

# B.O.K. Briefing

B.O.K. Ranch - The Peninsula's PREMIER PATH  
Accredited Therapeutic Horseback Riding Center



## Give a Gift that Lasts All Year by Sponsoring a B.O.K. Horse & Rider

Fall/Winter 2012

### Star Equestrian

Hannah started taking horseback riding lessons at B.O.K. Ranch at the age of 11. Now at age 16, Hannah is an accomplished, self-confident rider. When Hannah first started riding at B.O.K., she was considered a “minimum support” rider, which means she required someone leading her horse, and one or two side walkers next to her at all times.

That’s not the case anymore. Miss Hannah has progressed through various B.O.K. Ranch classes and is now a “transition rider”. This means that Hannah is able

to ride her horse at a walk and at a trot independently!



Although Hannah has ridden many different horses

throughout her years at B.O.K. (including some really tall ones), you will most often see her riding her favorite horse, Nellik. Nellik is a Norwegian Fjord and the B.O.K. Ranch mascot. Hannah and Nellik have developed a wonderful partnership over the years.

Hannah recently participated in the horse show at the Westwind Community barn in Los Altos Hills. She also plans to perform in the 28th Annual Western Day Riding Demo in 2013.

**Congratulations Hannah!**

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### Thank You for Caring

We want to thank our generous donors for helping the children and adults whose lives are changed forever by the B.O.K. Ranch therapeutic riding program. Because of your support, more than 120 participants a week benefit from B.O.K. equine therapy.

Based on requests from our community outreach efforts, we’ve introduced four new programs to help those facing the challenges of autism and other developmental disabilities. The new programs include: Mommy and Me; Equine Enrichment for Lifetime Learners; Whoa-Ga; and Bereavement Trail Rides (see page 3 for details).

Your continued support will enable us to serve many more children and adults with these innovative programs. They will thrive as never before, through your kindness.

Please include B.O.K. Ranch among the charities you will be supporting between now and the end of the year. We rely heavily upon year-end contributions to fund our year-round programs. Please take a moment to fill out and mail the enclosed reply card.

From everyone and every horse at B.O.K. Ranch, **Thank You for Caring!**



*Tish and her boys, Ben and Baby Beau taking Chase for a walk*

*"No hour of life is wasted in the saddle"*

*-Winston Churchill*



*Megan @ home on the range*

## Letter from the Director

Dear B.O.K. Ranch Friends,

Recently, a mother was in my office telling me how happy she is now that she found B.O.K. Ranch. She explained that her son had been turned down by several horseback riding lesson barns, including ones offering therapeutic riding. The reasons he was turned down ranged from "he was too high functioning", or "his special needs required more support than their lesson program could provide". She felt like Goldilocks looking for a horseback riding program that was "just right" for her son. When she learned about B.O.K. Ranch, she knew her search was over. I told her that the B.O.K. Ranch Therapeutic Riding Program has been "just right" for more than 27 years, for more than 120 riders per week.

Every year things just seem to get better and better because of our experienced instructors, gentle, hardworking horses, enthusiastic riders and dependable volunteers. **B.O.K. Ranch is the only Premier Accredited PATH Therapeutic Riding Center on the Peninsula, and it is the largest!** We aren't resting on our laurels; we continue to expand our programs –see page 3 for details. As many of you already know, my family has also expanded this year. Baby Beau is now 6 months old, eating like a horse and growing like a weed.

*Cheers for a wonderful and prosperous 2013.*

## Sponsor a Horse

Horse Sponsorship is an excellent way to support the B.O.K. Ranch Therapeutic Riding Program. Your generous donation helps offset the ever increasing expenses of caring for our four legged therapists. Horse Sponsor-

ship also insures that the B.O.K. Ranch will continue to provide equestrian therapy to future riders with special needs.

*All horse sponsorships are tax deductible.*



## Megan's Big Adventure by Miss Megan Dinsmore

When I am not working at the B.O.K. Ranch, I spend my "vacation" at a cattle ranch near the small town of Bridgeport, located east of Yosemite National Park. The name of the ranch is the Hunewill Ranch. The ranch has 4400 acres and is a cowboy and cowgirl's paradise. It has wide open spaces with beautiful mountains and lush green grass and lots of fresh water for the cattle and horses to drink. The Hunewill family settled in the Bridgeport Valley in 1861. In 1880, the ranch house and barn

were built. During the Great Depression, the family opened their ranch to the public. Today, three generations of Hunewills still live and work at the ranch.

During the spring and fall is when the Hunewills need help with the cattle. I go every year in the spring. Cattle work involves moving, gathering and sorting the cows, bulls, and calves from horseback. Only advanced riders may help with the spring cattle work. Each rider is assigned a horse. Every day begins at dawn with break-

fast. Right after breakfast it is time to tack up your horse and head out to the range to work until lunchtime. After lunch it is back in the saddle and back to work until late afternoon.

Although cattle work requires long days on horseback in all kinds of weather, I find it very rewarding. Every year I look forward to my time at the cattle ranch and living the life of a cowhand on the open range.

