

FALL/WINTER 2025

newsletter



Rescuing Abused, Abandoned & Neglected Horses throughout New Mexico



THANK YOU TO THE QUIET HEROES

Recognizing the Loyal Sponsors Who Make Second Chances Possible

In this season of gratitude, we begin by saying thank you to the quiet heroes who, without accolades or pretense, choose to sponsor one of our rescue horses.

Some remarkable individuals, who have been sponsoring for over 10 years are **Melissa and Keith S.**, who've sponsored Wobbles since 2012; **Lisa and Victor T.**, longtime sponsors of Aspen; **Yamuna L.**, who's supported Flo since 2013; **Marian C.**, sponsor of Sassy and Gidget; **Lorrie and Scott H.**, who care for Riley; and **Connie W.**, a sponsor since 2015.

These kindhearted folks step forward to provide monthly support for the horse they've chosen — covering the essential costs of feed, veterinary care, farrier work, and the training that helps each horse grow healthy, confident, and ready for adoption. Their steady commitment gives our horses the time and care they need to heal and flourish.

Sponsorship is truly an act of love in the form of financial support. Love as

a quiet promise that says, "You matter. Your story isn't over."

"Sponsoring Gemma made me feel connected, like I was part of her journey. I found comfort in knowing I helped this special being live a better life." – Sharon J.

Recurring gifts can be set up through our website, and sponsors receive year-end donation receipts for tax purposes. More than anything, they receive the deep satisfaction of knowing they've played a personal role in changing a horse's life.

In a warm hug of appreciation, we celebrate the sponsors who make transformation possible. Your generosity is the heartbeat behind every success story.



Become the quiet hero for one of these horses (Top to Bottom): Chai, Jack, Madalyn and Kobe. Visit: TheHorseShelter.org/Sponsor

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Jennifer Rios, Board President

Dear Friends,

When I reflect back on the past twenty-five years of The Horse Shelter, I cannot help but to marvel at the progress we have made, all of the horses we have been able to help through one method or another, and the enormity of the growth the organization has experienced. Every way in which we have evolved over the past quarter century, has served to improve the lives of more horses; something of which everyone reading this can be proud, as for certain, it has taken this village.

Whether you volunteer with us, donate, serve or have served on our board, work as an employee of The Shelter's, you have played a critical part on our path to helping New Mexico's horses. There are so many things that we do to help horses that you may not even know about, such as providing counseling to horse owners in order to help them keep their horses when circumstances might be difficult, networking and working in concert with all of the other horse rescues around the State in order to ensure that together we can help as many horses as possible, and providing training to many of the horses that come through our gate in order to give them the tools they need to find their forever homes, just to mention a few such actions.

Every day we are aware that it is our village that makes all of this possible through all of the roles you play in our success. The donations of your time and your hard-earned dollars are the lifeblood of our organization. When you shop in or donate to our resale store, you are helping us to fulfill our mission. When you give us an hour of your time, you make a difference in the lives of our horses. When you include us in your estate planning, you help to ensure that the horses of New Mexico are taken care of well into the future. When you send us a dollar or one million dollars, you are helping New Mexico's horses today. As 2025 comes to a close, I want to both thank you for your support and ask for your continued support. As you see prices for everything all around you rising, know that that is the case for The Shelter as well. Feed, labor, insurances, materials, etc. just continue to rise in cost and I want you to know we are working hard everyday to stretch our dollars in the best ways possible, but I also want you to know how very much each donation helps us.

I am very well aware of how many truly worthy options you have when making your end of year donations, I just want you to rest assured how very well and thoughtfully we put every penny we receive to good use, how much we appreciate it and how much it will make a difference for the horses of New Mexico.

Wishing you and your family a very happy and healthy holiday season and I hope to see you at the Shelter or the Resale Store soon!

All the best, on behalf of the Board,

Jennifer Rios
President
The Horse Shelter



LEGACY GIVING

A legacy gift to The Horse Shelter will help us expand our impact and mission. Your gift will save many lives and create futures for horses that otherwise have no recourse. Please consider including The Horse Shelter in your planned giving and estate. Besides the inclusion as beneficiaries in your will and testament, estate, living trust, life insurance, annuities or IRA—there are more options for you to explore with your estate planner.

CALL 505.471.6179, OR VISIT:
**[THEHORSESHELTER.org/
planned-giving](https://THEHORSESHELTER.org/planned-giving)**

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CONTACT THE HORSE SHELTER
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25TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

Almost 200 people visited our ranch in Cerrillos to see our operation firsthand.



