

RESCUE THE EQUINE

AROUND the FIRE

SUMMER 2013

RESCUE *the Equine* ★ MENTOR *the Child* ★ HOPE *for the Family* ★ EMPOWER *the Ministry*

## GENUINE RESCUE

BY KIM MEEDER

I looked across the ramshackled barnyard and saw her. She was standing in a makeshift pen no larger than my truck. What I noticed first was her eyes. They were brown, soft, reflecting only kindness.

All I knew about this horse was that she was deeply loved by an owner who didn't have much, and what little she had—was going away. The owner spilled out as much of the mare's story as she knew. The horse was a tall, black bay, seven-year-old Thoroughbred. While the owner was away from home, the mare had injured her right hind leg. The heavy bandage from hoof to hock gave silent witness that the wound was severe—as did the fact the horse was “three-legged” lame.

“Would you like our help to change her bandage?” I offered.

“Oh please! I would love that. I can't do it myself.” With that open door, Kelsie, our Director of Staff, and I went to work. Kelsie held the kind mare with a halter and lead rope while I carefully unwrapped the wounded leg. Having done many rescues together, Kels quietly evaluated the horse's temperament by gently rubbing her eyes, ears and lips. The mare's only response appeared to be one of gratitude.

Even though unwrapping the leg was painful for the mare, she stood quietly. Her only motion was to draw her injured limb up toward her belly, physically telling us this was unpleasant for her.

Removing the layers of band-



age took time. During this painful process she never struck at me, jerked her leg away or danced to avoid my touch. She just stood quietly. I was moved by her kind resolve. She chose to allow complete strangers tend to her.

Once the wound was fully revealed, I could see that it was nasty indeed. The gash was located halfway down the back of her hind lower leg and was approximately three inches long and two inches wide. After seeing the injury, I was even more amazed that she would choose to stand still while we vetted her.

I was left to wonder, if our roles had been reversed—would I? Would I quietly receive help even and especially when it's painful?

The mare continued to example her quiet inner strength by allowing us to hose down her wound with a 20-minute water bath. Once dry, we re-banded the leg, exchanged information with the owner and headed back to the ranch.

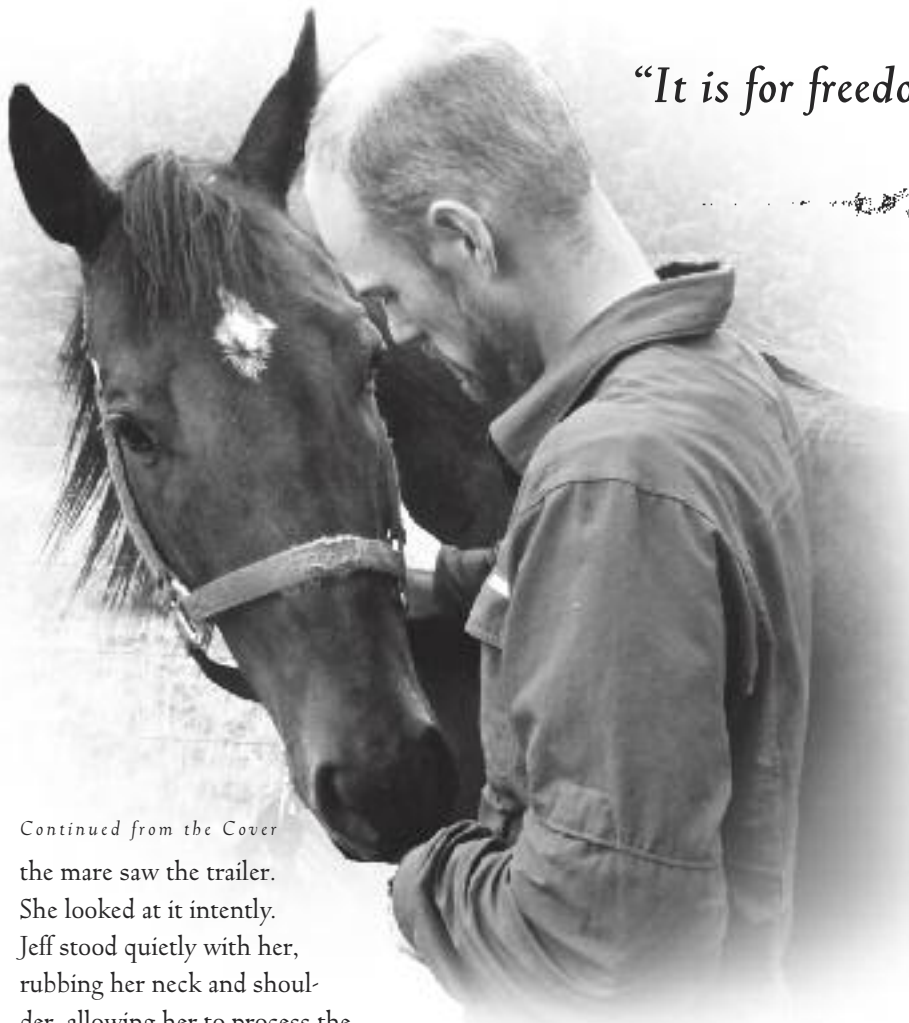
A short time later, I returned to the sweet mare. This time, I'd also brought Jeff, the director of our horse program—and our horse trailer. I watched as Jeff gently eased the mare out of her small enclosure. Her expression was bright and her gait was 80% sound. She turned toward Jeff many times, smelling his hands and chest.

