feces. If left undiagnosed and untreated, EPM can cause devastating and lasting neurological damage.



Treatments can be expensive, so if it's in your heart to help with his treatment, you can donate at: [Donate to Cheff](#).

For more information on EPM, click on: <https://aaep.org/horsehealth/epm-understanding-debilitating-disease>



Gunny Good News!

After his visit to MSU, it was determined that Gunny did not have ocular cancer! He was prescribed steroid eye drops and is doing well!

CHEFF HERD WISHLIST ITEMS

Archie – Granola bars and fly spray

Art – Money towards his EPM treatment

Awesome – Joint support funds (adequan/previcox) and tri care ointment

Emma – Sunscreen and fly spray

Garth – Joint support funds (adequan/previcox), Fly spray

Gunney – Sun block and Mane/Tail detangler

Harry – Contoured Dressage girth w/sheepskin size 28/30 and smartpak immune support

Harvey – Treats and a new halter with his name on it

Monte – Heat lamp for wash stall (portable one we can hang) and Back on Track blanket size 81

Sky – Back on Track quickwraps size 14 or 16 and BOT/thinline combo western pad

Star – Embroidered halter with her name

Tess – Antifungal shampoo, coat defense prevention powder and trouble spot drying paste

Tina – Joint support funds (adequan and hock injections) and Swat

Willy – 6 ½ inch French link snaffle and Shampoo

Winston – Ivory Soap and baby oil for cleaning as well as Back on Track sheet, size 81.

****General wants and needs****

Shampoo (regular and antifungal), fly spray, Sun block, Tri-care ointment



Merry
Christmas

Happy
HANUKKAH



EDUCATION CORNER: HORSES AND WINTER

In the July and August newsletters, we looked at issues that horses deal with in the summer. With winter approaching, we thought we'd continue the theme, this time focusing on some cold weather concerns that horses and their caretakers navigate each year in northern climates like ours.

Perhaps the most basic winter issue is ...

Staying Warm in the Cold

You have probably seen that Cheff horses spend most of their winter free time out in the pasture, just like they do the rest of year. Being outside in cold weather is something horses have evolved to do.



Most healthy horses can readily handle snow and cold temperatures as long as they have sufficient water, food and access to shelter from wind and precipitation. Being outside actually has some advantages over staying in the barn – there's room to exercise and play and the outdoor air is fresher than the typically dusty environment of a barn that's closed up against the cold.

A horse's natural "comfort zone" includes a much lower range of temperatures than a human's does. In other words, as air temperature decreases, humans notice and are affected by the cold sooner than horses are.



This comfort zone corresponds to a physiological entity called the **thermoneutral zone** or **TNZ**. The TNZ is defined as the air temperature range in which a horse (or human or other animal) at rest can maintain a normal core body temperature without its metabolism having to expend extra energy for cooling or heat generation. The temperature at the low end of the thermoneutral zone – i.e., the point where the metabolism must kick in to produce more internal heat -- is called the **lower critical temperature**.

A typical adult horse with a summer coat has a TNZ of, roughly, between 40° and 80° Fahrenheit. That temperature range can vary a lot, though, depending on age, health, body condition, type of horse (draft vs light horse), and how accustomed it has become to its climate, among other factors.

Compare that with the TNZ for an average human at rest, which is between approximately 65° and 86° F, if the human is wearing light clothing. You can see that, typically, a horse can handle temperatures significantly colder than a human can without having to increase its metabolic rate and without needing accessories such as a blanket to keep warm.

It's not really feasible to determine a particular horse's exact thermoneutral zone outside of a laboratory setting; however, being familiar with the TNZ concept helps you know how a given horse is likely to handle seasonal temperature changes. Through observation and hands-on checking for things like shivering, huddling with other horses, or sweating under a blanket, you get to know their individual comfort zone.

Several factors – some natural, some provided by humans – will supplement a horse's metabolism in maintaining a proper core temperature in a cold environment. Some of these are described below:

Winter coat



Most horses will develop some type of heavier coat for warmth in the cold season. A thick winter coat can shift a horse's lower critical temperature down by many degrees.

Winter coat growth is triggered primarily by changes in the amount of daylight. As days shorten from June to December, the diminishing light will increase melatonin levels, which in turn helps generate the thicker coat. The process takes a while, so coat changes usually aren't seen until late summer. The process reverses itself from December to June.

A winter coat can become extra insulating, as needed, thanks to the **pilomotor reflex**, which causes coat hairs to noticeably fluff up and trap in more body heat. (Human goose bumps come from this same reflex.) To maximize insulating potential, it helps to keep the coat groomed, since muddy and matted hair cannot fluff out very well.