*Megan volunteers at the B.O.K. Ranch on Wednesdays and works as our assistant barn manager on Thursdays and Fridays.*

## New Programs

### Equine Enrichment for Lifetime Learners

Studies show that activities such as singing, movement, painting, and storytelling are unique combinations that create whole brain communication and stimulate neuroplasticity. This new B.O.K. Ranch program is designed for seniors living in assisted living and nursing care facilities. This special equine inspired program is tailored to the needs of people living with Alzheimer's, Dementia, stroke, and other debilitating and/or degenerative disorders. This program is a great way to keep an aging mind sharp and bring the wonderful world of horses, color and engagement to loved ones.

### Whoa-Ga

As part of B.O.K. Ranch's commitment to health and well being, we are proud to introduce you to *Whoa-Ga* or Equine Facilitated Yoga. This 6 week session is open to everyone with an interest in learning a new way to have fun with his or her horse. *Whoa-Ga* combines: 1) mat yoga for the rider, 2) carrot stretches for the horse, and 3) mounted Yoga for the horse and rider. This class focuses on seat, breathe, core, balance, and strength. Come and join us!

### Mommy and Me

This program is for parents and their children ages 0-4. This is a one of a kind early intervention/enrichment program combining the talents of **Kristen Vacketta**, Board Certified Music Therapist, **Nicole Keating**, Master Mneme Art Therapist, and PATH Certified Instructor, **Shannon Hill**. Together they have created a unique program for little ones who may not be diagnosed, but may have missed or are late on reaching development milestones. This program is equine inspired and designed specifically to accommodate the very special needs of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. Parent participation offers support and resource time so new parents can share needs, options, joys, concerns, and other therapeutic recreation services, available in our area, with experienced parents.

### Bereavement Trail Rides

The instructors at B.O.K. Ranch are scheduled to begin their training with KARA, a renowned grief and bereavement support resource in Palo Alto. This training will provide our PATH Certified Instructors the insight and tools needed to support families working through the grief process. For many years, B.O.K. Ranch has offered this support for families and individuals coping with change, loss or trauma. Now we are offering regularly scheduled trail rides for individuals and families to help them through their healing process.

## Meet Atti and Harvey

Atticus (Atti) and Harvey are our latest additions to the B.O.K. Ranch family. These two rescued miniature horses are named after two influential "right fighters", Atticus Finch and Harvey Milk.

Not a lot is known about Atti and Harvey's history, except that they came from an abandoned miniature horse breeding farm in the North Bay, and they are probably in their mid-20s. We are very glad we

found them ,so they will enjoy lots of TLC and a second chance for a happy life at B.O.K. Ranch.

Atti and Harvey will have important roles in two of our new programs starting this winter. One of the new programs is for seniors living in assisted and nursing care facilities. The other program is a "Mommy & Me" program for tiny tots with special needs (see details above). For

little people or people with limited mobility, a full-size horse can be intimidating, but there is something magical about a mini-horse.

Both Atti and Harvey are available for sponsorship, so if you are interested in helping provide care for these two delightful minis, please contact the B.O.K. office for more information.

**Sponsorships for Atti and Harvey are tax deductible.**



*For more detailed information on our NEW PROGRAMS call 650-366-2265*



*Atti and Harvey share a snack*

## Volunteer Corner

### Did you know?

Although body language is the main way horses communicate, they can also express themselves vocally. Here are some translations:

**Exhale:** An outward sigh that is soft and relaxed means “Aaaahhhh, I’m no longer tense.”

**Sharp snort or blow:** One or two snorts might be a punctuation of alarm, or could indicate that he or she is clearing dust from his or her nasal passages.

**Vibrating, rolling snort:** Usually uttered in deep tones, a rolling snort means a horse is very wary and suspicious and may suddenly bolt.

**Whinny or neigh:** This is a loud call that usually starts high and drops in tone. It can often be heard a half a mile away. Horses use a full-volume whinny to make or maintain contact, as a warning, or to solicit attention or care.

**Nickering:** A soft, low chortling is how a horse greets a friend.

**Blowing:** Horses often say hello to each other by blowing into each other’s nostrils. It may end almost as soon as it begins, or it may escalate to excited nickering, grunting, squealing, and varied displays of body language, friendly and otherwise.

*How to Think Like a Horse*  
By Cherry Hill

**Welcome to all our new volunteers!** You are already making a difference in supporting our program with your enthusiasm and can-do attitudes. Our Volunteer Orientations have been very successful in recruiting and training many new volunteers! Instructors **Shannon Hill** and **Bethany Layport**, and our Super Volunteers **Gabriela (Gabby) Rose** and **Claire Rose Vincenzi** dedicate one Sunday a month to bringing our volunteer recruits up to speed on the duties and responsibilities of volunteering at B.O.K. Ranch.

We are always looking for dedicated volunteers. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please call the office at 650-366-2265 or email [bok.office@yahoo.com](mailto:bok.office@yahoo.com).

Thank You!



## 2013 Calendars Are Here

Instructor **Bethany Layport** used her excellent photographic skills to design and produce a new calendar dedicated to the Horses of B.O.K. Ranch. Each of our handsome, hard working equines has at least one month displaying their portrait.

In addition, each horse’s birthday is highlighted on the calendar, so you may want to bring them a treat to help them celebrate their special day. **Happy New Year!**

Calendars are available in the B.O.K. office for \$20 each. Proceeds from the sale of the calendar go to support the B.O.K. Ranch therapeutic riding program.

