



September 2020 - Issue 1

CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

We are excited to bring you our new Newsletter! Every month, we hope to highlight volunteers, horses and issues our clients deal with. We hope you enjoy it, and if you have any feedback we would love to hear it!

As always,

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH US—WE CANNOT DO THIS WITHOUT YOU!!!!

Meet Barb and Dave Eshuis!

If you haven't yet met Cheff volunteers Barb and Dave Eshuis, you've probably seen their handiwork around the grounds. In addition to volunteering with therapeutic riding, they take care of the garden and planters in front of the buildings. This year, after Cheff's closure for COVID-19, they've been focused on weeding and cleanup. Plus, Barb added two handmade butterfly feeders. See if you can spot them!

Before joining Cheff eight years ago, Dave worked at Pfizer, receiving the W. E. Upjohn Award during his 29 years there. Barb spent 15 years at Western Michigan University. Their plan was to find a volunteer activity they could do together after retiring.

They learned of Cheff a few years earlier through Barb's job. Students in her department, Family and Consumer Sciences, did field experience. One day, she noticed "Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center" listed on a student's form and her curiosity was piqued. They learned more and realized that their interests and experience were a good match.

The couple had previously volunteered with Special Olympics. They got involved through Barb's nephew, a Special Olympics athlete, with whom they had always been close.

Their experience with horses goes back to school days. Barb's family lived in Milwood, a Kalamazoo city neighborhood. She and her sisters had two horses they boarded at a friend's farm, traveling there most days after school.

Her dad's hobby was driving a team of eight half-Haflingers similar to Cheff horse Emma. The Bonselaar Horse Show Arena at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds is named for Barb's dad, Julius Bonselaar.



Barb, Garth and Dave

Barb and Dave Continued)

Dave grew up in Comstock, eventually meeting Barb at Kalamazoo Christian High School. With a long interest in equines, Dave happily joined in Barb's horse activities and learned from her dad to drive a team of two.

When not at Cheff, the couple, now married for 54 years, might be found camping, sometimes with their extended family: 3 children, 9 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Barb is a garden club member and road bicyclist. Dave enjoys hunting, and fishes on Gilkey Lake where they reside. Dave is a volunteer with Forgotten Man Ministries, a Bible study program for incarcerated people. Both are active in their church.

Besides therapeutic riding, the two have helped in Cheff's Hippotherapy program and spent time working with individual horses outside of classes. "A great thing about being a Cheff volunteer", Dave says, is "you pick up something new every time you're there. Just listening to the instructors during classes is a learning experience!"

They love seeing the difference equine therapy makes for clients, sometimes so quickly. The special part, they said, is "you make such meaningful connections" with clients, horses, and other individuals.

So, if you have not met Dave and Barb yet, please introduce yourself to them—they are a wonderful couple and a joy to be around!



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Kari M
Molly
Nora G
James J
Robyn S
Sierra M
Anna P
Kathy P
Kim S
Bryan L
Dan H
Makenzie M
Charlie L
Roxanna M
Paige H



September's Featured Horse: ART



Who is that handsome white gelding with the luxurious forelock? Well, that would be Art, Cheff's 16 year old Appaloosa-Percheron gelding.

Art arrived at Cheff in mid-October of 2019 from Whispering Point Farms where he was used as a lesson horse and in eventing. Art loves jumping and going on trail rides. He's very friendly and loves people, just like a big goofy dog.

Art has been trying out for hippotherapy and is working on his ground driving and patience - all Art really wants is a person and a job.

Art has a bit of a bouncy trot, but he is learning how to trot slower. His canter is super smooth!

Here's a tip if you want to get on Art's sweet side - he is a sucker for granola bars! He could really use a Back on Track All Purpose Pad too. And although Art fusses when you put it on him, he really needs Diaper Rash Cream to use as sunblock on his adorable pink nose.

Art's most outstanding feature is definitely his forelock! Although he arrived with a roached mane, Art has been considering growing it out. What do you think? You can share your thoughts on what you would prefer with Emily.



Education Corner

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder that affects communication and behavior and is usually diagnosed before the age of 2. Autism affects roughly 1 in 59 people in the United States and is one of the issues some of our clients are dealing with. “Spectrum Disorder” is used when referring to Autism because the symptoms and behaviors can vary in type and severity from person to person.

Most people with ASD have:

- Difficulty with communication and interactions with other people
- Restricted interests and repetitive behavior
- Symptoms that hurt the person’s ability to function properly in school, work, and other areas of life

Scientists do not know the exact causes of ASD, they do, however, believe it may be a combination of genetic and environmental influences. It is generally more prevalent in boys than girls, with 1 in 34 boys affected as opposed to 1 in every 145 girls.

There are medications that may be prescribed that can help with some of the symptoms associated with ASD, which can include:

- Irritability
- Aggression
- Repetitive behavior
- Hyperactivity
- Attention problems
- Anxiety and depression

For a more detailed list of signs and symptoms of autism, go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/signs.html>

Behavioral, psychological and educational therapies may also be beneficial in helping the individual and can assist them with learning how to reduce challenging behaviors, build upon their strengths, and learn life skills to be able to live more independently.

One of the more effective therapy options is EQUINE THERAPY. How do our horses help our ASD clients?