(Top Left) Jillian and Scooter share a joke. (Top Right) Sophia and Zobi, a match made in heaven. (Bottom Left) Scooter scooping up some more joy with a young horse lover. (Bottom Right) Cappacino and Becky welcome guests.

Mother Nature may have shifted our plans, but she delivered beautifully on the rain date. Saturday, October 18 turned out to be the perfect day for our 25th Anniversary Open House, and we were thrilled to welcome almost 200 guests to the ranch!

Visitors got a firsthand look at daily life on the ranch enjoying our beautiful horses and watching thoughtful training demos that reflect just how far our horses and volunteers have come. Kimber and Molly gave impressive ground training presentations with Aspen and Mick, showcasing patience, consistency, and progress in action.

Fan-favorites like Scooter and Inigo Montoya welcomed guests in the Petting Pen, while young Cappuccino stole the show in his tiny hat. Even Ozzy and Jarvis found ways to entertain—sneaking up on guests with their usual mischief.

We were also thrilled to see adopter Sophia return with Hala, a wonderful reminder of why we do what we do. Carrie performed with her adopted horse Kelsey, and Bree gave a beautiful riding demo with Grace and Phoenix, offering a glimpse of the training in progress at THS.

This year's Open House was a celebration of community, connection, and the incredible journey of rescue.

If you couldn't make it this year, we hope these photos capture the joyful energy that filled the ranch. From playful horses to smiling guests, the spirit of the day was truly something special.

A heartfelt thank-you to all the volunteers and staff who took time out of their Saturday to make the Open House such a welcoming and memorable experience for everyone. We couldn't do it without you!

ADOPTION HIGHLIGHT



Two gentlemen find their forever home. Companion horses are perfect for those who want the beauty of horse ownership without the demands.

We're excited to share that Scooter and Venture have officially been adopted, and their story is one that truly warms our hearts.

Joanne and her husband, Bill, had horses for many years. But after the passing of their last horse this summer, they thought they had closed that chapter of their lives. As it turns out, the barn felt a little too quiet. The presence of horses, it seems, is hard to live without.

When Joanne visited The Horse Shelter, she connected immediately with two of our most charming residents—Scooter and Venture. These bonded boys were looking for a non-riding home, and Joanne and Bill were the perfect match. No need for saddles or bridles—just space, care, and the shared comfort of companionship.

At The Horse Shelter, our adoption process is designed to ensure every horse ends up in a home that fits their needs and personality. For Scooter and Venture, that home now includes skilled and experienced hands, and people who truly appreciate what it means to give a rescue horse a second chance.



WE ARE DRILLING

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we're in the final stages of drilling a new well at the horse ranch in Cerrillos.

In an amazing display of generosity our wonderful donor Jackie Counter donated \$108,000 to our well fund bringing the total contributions to \$110,500.

We are deeply grateful for her ongoing support (she also sponsors our horse Natilla).

Thank you, Jackie and to all that contributed to this fund. We started drilling in October and are happy to report we have a good well and are in the final stages of installation. This new well will provide plenty of water for our horses and operations far into the future.



Meet our Progression Riding Trainer Brianna Gooch

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Brianna Gooch has been a valued member of The Horse Shelter community since 2018—first as a volunteer, then as an adopter (of the beloved Tango), and now as a key contributor to our training team. Brianna serves as our “progression rider,” the person who takes horses that have been started under saddle by our colt starters and continues their education until they’re ready for adoption. Her thoughtful approach and steady presence have made her an essential bridge between early training and forever homes.

Originally from Virginia, Brianna began riding at age five despite not coming from a horsey family. She grew up in the Hunter discipline, riding and competing with lesson horses before eventually becoming a horse owner herself. After relocating

to New Mexico with her partner, Farrier Rachel Lynn—who also has deep ties to THS—they quickly connected with our shelter, and we’re so grateful they did.

Since stepping into the Progression Rider role in January 2025, Brianna has helped guide several horses into successful adoptions, including Pixie, Snickers, Jill, and Kelsey. Her skill, compassion, and dedication shine through in every ride and every match made. Thank you, Brianna, for your continued care and commitment to our mission.

Learn more about the
volunteer process at:
[www.TheHorseShelter.org/
volunteer/](http://www.TheHorseShelter.org/volunteer/)

CHEERS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



This October we celebrated the compassionate, hardworking individuals who make our mission possible—**our volunteers**. Truly, we are grateful for them every day.

There are so many things we can only do because of our volunteers. Events like our Open House and Fundraising Auction wouldn’t happen without the 30+ volunteers who sign up to help. They set up, break down, attend to guests, show off our horses, and—most importantly—keep everyone safe.