Once the pair walked around the garage,

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“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.”

— Galatians 5:1



*Continued from the Cover*

the mare saw the trailer. She looked at it intently. Jeff stood quietly with her, rubbing her neck and shoulder, allowing her to process the scene. Once the decision was made to move forward, the mare walked with such enthusiasm toward the trailer that she passed Jeff!

Again, I watched in awe.

The mare has been with us for a week now and she continues to amaze me. Not only is her terrible wound healing rapidly; it appears that her heart is healing even faster. In my career of rescuing horses, few have been the times that I've witnessed such a healthy desire by an equine to press through their fear, to trust, forgive and heal.

What I've learned through experience



is that “genuine rescue” can only happen in the heart of one who *genuinely chooses it*.

There's no brokenness, no pain, no heartache, no anger, no fear so deep—that Jesus Christ's love is not deeper still. There's NO nasty wound that Jesus cannot heal. There's NOTHING that He cannot rescue and redeem... except... a life that *refuses* His help.

When Jesus Christ came to this world, lived a perfect life and then laid His life down in our place—and rose again—He broke the lock on the prison door of suffering. That door can *never* be closed again. It's a fact that all of us will spend time in the prison of pain... and when we do... there's no better time to *know* the door is OPEN. Because of the victory Jesus has already gained for us, we can leave our “ramshackled pen” of suffering any time we choose.

Because of this truth, when it comes to our “wounds,” we each have a choice to make.

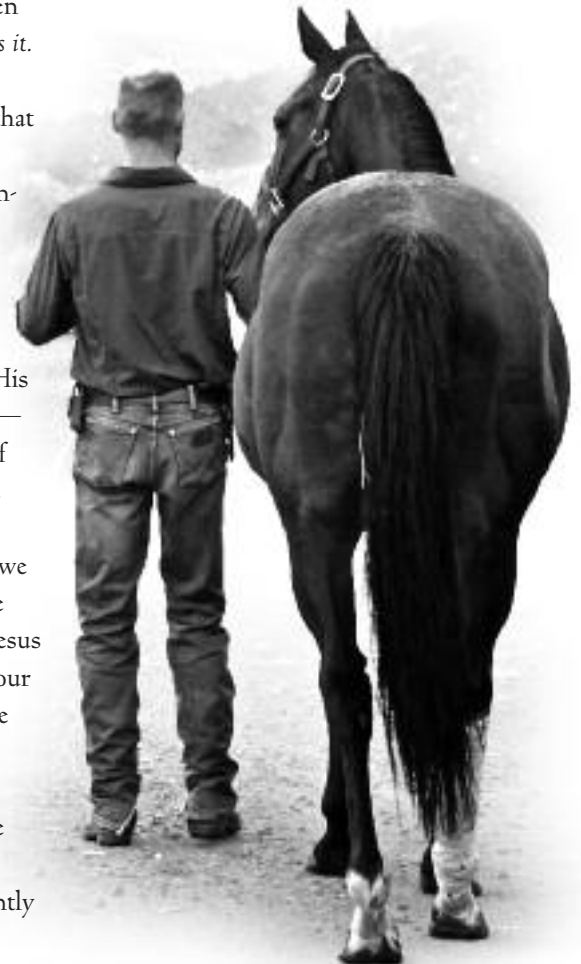
Just like the kind mare looking intently

at the trailer—we must choose. We can remain focused on our past and run back into our corral of suffering. Or, we can choose to focus on our future—what *can* be—and run toward the open trailer door—take a mighty leap of faith inside—and trust Jesus to guide us toward His perfect plan for our life.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Gal. 5:1, NLT).