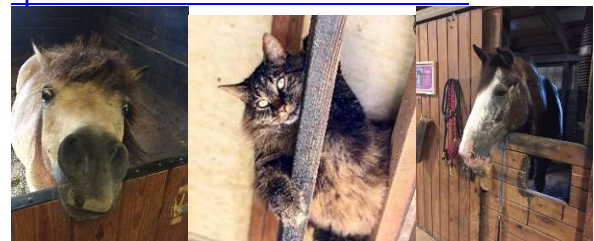
- When our clients groom, pet and ride the horses, they *care* about the horses, which causes an emotional bridge to be built. When they learn to *care* for other beings, that can transfer to their relationships with other people as well.
- Many of our clients have problems following directions, and when directions are given to them during a *fun* activity they tend to grasp and remember those directions better. Because children, and many adults, love to move, giving the horses directions to move motivates them to communicate. Their cognitive concepts also improve when given activities to do while riding—throwing a ball, going through an obstacle course, etc.
- Balance and spatial orientation are governed by our vestibular sense organs, which are stimulated through direction change, incline and speed. As you can imagine, riding a horse can and often does incorporate all of those factors and therefore makes the therapy exciting and motivates them to continue to be engaged.

As volunteers working with these clients in classes, we all see how they are often better able to focus and relax while riding, and how much they love it!

For more information on Autism Spectrum Disorder, you can go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/index.shtml>





Autism: which symbols?

Most people within the Autistic community have strong preferences (with good reason) about particular symbols associated with autism.

How do you get it right?

Remember that autistics' preferences take precedence over neurotypical allies'.

Here's a quick guide:



Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)
by autistics for autistics



Neurodiversity
designed by autistics to represent the diversity of the autistic spectrum



National Autistic Society (UK)
Not perfect but does listen to autistic voices and encourages acceptance



Autistic Pride
*Official Autistic Pride flag
Autistic Pride Day: June 18th*



Autism Speaks
*Does not speak for autistics
Regarded as a hate group by the autistic community*



Light It Up Blue
Autism Speaks' genderised manipulation of World Autism Awareness Day



Puzzle piece
*Old symbol for autism
Widely rejected now by the autistic community*



Autism Awareness
*Awareness not acceptance
Autistics reject the puzzle piece*



BALANCE = OUR VESTIBULAR SYSTEM

• Fear of heights • Difficulty sitting still, always moving and seeking movement • Dislike tilting their heads or being upside down • Appear to be clumsy and lack typical motor movement coordination • Has difficulty riding a bike, jumping, hopping, or balancing on one foot • Can be a thrill seeker at times and does not see risk or danger • Rocking or spinning excessively



BODY AWARENESS = OUR PROPRIOCEPTIVE SYSTEM

Applies too much pressure when writing or colouring-in • Appears too rough when touching other children or animals • Appears clumsy, uncoordinated and have difficulty performing everyday activities • May enjoy tight clothing or lots of layers • Always full of energy, on the go, loud and active • Walks with heavy feet, sounds like stomping • Fidgety when seated



TOUCH = OUR TACTILE SYSTEM

Bothered clothing, socks, tags, certain materials • Touching things constantly • Avoids groups of other children, may fear unexpected touch • Avoids outdoor play, may dislike the wind on their skin • Difficulty holding a pencil or using scissors • Dislikes finger painting and using glue or clay • May walk on their toes



HEARING = OUR AUDITORY SYSTEM

May be extremely sensitive to auditory input and appear stressed or anxious • Covers their ears when they are exposed to sudden or loud noises • Have difficulty determining where a sound is coming from • Distracted by seemingly normal background noises, not able to filter them out • Either some delay or confusion when following verbal directions • May have normal hearing but has difficulty organizing, interpreting or remembering auditory input



SIGHT = OUR VISUAL SYSTEM

Difficulty maintaining eye contact • Has trouble copying information from one place or page to another • Struggles keeping place while reading • Has a hard time tracking a moving object • Gets tired with reading or homework • Exhibits characteristics of dyslexia, reversing words or letters when copying • Difficulty judging space and distance



SMELL = OUR OLFACTORY SYSTEM

Sensitive to even typically pleasant or normal smells, causing stress or anxiety • Refuses certain foods due to their smell • Bothered by typical household or cooking scents, perfumes and aftershaves • Determines whether he or she likes someone as a result of how they smell • Excessively smelling when introduced to objects, people or places • Uses smell to interact with objects • Seeks strong odours



TASTE = OUR GUSTATORY SYSTEM

Fussy or picky eater, preferring to eat foods with familiar tastes and textures • Only eats "soft" or pureed foods past 2yrs of age, may gag with textured foods • Has difficulty with sucking, chewing, and swallowing • Fearful of going to the dentist or having dental work done • Dislikes or complains about toothpaste and mouthwash • May lick, taste, or chew on inedible objects past the toddler years • Complains or reacts adversely to smells

Amazon Smile

So many people order online from **Amazon.com**, but did you know that the Cheff Center can receive benefits when you do? Go to smile.amazon.com and register—we are one of the 1000's 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!

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!!!

Questions/comments? Please contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator,
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If you have suggestions for future newsletters, or are interested in submitting articles, please contact Sara Putney-Smith.

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