The downside of a winter coat is that it makes a working horse hotter, requiring longer to cool down. For horses that exercise extensively in the cold, their coat can be partially or fully clipped to ease sweating and overheating. Blankets are then used to fill in for the missing winter coat.

Shelter and wind breaks

Getting out of the winter wind and precipitation is a huge help to horses for staying warm. You've probably noticed the various run-in sheds in Cheff's pastures on both sides of 43rd Street, meant exactly for this purpose.

Horses will also seek out natural shelters such as an area of trees that block the wind, rain, and snow.



Blankets



If you are volunteering at Cheff now or have in past winters, you've seen the variety of blankets our horses use and the differences in who needs a blanket when. Blanketing instructions are usually posted on the white board in the barn, and you can always ask an instructor or other staff member if you have questions about how and when to put on or remove a blanket.

You may have noticed that the draft and draft cross horses, like Tess, Willy and Garth, don't need a blanket as often as the lighter horses.

There are tons of blanket styles and weights available. Equine gear companies provide comprehensive [blanket buying and using guides](#). [Blanketing advice](#) is available from university extension services and veterinarians.

Some general guidelines are:

- Blankets must fit the horse properly for safety, comfort, and best insulation. An ill-fitting blanket can rub and irritate a horse's skin.
- Check blankets regularly for damage like tears and broken clips. Also check the inside lining for built up dirt or hair that can be uncomfortable.
- Remove the blanket daily to thoroughly check your horse's condition.



Food and Water

As mentioned above, when air temperature is low enough, a horse's metabolism will burn extra calories as a way to generate heat internally and maintain body temperature. This means **more food is needed during cold periods** to keep a consistent weight.

Additional hay is generally a good option during winter because digesting hay generates more internal heat than digesting grains. Horses that have ready access to hay feeders in the pasture can adjust their intake as desired. For some horses, high calorie feed may also be needed to maintain weight through the winter.



Hydration is critical year-round and can be tricky in the winter simply because water freezes.

In summer, the pasture grasses that constitute much of a horse's diet provide significant hydration because of their high moisture content. The hay and grain fed in the winter are much dryer, so drinking water becomes extra important. General estimates say horses need 8 to 12 gallons of water daily in winter. Impaction colic is a problem to watch for anytime, and especially in winter with the increase in dry feed. Good hydration is important to prevention.

So, what are some methods to ensure proper winter hydration?



- Keep ice out of water supplies! Immersion heaters and insulated buckets can help.
- Warming water to 40° F or above encourages drinking. Extremely cold water is less desirable to many horses and can cause pain for those with sensitive teeth (as some of us humans know all too well).
- Salt blocks or adding a bit of salt to feed will encourage drinking.
- Horses can eat snow, but it is not a viable alternative to a ready supply of fresh, unfrozen water.
- **Above all, check water frequently and regularly.** Heaters can prevent freezing, but still need to be checked to be sure they are working and safe.

Snow, Ice and Hooves

Hooves grow a bit slower in the winter, but regular trimming is still needed. With freezing and thawing, mud happens, and standing in stagnant mud can contribute to hoof problems like thrush. Hooves should be picked out and examined frequently.

On snow and ice, bare hooves have better traction than hooves with traditional shoes. Snow tends to collect in shoes and can build up into a pack of ice, which makes walking quite unsteady. For horses that need to keep their shoes in winter, farriers can provide options with more traction, as well as snow pads and rim pads that will prevent build up in the hoof.



Another winter issue is icy conditions on the ground where horses need to walk, like around a run-in shelter's entrance and near hay feeders and water troughs. Ice presents a danger for falls and may prevent horses from sheltering or getting food and drink because they will avoid the area. Breaking up the ice or covering it with sand will help.

We hope this article gives you an idea of some cold weather issues, especially if you haven't worked with horses at this time of year before. While winter is a slow period for some horses, the Cheff herd is fortunate to have good work to do, with plenty of exercise and tons of affection and attention throughout the season thanks to staff, clients and all the volunteers!