The kind mare came with the name of “Paisley.” After prayer and consideration, Jeff was moved to retain her original name, something we rarely do. Curious, I looked up the name. Unknown to all of us, I learned that its English origin means “church.”

Perhaps Paisley's friendship and presence will become the “church” through which young ones will know the saving grace and genuine rescue of Jesus Christ.



# EYES TO SEE

BY JEFF GORHAM

*This letter was originally written as an inner-staff note of encouragement. It was so inspiring to us, we wanted to share it with you as well.*



*Hey Everyone,*

Every now and then you get to do a session that really defines you; one that makes you so aware that what we do here is vitally important. I had a session yesterday with an incredible boy. This little guy is funny and eager to please. He's scared to get on a horse, but he rides bareback anyway. He always listens and is gentle and kind to Robby, his favorite horse. He enjoys working and happily does his chore to help the ranch. This little boy loves baseball, football, the outdoors and just being here on the ranch.

What you cannot tell from this young man's attitude and outlook on life is that his mom is in jail. He's broken hearted and afraid of his father because—when he's not in jail—he drinks, smokes and is abusive. This child is twice the size of any other seven-and-a-half year olds, and he's been held back and must repeat second grade. His current guardian is a 21 year old who's doing his best to make a home. The little boy only has one pair of shoes, Crocs. He lives with his cousins, but most of the time he's left to play video games by himself.

During his last visit to the ranch, I gave him a pair of boots from our donation room to ride in and take home. Today he showed up in some old shoes six sizes too big. They were his mentor's shoes, because the boots I'd given him had been misplaced.

When faced with all these challenges, do you think that any of this affected the little boy's attitude? Not a bit! Few would ever know of what he faces if all they had to go on was his outlook.

This little boy challenged me to look at my own life—*really* look. And I pass that challenge on to you.

When you look at your own circumstances and difficulties (if you can call them difficulties), ask yourself—is your attitude one of joy, thanksgiving and gratefulness for the things you DO have, and where God has you in this moment?

I would love to say “Yes.” But that's not always the case for me. Seeing this little boy and his happy attitude despite everything he must face really struck me. Through it the Lord helped me see the ways I've allowed discontentment, selfishness and entitlement to seep into my life.

Yesterday I came to the ranch to teach a little boy—but instead, this little boy taught me. He showed me how to be grateful, gentle, kind and resilient despite circumstances.

We had the time of our lives yesterday. Even though he was afraid at first, he rode and bathed Robby. We also ate popsicles, played ball and he-hawed with laughter. Finally, we dueled with plastic swords until our time ran out.

Yesterday made me realize the beauty of the Lord is everywhere. Each of us has been given eyes to see, but rarely do we see beyond ourselves. Jesus has given us ears to hear, but rarely do we listen. My prayer for myself is that I would purpose to do better at both: to see what the Lord IS doing and to listen to His voice. I'm tired of missing the beauty and treasure all around me because my focus is in the wrong place.

Friends, I see the Lord's beauty in all of you. I see your uniqueness and the special ways He has equipped you to work with these children. Never underestimate the roll you play in the lives of these kids and their families.

I know I will never forget this little boy, and I believe he will never forget his time spent here. Because of what Christ has already done for us, he—and kids like him—is why we press in to do what we do.

I love you all very much,

*Jeff G.*

# FOUR-LEGGED MINISTER

BY JEFF GORHAM



I waited for my first session of the day at the Greeter's station. My child's family was running a little late, so I decided to meet him at the bottom of the driveway and walk up with him once he arrived. Before I got down there, I heard a car roar into the parking area. *I bet that's him*, I thought.

