



AROUND the FIRE

NEWS FROM CRYSTAL PEAKS YOUTH RANCH

SUMMER 2010

THE JOSEPH LEGACY

BY KIM MEEDER

Over the years, Troy and I have prayed for God's leadership, wisdom and provision to help guide Crystal Peaks forward into His best plan. Last spring, a reoccurring message began to grow in my heart. Over time, it spread out in my mind like a vast field of wheat. The message was simple; God was going to make the ranch like Joseph in Egypt. It was His plan to provide an over abundance—not to be spent—but to be saved. This extra was to be stored by the ranch and then appropriated to others during times of hardship. The 'gifting' that was coming would not only meet the needs of our ministry, it would reach far beyond.

Upon sharing this hopeful anticipation with Troy, he too was eager to follow the leading of the Lord. Fourteen years of necessity had already taught us how to operate Crystal Peaks in a frugal manner. So, it wasn't difficult for us to begin the focused

process of storing a portion of the contributions that flowed into the ranch. With our eye on the unknown, we stepped forward in faith and watched our small storehouse begin to fill.

By the following winter the reason for the message became urgently clear. In nearly every direction around us, scores of children, adults and families were struggling to make ends meet. With prayerful consideration of each case, help began to flow from the storehouse. Just as it had streamed in, support poured out in the form of groceries, winter clothing and finances for gas and heating. Dozens of large boxes filled with tack were sent across the US and beyond to shoulder with similar ministries trying to give aid to broken families. One exhausted young father, who was working three jobs, was given an envelope with enough help to buy Christmas gifts for his wife and three small children.

Continued on page 2



“Day by day the Lord takes care of the innocent. They will survive through hard times; even in famine they will have more than enough. The steps of the Godly are directed by the Lord. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.” (Psalms 37:18a, 19, 23, 24).



Because pure love had moved faithful hearts to give to this ranch, pure love was given through this ranch. Pouring out like a river, the ‘storehouse’ was working, gushing help to those in need.

And so it began.

Earlier this spring, Troy was approached by a family who wished to make a donation of hay. He passionately responded, “Yes, no bale left behind!” Our ranch alone uses 110-120 tons a year. If we have a surplus, we share the wealth with local families and similar ministries that we’ve assisted into existence. Troy explained that we can find a home for every bale of hay.

The family glanced knowingly at each other, eager to reveal their intentions. Curious, Troy asked, “How much hay do you wish to donate?” They smiled and said, “300 TONS.”

After Troy picked himself up off the floor, their conversation continued with the assurance that there would be a potential large annual hay donation from now on. Even with our two hay barns packed to the rafters, 300 tons of hay would bury our small ranch.

After much consideration, Troy came up with a solution he hoped would benefit everyone. Since this was going to be a yearly donation, he proposed to have the ranch finance building a large hay barn on their property so it would be convenient for them to place the hay under shelter and not have to move it. This way, we could storehouse the hay and dispense it for those in need. Our friends thought this was a great idea... with one exception... *they* wanted to build the barn for the ranch. With great enthusiasm, they said, “Let’s call it Joseph’s Barn!”

With 300 tons of hay needing to be placed, Julie called many of our similar ministries within reasonable driving distance with the good news. Within days, 250 tons had already been designated toward eager homes.

Days later, the ranch was contacted by a friend who represented a group who wished to remain anonymous. They had been observing the ranch for quite some time and were moved by our ministry to families in need. Their desire was simple; they wanted to help. In a grassroots fashion, they hoped to come alongside struggling families and offer assistance.

In our kitchen a few nights ago, as Troy and I marveled at the generosity of this group, we inadvertently referred to them as the ‘Joseph Project.’

And so it began.

Giving is so fun. In a unique way, it blesses in both directions. Often, tears of gratitude fall from those who receive gifts and tears of joy fall from those who give them. Perhaps it would look like a full rainbow—arcing for the glory of God—to become a blessing on each end.

Friends, thank you for your part in this process. Thank you for your prayers, your support, your incredible generosity and your friendship. Troy and I wanted you to know that together, what you’re doing... is arcing from your heart, through ours and beyond... and it’s making a difference.

“Day by day the Lord takes care of the innocent. They will survive through hard times; even in famine they will have more than enough. The steps of the Godly are directed by the Lord. He delights in every detail of their lives. Though they stumble, they will not fall, for the Lord holds them by the hand.” (Psalms 37:18a, 19, 23, 24).

Dear Family—because of you—
Joseph’s Legacy lives on.