Daily mucking for 100 horses would take one person over 12 hours. With 8–10 volunteers and one staff member, it takes just two. Volunteers also groom and socialize horses during our daily classes.

Thanks to their dedication, horses once neglected or afraid are rediscovering trust, care, and love. Our volunteers truly are the heartbeat of our rescue.

From all of us—and from every horse you’ve touched—thank you for giving your time, energy, and heart to our herd.

THE REMARKABLE JOURNEY OF LEE

What's possible when rescue, care, and love meet opportunity.



Lee today—her grace and the deep connection she shares with her rider. These images speak louder than words about the impact of rescue, the patience of training, and the power of trust.

Every now and then, a story comes along that reminds us exactly why we do this work.

In 2013, The Horse Shelter took in five young foals who had been separated from their mothers during a roundup and were bound for slaughter. One of those foals was a petite weanling we called Chinle—quiet, alert, and full of unspoken promise.

Four years later, she entered our 2017 Gimme Shelter training event with Wyatt Mortenson. That experience laid the foundation for what would become a life-changing partnership.

Today, Chinle—now known as Lee—is not only thriving, she's turning heads across the Southwest as the trusted mount of young rider Emma Ortiz.

Since her adoption in 2017, Lee has become a standout competitor, traveling throughout New Mexico and Arizona with Emma. The pair has competed in barrel racing, poles, and breakaway roping—earning a saddle in the 2023 Rodeo de Santa Fe Summer Barrel Racing Series. That same year, they

won the Sandoval County Fair Queen title, again bringing home a saddle.

Most recently, Emma was crowned the 2025 Rodeo de Santa Fe Queen, proudly riding Lee during grand entries, flag runs, and hot laps. If you caught the event on The Cowboy Channel, you likely saw Lee carrying the New Mexico state flag—a former rescue horse leading the charge in a celebrated rodeo tradition.

Emma's mother shared:

"She has taught my daughter so much—about patience, connection, trust. Lee's bond with her is something truly special. She's grown into this absolutely stunning mare with the most incredible presence, and people are always surprised to learn she's a rescue. We proudly tell everyone she came from The Horse Shelter. We're so grateful to be part of her story."

So are we. Lee's transformation is proof of what's possible when rescue, care, and love meet opportunity.

Treat yourself and friends to a year of powerful portraits from the ranch.

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW WALL CALENDAR



We are thrilled to unveil our first-ever 2026 Wall Calendar, a tribute to the horses of The Horse Shelter and the people who care for them. This limited-edition calendar features the photography of Evalyn Bemis, a cherished sponsor, adopter, and dedicated volunteer, who graciously donates her work to support our mission. Each month showcases

breathtaking photos and stories behind the horses who call our shelter home. *Get yours today!*
Purchase at the Resale Store or online by following this QR code to The Horse Shelter.org.



Preventing Refeeding Syndrome

REFEEDING A MALNOURISHED HORSE

In our last newsletter, we introduced the Henneke Body Condition Scoring System to help you recognize different levels of malnourishment in horses. When it comes to refeeding a starving horse, careful management, veterinary supervision, and precise nutritional planning are critical for safe recovery.

Begin by feeding small, frequent meals made up of high-protein forages such as alfalfa or high-quality grass hay.

Avoid offering grains or calorie-dense concentrates during the initial stages. Introducing these too soon can trigger Refeeding Syndrome—a life-threatening condition that occurs when an emaciated horse is reintroduced to nutrition too rapidly. This syndrome can cause severe metabolic disturbances, organ failure, and even death over the following days or weeks.

If you encounter a starving horse, do not throw a bag of grain over the fence. Instead, contact us or the appropriate law enforcement agency. With proper intervention, the horse can receive the specialized care it needs for a safe and successful recovery.

NM Livestock Board: 505.841.6161
nmlbonline.com

The Horse Shelter: 505.471.6179



Isaiah arrived malnourished in 2022. With careful supervision, we introduced a healthy diet for rehabilitation.



The Horse Shelter

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FIND YOUR TREASURE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Discover delightful gifts at The Horse Shelter's Resale Store—perfect for teachers, pet sitters, and all the special people in your life! Browse our enchanting collection of unique finds, including charming tea towels, stylish THS merchandise, cozy apparel, art, jewelry, and more. Every purchase supports our mission, so you can give a thoughtful gift while making a difference.

821 W. San Mateo Rd. #A
OPEN

MON-SAT 10:00 am - 5:00 pm
SUNDAY 11:00 am - 4:00 pm