I ran down the gravel drive so I could greet this little man. Sure enough, a car had flown into the parking lot. The gravel and dust flying around the car almost completely obscured it. As I got closer, my heart sunk. I heard yelling coming from the car. Then I saw Kevin—my little guy—climb out. Barely having enough time to shut the door, his dad peeled out of the parking area, throwing dust and rocks all over his son.

Dirty and crying, he walked toward me. With his head down, I watched as he kicked the bigger gravel stones around him. Alone, this little broken heart started the long trek up the hill. As we met, I asked how he was doing. Looking up at me with tear-filled eyes, he said he was fine.

My heart tore into pieces for this little guy. I knew he was really hurting, and he must be wondering what he'd done to deserve such terrible treatment. Together we began our chore. He fought to keep back the tears, but every now and then one would escape and slide down his cheek. Even still, no interaction was to be had. I carefully pressed in and continued to ask how he was doing. He'd choke up but always manage to keep it under control, continuing to say he was okay.

It finally was time to get a horse. "Who would you like to ride?" I asked. He said he didn't care.

Jokingly, I replied, "We don't have a horse named 'I Don't Care.'" He made it clear that was not what he meant and again said, "I don't care; it makes no difference."

*Lord, how am I going to reach this little boy?*

Just then Buckshot's head popped up. He walked toward us licking, chewing and bobbing his head, every indication that he wanted to meet this little man. "I think Buckshot would like to work with you today. Let's halter him up." We worked together to do so. "What do we do now?" Kevin asked as we led our spotted gelding out of the paddock gate. "We get him cleaned up and ready to ride," I said with a smile.

With the brush bucket in hand, we groomed Buckshot. The first brush he pulled out was the stiff brush. As Kevin began the grooming process, Buckshot reached over and nibbled on the brush. Then—I saw it—faint but there, the barely discernible outline of a smile. *Lord, thank You. We have something.*

Next in the lineup was the soft brush, and again Buckshot reached over and nibbled on it. This time a full smile appeared. With the last brush, Buckshot gently took it from Kevin and commenced to wave it around like a sword, eventually flinging the brush

across the yard. Not only did Kevin smile, but a small giggle snuck out too.

After watching all this happen, my thoughts began to churn, "Kevin, I have something a little different in mind for today. Let's go to the round pen." We headed in that direction with Buckshot in tow.

Before we took Buckshot into the round pen, I asked Kevin if he would mind hiding behind the mounting block inside. Kevin looked surprised that I would ask such a thing, but he did it. Next, I led Buckshot through the gate and released him. He looked around for a few seconds, and then with ears perked, headed straight for the mounting block.

"Kevin, when he finds you, get up and run."

Buckshot quickly found him, and Kevin jumped up and ran like a mad man. Buckshot shook his head and began to trot after the boy. Kevin ran and ran. Dodging this way and that, they ran together. Buckshot followed his every move, matching him step for

step. The whole time, Kevin just laughed and laughed.

When he was finally too tired to run anymore Kevin slumped down, kneeling in a heap on the warm sand. Buckshot walked over and gently placed his muzzle on Kevin's shoulder. It was too much. Kevin buried his head into Buckshot's neck. Grasping his mane, I overheard him tell our four-legged minister that he was the only one who'd ever wanted to play with him.

Later, as we put Buckshot back into the paddock, I marveled at this special creature, and how God uses His creation

to reach the broken. Earlier, I had asked God for help and here's what I know is true; a little boy showed up at the ranch that day in tears... but left with joy... and a smile on his face.

*"The Lord hears His people when they call to Him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those who are crushed in spirit"* (Psalms 34:17-18, NLT).

# I WILL BE WITH YOU

BY RUTHANN GOODRICH

WOW, I've only been in Oregon for a short while as a Full Time Volunteer at Crystal Peaks, and I'm already so amazed at what my Lord and Savior has been teaching me. Recently, I had the gift of helping and participating in the Leadership Clinic here at CPYR. I met many people from all over the country who also have hearts to serve Jesus by using horses.