Sources / More Info

[Caring for the Horse in a Cold Climate](#) (Applied Animal Behaviour Science Journal 2020)

[Does Your Horse Really Need to Wear a Rug?](#) (Horse & Hound UK 2020)

[Horse Blanket or Not?](#) (MSU Extension 2018)

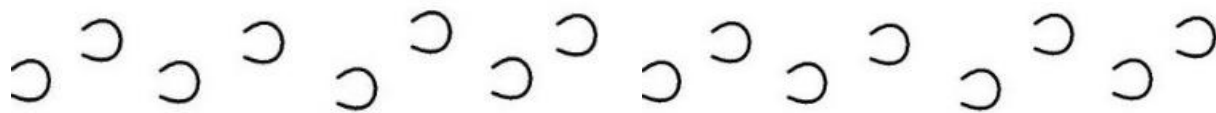
[How Horses Grow Winter Coats](#) (Horse Illustrated 2018)

[Shelter for Horses](#) (Univ of TN Extension Equine Welfare Series 2017)

[Winter Care and Feeding](#) (My Horse University 2017)

[Winter Hydration in Horses](#) (My Horse University 2017)

Photos from Cheff, except [purple blanket with neck cover](#), [water bucket](#) and [horseshoe pads](#) (all cropped)



CHEFF HERD: COLORS/PATTERNS/MARKINGS

We looked at horse colors, patterns, and markings in the Sep – Nov newsletters. To follow up those articles, FYI, here's a listing of Cheff equines with their colors, patterns, and markings, plus breed and year born.



Archie
2006 Standard Donkey Jack
Color/Pattern: White
No Markings



Art
2003 Draft Cross Gelding
Color/Pattern: White
No Markings
* Art's coloring is a bit mysterious. He's an unregistered Percheron / Appaloosa mix with speckles that are more Appy than typical gray spots. For simplicity, we call him white!



Awesome
2000 APHA Gelding
Color/Pattern: Smoky Black
Markings: Star



Gunny
2001 Haflinger/Paint Gelding
Color/Pattern/Markings:
Red Dun Overo
* In previous articles, we called Gunny Chestnut Overo. Actually, it's more likely Red Dun Overo.



Harvey
1992 Morgan Gelding
Color/Pattern: Bay
Markings: Star



Monte
2006 APHA Gelding
Color/Pattern /
Markings: Black/White
Tobiano

Emma
2003 Haflinger Mare
Color/Pattern: Chestnut with flaxen mane and tail
Markings: Blaze; Socks



Garth
2000 Q.H./Draft Gelding
Color/Pattern: Bay
Markings: Blaze; Rear sock



Harry
2007 Belgian Warmblood
Color/Pattern: Bay
Markings: Blaze; Front anklet (aka Pastern marking), rear socks



Sky
2003 APHA Gelding
Color/Pattern: Bay Overo
Markings: Stripe; Socks





Star
 1994 Mini Horse Mare
Color/Pattern: Dun
Markings: Star



Tina
 2003 Trakehner/Arabian Mare
Color/Pattern: Flea-bitten Gray
 No Markings



Willy
 2011 Clydesdale Gelding
Color/Pattern: Bay Roan
Markings: Blaze; High socks

Tess
 2004 Clydesdale Mare
Color/Pattern: Bay Roan
Markings: Blaze; High socks



Winston
 2002 AQHA/APHA
 Gelding
Color/Pattern: Chestnut
Markings: Blaze; Front and rear socks



Remember, there are no sessions from December 17th
 until February 14th.

Have a wonderful HOLIDAY SEASON!!



The BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL MODEL OF DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

