Western Day—The End of an Era

Since 1985 B.O.K. Ranch’s annual Western Day was a grand celebration filled with family fun, games, riding demonstrations, live music, silent auction, and a delicious barbecue lunch served by the Redwood City Fire Department. Every year the number of guests attending Western Day increased. This gave B.O.K. the opportunity to reach out to the community and to share the mission of the program while demonstrating its valuable services. Western Day was B.O.K. Ranch’s main fundraising event with all proceeds going directly to support the program.

Over the years, Western Day grew and produced varied and unusual forms of entertainment including: dog agility demonstrations, sheep and duck herding, face painting, wine tasting, live music, 4-H demonstrations, carnival games, and art exhibits—to name just a few. The primary purpose was not just to raise money but to bring the community together and to have FUN!

Last year we celebrated the 30th annual Western Day with more than 700 guests joining us at the place where it all began; the home of the Kulchin family. At that time we didn’t know that it would be our last Western Day celebration. We regret to inform you that there will be no Western Day fundraising event this year.

Your help and support are still needed! Your donations given at Western Day added much needed revenue to meet B.O.K.’s annual operating expenses. It provided the main source of funding to support the scholarship fund. Scholarships ensure that many children and adults, who are socially-economically disadvantaged, receive a positive, recreational therapeutic riding experience.

We are appealing to our donors who have faithfully participated in past Western Day events to please consider donating to B.O.K. now by using the enclosed self-addressed envelope. We depend on your generosity to keep B.O.K. Ranch’s commitment to providing therapeutic horseback riding to a growing number of individuals in the community. To those who are able to do more for us, we are pleased to give recognition and reward. Thank you for your support!
Dear Friends and Family,

Many of you may be wondering if your Western Day invitation was lost in the mail. As our lead story states, the era of Western Day has come to an end. Last June, the B.O.K. Ranch hosted the 30th Anniversary Western Day fundraiser at the home of B.O.K. founder, Ann Kulchin. We welcomed 760 guests to enjoy family fun at the place where B.O.K. Ranch originated in 1985. We are very thankful to Ann Kulchin for her many years of graciously hosting Western Day. Due to personal reasons, Ann has decided to step down from her role at B.O.K. Ranch. We wish Ann all the best and thank her for her vision, strength and devotion in leading our organization for the past 30 years.

The Board of Directors and the management of B.O.K. are making 2016 a transition year. The focus is to provide the best therapeutic riding program to as many riders and families as possible while keeping the cost/lesson affordable. We are also working hard to come up with creative alternatives for an annual fundraiser. Your ideas and suggestions for a special fundraising event are welcome.

Since working at B.O.K. I have many lovely memories from past Western Days. I will never forget the beaming pride on the riders’ faces after preforming in front of a crowd; the adorable children running around with their faces painted; or having 700 friends and strangers coming together to sing “Happy Birthday” to my son, Benjamin. I know everyone reading this newsletter has their own fond memories of past Western Days.

In true B.O.K. Ranch fashion, we are moving forward. B.O.K. continues to provide lessons 7 days a week with more than 130 participants. We have recently welcomed new horses, volunteers, instructors, and riders. We will always remember the original Kulchin family’s vision to provide the highest quality recreationally based horseback riding program to children, teens, and adults with developmental, physical, and emotional challenges (special needs). Please consider contributing your annual June donation today. We look forward to celebrating with you soon.

Happy Trails,
Tish

PATH Intl. On-site Workshop and Certification

BOK Ranch hosted PATH Intl. Registered Riding Instructor On-site Workshop and Certification in May 2016.

Becoming a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor takes a year of hard work and preparation. Passing the certification criteria involves taking a written exam, completing a minimum of 25 hours of teaching therapeutic riding lessons under a current PATH Intl. certified instructor to a group of at least two students, enrolling in a mentorship program, and traveling to a PATH Intl. On-site Workshop and Certification (OSWC) event. To earn certification at the OSWC, the candidate must complete 2 1/2 days of classroom work and demonstrate their riding skills and their skills teaching riders with disabilities. Each candidate is evaluated by two PATH Intl. Evaluators.

Seeing a growing need in Northern California, B.O.K. Ranch decided to host an OSWC this past May. We had a total of 16 candidates in the workshop. Six of the candidates went on to earn their certification. Four candidates passed and are now newly PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructors! Out of this group of dedicated, hard-working candidates, B.O.K. Ranch hired one new instructor. Taylor Singmaster is our new Saturday instructor. Welcome Taylor!
Meet Dusty

Every horse accepted into the B.O.K. Ranch program comes with a backstory. Although the details may vary, there is usually a common thread. Not this time! In B.O.K. Ranch’s 31 year history, we don’t think we’ve ever had a horse with the same life story as Dusty.

This 19 year old, red roan, Quarter Horse gelding has spent a good part of his life participating in Civil War re-enactments as part of the Union Calvary. Yep, you can fire cannons around this horse and he won’t bat an eye. Talk about “bomb-proof”! Dusty is a super gentle soul that wouldn’t hurt a fly (unless that fly was part of the Confederate army).

The riders at B.O.K. Ranch count on Dusty everyday to carry them safely around the arena and out on the trail. We are very fortunate that we found this wonderful horse. We are currently looking for a sponsor for Dusty. If you would like to contribute to the care and feeding of this honorable gentleman, please call 650-366-2265. Horse sponsorships are $3500/year or 12 monthly payments of $291.

Ashley McIntyre—Local Hero Award

On May 21, 2016 B.O.K. Ranch’s lead instructor, Ashley McIntyre was honored at the 10th annual Midpen Media’s Local Hero Award ceremony. The annual reception and screening of video profiles showcase the passion and dedication of the five winners. The Local Hero series was created by Louise Pencavel to call attention to extraordinary people in the community - not only to honor them, but to tell their compelling stories.

Ashley was nominated by Molly Hale, a long time B.O.K. rider and Board Member. This year’s award ceremony had the largest number of attendees to date. Midpen Media had to set up an over-flow viewing room because the ceremony room was crowded with people lining the walls.

Any B.O.K. rider who has taken a lesson from Ashley knows first-hand that her lessons are unique. Ashley has never, and will never, teach to a disability. Ashley looks beyond the diagnosis and teaches to the person within. Ashley strives to achieve independence with all her riders by getting them to reach their personal walk/trot/canter goals on a day to day basis.

Congratulations Ashley! You’ve always been our Local Hero! You can view Ashley’s interview at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OP_b0WRlIXs
Summer Camp Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the success of the B.O.K. Ranch program. It has been said many times that without our hard-working, dedicated volunteers our PATH Intl. Premier Accredited program wouldn’t exist. B.O.K. Ranch needs volunteers to fulfill its mission; it cannot fulfill it alone.

Volunteers are involved in every aspect of the program: horse care, including exercising horses, stable management and supporting our riders and instructors during lessons.

Sign up NOW to volunteer for summer camp by emailing Liz Beeson at volunteercoordinator@bokranch.org. You may also call Liz a at 650-366-2265 to sign-up. You may volunteer for a 1 week camp session or for all 6 weeks. Camps are Monday—Friday, 8:30 am—1 pm. We look forward to seeing you this summer!