During one of our lunch breaks I watched as a staff member took a participant into the horse paddock. The horses had just been fed and were all eating hay. During this time they do not usually pay much attention to people. But as I continued to watch, Hero, one of our beloved geldings, left his dinner and walked right over to the woman. Thoughtfully, she reached out her hand and began scratching him. He put his head straight up in the air—like a giraffe—and leaned into her touch. His body language proclaimed to all that he was very much enjoying the attention. One could almost hear him saying, "Oh that feels so good! Don't stop! Now scratch a little to the right, now the left." It was such a precious scene.

Hero's actions revealed that he believed human kindness was more important to him than eating dinner. He just wanted to feel loved and needed.

Watching this reminded me of how our God loves us so much.

He's never too busy to stop what He's

doing to come and meet our need. He *wants* to spend time with us. He desires each of us to reach out our hands to Him, walk with Him and spend time with Him. He has already chosen to be with us—all we have to do is trust Him.

While watching the sweet interaction between woman and horse, the passage that came to mind was Isaiah 41:9-10. It says, "I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.' So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

I'm blessed beyond words to serve a God who loves me so much. He doesn't ask us to do life on our own, but instead says, *I will be with you.*





Red Owl Photography

## A Conversation with one of CPYR's Full Time Volunteers:

# Karen Downer



We've attended the HoeDown every year since—it's a celebration we wouldn't want to miss!

Then in 2007, my husband encouraged me to attend an Information Clinic. I was resistant because

I couldn't see my husband supporting us starting a similar ministry. But I went and had the time of my life! Little did I know, God had plans for us to move to Bend to support the ranch. As an adult, I'd served in various ministries within the church, but I became alive when I realized I was being called to serve in a ministry that involved horses. So, in 2011, I left my career of 25 years and took a huge leap of faith to move our family and establish roots in an area we had only dreamed about living... doing what I'd never dreamed I'd ever get to do.

### **What gives horses a special place in your heart?**

Until God revealed Himself to me, horses gave me a purpose, a direction and a sense of hope. I grew up in a home that was broken and severed by divorce. A strong sense of abandonment and loneliness crept in and left me very vulnerable. I was quick to wander and tried to find love in all the wrong places. But, thankfully, I had an uncle who had a strong love for animals and people. Out of the blue, he offered to buy me a horse with my parents' approval. I was blown away—a dream was coming true.

My parents accepted his offer and a short time later, I was an active, full-fledged horse-crazy girl. Any teenage boy that tried to get my attention soon realized that he could NOT compete with the love between a girl and her horse. And that was a good thing for that season, as I was starving for love and could have easily gone astray.

### **Which aspect of the ranch's ministry do you most connect with?**

I enjoy every aspect of the ranch, from cleaning the paddock, to doing vet care for a horse. But I find that spending time with the youth, whether it involves riding, crafts or working in the woodshop, to be very rewarding. The kids that come to the ranch are so amazing! I especially enjoy teaching them how to ride, how to communicate and establish trust with a horse and how to learn healthy boundaries and respect with such a large animal. All of which, I pray they can take with them as life skills.

### **How has being a part of Crystal Peaks' ministry affected your family?**

The staff, which is affectionately called our "ranch family," is just that, family. They offer unconditional love and support. Our children have seen the power and beauty of giving our time and our hearts to serve those who need to feel loved and accepted, despite what they are walking through in their life. Our family has been deeply impacted by the ranch.

### **Tell us a bit about your family.**

My husband, Todd, and I have been married for 26 years. We have two wonderful teenagers named Danae and Brian. As a family, we love outdoor activities, such as camping, kayaking, hiking and horseback riding.

### **What first brought your family out to the ranch?**

I heard about the ranch when Kim came to our church to talk about the ministry. At that time, I was searching for God's will in my life. After hearing how the ranch uses horses to touch the lives of youth and families, I was moved to tears.

Our first trip to the ranch was for the annual HoeDown in 2005. We just showed up, not knowing a soul. We were powerfully impacted that day. Everyone was so friendly!

We danced, played crazy games, enjoyed a yummy BBQ and ended the night with worship. Laughter filled the ranch, which was so healing. And the Joy of the Lord was present!

# A Beautiful Picture Complete

BY XANDRA ASSUR

RESCUING THE EQUINE is one of the four main pillars of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch. Our equine friends have the incredible ability to reach through barriers that many children build to protect themselves. It's awesome to witness a child open up and grow in different areas when around the horses.