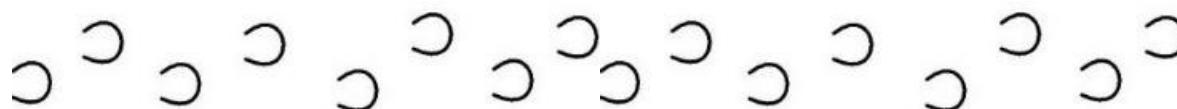
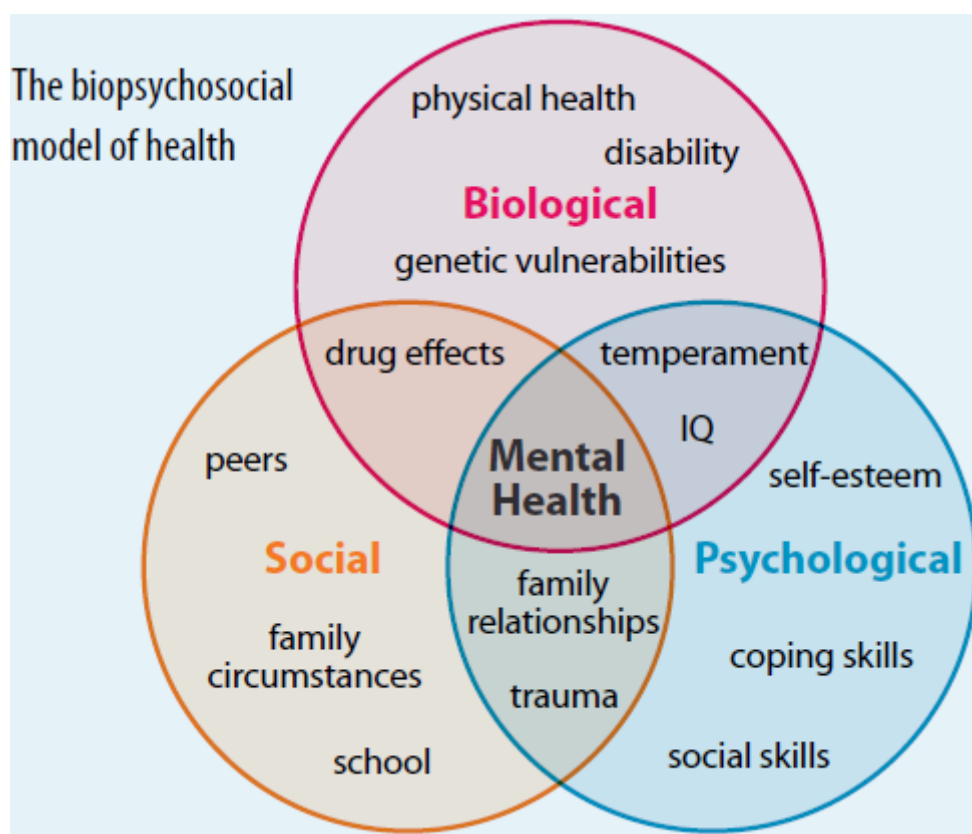
Enjoy this special volunteer contribution to the Cheff Center Newsletter!

In 1977, George Engel conceptualized what is now known as the Biopsychosocial Model—believing that in order to understand a person’s physical and/or mental health, we need to not simply consider the biological factors of a person, but also the psychological and social factors they face.

You can see the model’s influence here at Cheff in many ways. For example, assessing new clients and determining where they are placed (in Therapeutic Riding or Physical Therapy or another Cheff program) may take into account all three factors – bio, psych and social.

The model also illustrates how our role as volunteers involves bio, psych and social components as we work with clients and each other at Cheff each week.

To learn more about the Biopsychosocial Model, see the full article here: [BECOMING SHERLOCK](#).



December Fun Fact

In 2004, Congress designated December 13 as National Horse Day and, since then, Americans have been taking the day to celebrate and appreciate the role of the horse in not only helping our country become what it is today, but also its current role in the modern era.

Horses, in general, contribute roughly \$9.2 billion to the US economy. Whether they're helping plow fields; move food and supplies into rural areas; move livestock in ranches; or just provide sweet, thoughtful equine therapy; horses have woven themselves into the fabric of life in America.

[NATIONAL HORSE DAY - December 13, 2021 - National Today](#)

January Fun Fact

January 1 is the official birthday for all registered Thoroughbreds. This was thought to help keep things simple in determining where and when a horse will race, whether it be against rivals of the same age or older challengers.

Unfortunately, that doesn't exactly mesh with the natural reproductive cycle of the equine. Mares are ready for breeding in late spring/early summer, giving them an entire summer worth of green grass to fuel up and nurture a tiny embryo into a full-fledged foal.

It also means, with their 11-month gestation period, that the foals are born anywhere from May to October, which doesn't work well with the January 1 birthday. If a foal is born before that day, he is automatically considered a one-year old, even if technically he's only two days old. Obviously, that puts him *way* behind his peers.

[why-do-thoroughbreds-share-the-same-birth-date](#)

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Brooklyn B
Taylor G
Karolina J
Rene S
Madisyn W

Gillian E
Ginger H
Barb M
Alison T
Lynn W

Riley F
Susan H
Michelle P
Kyla T




JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Ben A
Kari B
Abby D
Charlotte H
Nate K
Kathryn M
Nicole P
Lacey R
Cassie S

Taylor B
Rhianna B
Matalynn E
Amira H
Hailee L
Alexandria N
Kristie P
Michelle S
Claudia W

Lisa B
Cassandra D
Julie G
Reagan H
Andee M
Bonnie P
Jessi R
Linda S

Did you know that Cheff gets a large discount on horse-related products?

If you want to  your dollar, please make a [DONATION](#) and we can use it where most needed!

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 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.

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/>

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!

Do you have any Questions/Comments/Suggestions?

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

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