Free

BY AMANDA SETTLE

The sun set over the mountains, spreading vibrant colors that painted serenity and peace across the sky. Stillness filled the air. As I continued to watch the girl riding around me with the molten heavens streaming out above her, my heart was overcome with new compassion for this child.

“You’re doing a great job,” I called out as I watched her slow her horse from a trot to a walk. “Why don’t you cool him down now?”

All summer I had been blessed to spend riding session time with this quiet, tender-hearted soul. During our season together, we chatted about life, school, family, and friends. But, as the year was coming to a close, I desired to reach beyond the superficial, into the depths of her heart. I longed to engage her in a conversation where I could share the hope of Christ. But the words had not come.

I watched my young friend thoughtfully guide her horse around the arena. With each step, I could feel frustration toward myself increase. I just didn’t know what to say. Because of my quiet nature, I felt like I was failing my precious friend.

Desperate to share God’s loving heart with her, I inwardly cried out, “Lord, What is it that I’m supposed to say? What is my role here?” Waiting for an answer, I felt nothing but stillness.

The setting sun gave notice that it was near time to end the session. To my private dismay, I gave way to the silence. Instead of searching for the ‘right’ words or questions, I simply gave up and watched the young girl ride her horse one last time around the arena. Once again, my own ineptitude seemed victorious.

In the wordless moments that followed, I felt a gentle nudging in my flustered heart. The Lord’s loving voice broke through the bondage of my doubt: *Don’t be afraid of the silence. My presence is greater than your words.*



Emotion rose within my throat as I watched this private girl and her horse walk toward me. Suddenly, I realized it wasn’t about what I said or didn’t say. It wasn’t about my words at all. This moment was about me choosing to trust Christ for how He made me. I needed to let go of trying to measure myself against others. I needed to trust who Christ was in me and the way He was fashioning me for His purpose, His glory.

I had wrestled all season with feelings of inadequacy. I even tried to remedy these feelings by mimicking the personalities of other leaders. But, this only made me feel more deficient. Finally, I understood why. The Lord wasn’t asking me to ‘do’ anything different, or even ‘be’ anything different. Rather, He was calling me to trust in HIM. It was His desire that I simply *be*... be a presence for Him in the life of this little one.

Our session ended that day with only a few more words exchanged. But now, I saw things differently. I understood the purpose in the silence. Realization sparked in my heart; the awareness that God created my quiet spirit to impact kids in a specific way. I found great peace in embracing the hope that who Christ was in me... was more than enough.

Since that day, each session has become more exciting as the Lord reveals to me how individual traits and gifts are fragments and expressions of HIS heart. Now, as He continues to show me my role in His body, I’m thrilled to be obedient when He prompts me to break the silence and encourage others to seek His calling on their lives.

Expressing God’s joy is real now—now that I understand He’s calling me to be free in who I am, free in who He has created me to be.

I’m learning there’s something extraordinary about filling this role—the role of *you*.

“Under His direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Eph. 4:16 NLT)

{ GOLDEN MOMENT }

BY SARAH BECK

“He’s a treasure!” I marveled at the golden Arabian gelding I had just ridden. Pulling the saddle from his back, I noted an important truth about Halo: this horse was intuitive. When with a person, he put his whole being into the experience. At that moment, I knew that Halo would flourish with a quiet, attentive child. Smiling, I filed the thought away and went about my tasks for that day.

In the middle of my full schedule, precious time was allotted for Mitchell, my dear, young friend. Mitchell was a happy kid. However, since the death of our beloved horse Syngin, things just weren’t the same for the boy. Mitch had been profoundly attached to Syngin and they had shared a deep bond. Although he was still willing to help out at the ranch, he stopped spending time with the horses.

Since the months of Syngin’s passing it was clear, Mitch was still privately grieving.

After completing our daily ranch chores, Mitch Mitchell and I wandered out onto the boardwalk of the barn. Praying for wisdom I realized it was the perfect time to ask the uncomfortable question, now at the forefront of my mind.

“Let’s go take a horse out, what do you say?”

Contemplating the question, his expression dropped. Overhearing our conversation, his insightful mother walked past and gave

her son a good-natured nudge, “Why don’t you trust Sarah? I think it’s a good idea.”

With a few quick glances between his mom and me, he reluctantly agreed. After retrieving a halter from the tack room, we went into the paddock and straight toward Halo.

Mitch hesitantly walked to the golden gelding with an outstretched hand. The horse shifted toward Mitch until his nose met the boy’s finger tips. I watched Mitch’s expression soften toward the gelding.

Observing the interaction between Mitch and Halo as he groomed him, it appeared he had found a new friend. Following the boy’s every move with his muzzle the gelding appeared to be encouraging the child. Periodically, Mitch would stop mid-brush stroke and silently embrace Halo’s neck.