Just last week I worked with a girl who had a broken arm. She wanted to be around a horse even though she was not able to ride. So, we went into the paddock and selected a mare in need of some quality grooming time. We chose to give our love to Phoebe, a horse that came to the ranch years ago in a desolate state. Today, she's a living testimony of redemption.

We spent most of the session time chatting and brushing. While grooming Phoebe, we created a huge pile of fur on the ground. We could've made another horse out of all that hair! Once we finished, we had some extra time so we decided to do some ground training in the round pen with our sweet equine friend.

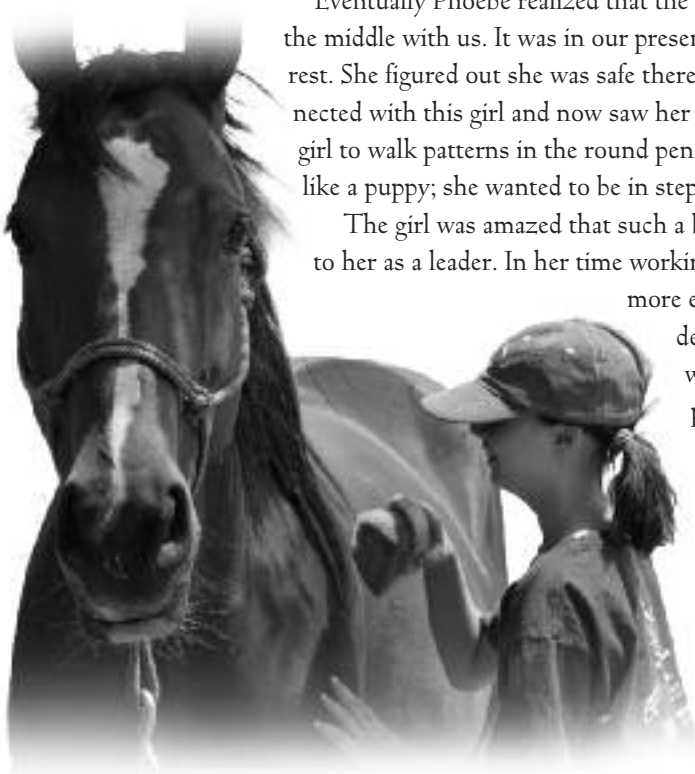
I love working in the round pen because it's a great place to teach kids about horses. It's also a place where the horse is able to really connect with a child and leader. Many times I've walked away from time spent there realizing that I learned something about myself and my relationship with God.

Once released in the round pen, Phoebe playfully galloped around the perimeter time after time. I quietly stood in the middle, watching as she ran off her energy. After the mare had settled down, I allowed the girl to come in the middle and stand with me while I showed her how to give Phoebe cues to walk, trot or change directions.

Eventually Phoebe realized that the best place to be was in the middle with us. It was in our presence that she was able to rest. She figured out she was safe there. Phoebe had connected with this girl and now saw her as the leader. I told the girl to walk patterns in the round pen. Phoebe followed her like a puppy; she wanted to be in step with her new friend.

The girl was amazed that such a big animal would look to her as a leader. In her time working with Phoebe, she felt

more empowered and confident—as did Phoebe. I watched as a beautiful picture was completed—a girl loving a horse—and that same horse giving the gift of love and friendship—back to the girl.



Yes! I would like to shoulder with Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch to support children, horses and families in need.

Please use my donation for:

- Where it is needed most
- Rescue the Equine
- Mentor the Child
- Hope for the Family
- Empower the Ministry

### Payment Method:

A check payable to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch or CPYR for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send donations to: Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch, 19344 Innes Market Road, Bend OR 97701.

You can also make your donation at [www.crystalpeakseyouthranch.org](http://www.crystalpeakseyouthranch.org) with your credit card or PayPal account.

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## CPYR CALENDAR

Curious what's going on at Crystal Peaks? Planning to be in our area? Find how you can be involved at the ranch by checking our Calendar of Events. Go to [www.cpyr.org](http://www.cpyr.org) and click "CPYR Calendar" under the "Visit the Ranch" tab.

**A few upcoming events you'll find there:**

Harvest Day – August 14, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Sign-up required)

We'd love for your kids and family to join the fun!

Summer Wrap-Up Party – August 29, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

All are welcome!