Still hugging Halo, Mitch turned to look at me, “I think Syngin is still my favorite horse, but

Halo is my second favorite.”

The boy’s expression change conveyed that he needed to ask a question. Realization dawned in my heart. In his childlike way, he was trying to ask if it was okay to love another horse, if it would betray Syngin. Stepping forward I bent toward his face, “You’ll always love Syngin, and that’s okay. But, you can also love Halo too. You don’t have to choose one or the other. Syngin would want you to have a friend.” Mitch nodded solemnly, trying to process what I had just shared.

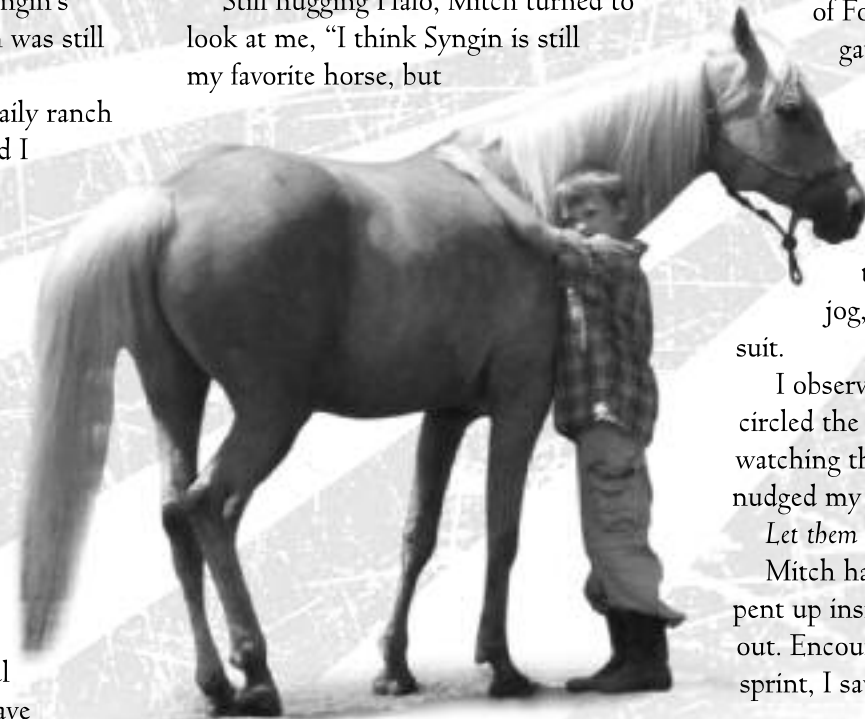
Once in the arena God impressed on my heart an idea to encourage this new found friendship. “Hey Mitch, let’s see if Halo will follow you!” He gave me an enthusiastic nod. The boy understood the instruction quickly and soon Halo was eagerly following his every step. Within their game of Follow the Leader, Mitch gave Halo hugs.

I climbed up onto the fence and called out the challenge for the pair to try and stay together at a trot. Mitch began to jog, and Halo followed suit.

I observed as horse and boy circled the huge arena. While watching them play, the Lord nudged my heart once again.

Let them run.

Mitch had so much sorrow pent up inside, he needed to let it out. Encouraging the boy to sprint, I saw him run as fast as he



could. He appeared to be leaving his grief behind. Fueled by friendship, a golden horse cantering in pursuit.

Watching them run together, it looked as if Mitch was letting go of the sorrow of losing his best friend. In that moment, I imagined the boy's pain being trampled under the hooves of a newfound companionship.

Within this life each one of us will at some point experience profound loss. The weight of this sadness makes us believe that we will never be the same again. And it is true: we will never be the same. Yet, when we shift our focus away from our sorrow and instead, to the unique work the Lord brings into our path our hearts can be whole again. With one simple "no" Mitchell could've missed this opportunity

to heal.

The friendship between Halo and Mitchell reminds me to watch, even in the midst of sorrow, for the 'golden moments' God will bring.

Mitchell's golden moment just happened to come in a golden horse named Halo.



Through my tears
I realized God's plan
is *always* perfect.

STREAMS OF LIFE

BY DEANNA JOY

I first trudged up the long, gravel driveway to Crystal Peaks on a crisp spring day just over a year ago. With my two young daughters in tow, my labored steps matched my heavy heart. Years of financial woes, family tensions, debilitating and chronic illnesses, betrayed friendships, and a daughter's mounting learning challenges had consumed my resolve. The harder I struggled to meet these needs and make my life measure up to my expectations, the deeper I sank into a pit from which there was no escape.

My guard went up as we approached the top of the ranch driveway. In my weariness, I was unwilling to trust anyone. "Welcome to Crystal Peaks!" came a young woman's warm and genuine greeting, which was disarming to me. I watched as my little girls met their leaders and were happily led away to work and play with horses. Hesitantly, I trailed along behind them. Taking in the beauty of my surroundings, I whispered the prayer that had become so constant to me it was like breathing: "Lord, rescue me! Send water to my soul!"

Slowly, the Lord used our visits to Crystal Peaks to break down my protective walls. Through the early summer I found private places around the ranch to cry, pray and lose myself in the visual panorama of mountains and valleys. Gradually, the jumble of rot that had filled and blocked my heart began to loosen and wash away. And yet, as the heaviness of my depression began to lift, I was more aware than ever of the emptiness behind it.

The last Saturday of July, my family and I attended the ranch's annual Hoedown. Restlessly, I wandered about, keeping an eye on my children as they picnicked, square danced and played games. Yet the beauty of the day did nothing to fill the barrenness inside me.

When the afternoon heat faded into the coolness of the high desert evening, my family made its way to our car. I lagged a few steps behind, discouraged with myself. Why did my inner emptiness still remain? I kicked at the dirt as I walked and watched it puff up into little dry clouds around my feet.

I conceded that my heart felt just as dry and dusty.

Slowly, realization poured into my thoughts. I had tried for the past few hours to drink all the life-giving water out of the people and the place that I loved, and it wasn't enough. All I had done was gulp down everything they had to give, yet, my heart still felt parched and thirsty. Crushed in spirit, I kicked in frustration at the dry dirt all the way down the hill.

While my family settled into our car, I heard the gentle voice of God. "You're right, my child. These people and this place will never be enough. That's because what you're looking for isn't found *in* people. It isn't found *in* a place. What you are looking for isn't

found on the outside, but the inside. What you seek is found only in Me. If you have gained comfort in the steadiness of the mountains, it is because I put them there to remind you of My faithfulness. If you have thrilled at the rich colors in the flowers, it is because I painted them to remind you that no concern of yours is too small or too difficult for Me. If you have felt loved here, it's because I have loved you through the willing hearts of these people. I have brought you to the ranch this year to empty you of decay and debris—to make room for MY springs of water. I have brought you here tonight to help you understand that this ranch, its staff, and you are similar to this dusty soil under your feet. I am your God and I *delight* to pour my rivers of living water into your barren places."

**“I give waters in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert,
to give drink to My people,
My chosen.”**

Isaiah 43:20b (NKJV)

My prayer for my life transformed that night. The constant plea, “Rescue me!” was replaced by “Fill me!”

For so long, I had been asking God to rescue me from my own life, to move me out of the desert of my hardships so that I could know His joy. But He used that summer at Crystal Peaks to illustrate how it is *in our desert places* that His living water is most needed.

Cold pure water flows from the ranch’s deep well to make it a lovely oasis in the middle of the high desert, not only for it’s own refreshment, but for all who step on this once desolate place. Likewise, the pure living water of Jesus’ forgiveness, love and life is abundant enough to not only transform us, but to overflow beyond the narrow streambeds of our lives and bring restoration and hope to others who’re suffering in a desert place around us.

Jesus offers living water to all who seek Him. When we drink deeply from His presence, we experience true joy in any circumstance we might find ourselves.

**He is the only true source.
And He is more than enough.**

*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
- Potential Property Expansion
- Endowment Fund

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.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org
with your credit card or PayPal account.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

Please make my donation a gift

In honor of:

In memory of:

Please send gift acknowledgement to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BEND, OR
PERMIT # 3

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch Co.
(541) 330-0123
19344 Innes Market Road
Bend, OR 97701
www.crystalpeaksyouthranch.org

DR. DOBSON VISITS CRYSTAL PEAKS!

BY KATHERINE TEAGUE



We are thrilled to announce that Dr. James Dobson and his wife Shirley visited Crystal Peaks on June tenth. He recorded an on-sight interview with Troy, Kim, ranch staff and kids and parents as a pilot for his new radio program, "Family Talk." Years ago, Dr. Dobson raised Arabian horses in Waco, Texas. So, it was no surprise when he jumped at the chance to canter laps around the arena on Troy's horse, 'Eclipse.' We are honored, humbled and extremely excited to be a small part of this new endeavor for Dr. Dobson and his family. Please join us in praying that the Lord will use this broadcast to extend His message of grace and hope to encourage broken hearts.