First Words, Future Success

Blacksmithing runs in Colt’s family. His relatives own a spring manufacturing company in Kansas City that began as a blacksmith’s shop, and now over a hundred years later, Colt is taking blacksmithing classes. He is involved in many other activities too including baseball, scouting with Trail Life USA, curling, community service projects such as beach clean-ups and flag planting and retrieving at Riverside National Cemetery, and he loves NASCAR!

At 14, he is a social, caring, outgoing, and respectful young man. When he sees a veteran, Colt has no hesitation about walking up, shaking hands and thanking that person for their service.

All of these activities have become possible since Colt began riding at The Shea Center.

Ten years earlier, Colt’s mother, Candace, read an ad in OC Family magazine about The Shea Center’s military program for persons with disabilities. She was excited to think that Colt, diagnosed with apraxia of speech, could ride horses and receive therapy at the same time. (Candace still keeps the ad on her refrigerator as a reminder that the family’s lives began to change when Colt became the first client to benefit from our military program). His dad, Frank, has recently retired from the Navy after a 24-year career.

Apraxia is a rare disorder that affects the ability to accurately motor plan the movements required to speak. Colt was four years old in 2009 when he began riding at The Shea Center. At that time, he was unable to form more than three or four word sentences. Colt’s speech therapist Terri Hutchison SLP comments, “Using a horse was a way I could decrease the pressure of learning to speak and continue to work on his language in a positive way.” Terri trained Colt in conversational speech and he quickly progressed to using full sentences and holding conversations.

Candace explains, “You don’t fully know your child until he can express his thoughts. The hardest part was when he couldn’t tell me where it hurt, or if he was hungry. There were times we both felt deflated; he’d try so hard to express his needs; it was as if he wanted to say ‘someone help me.’ I was heart-broken. I had no idea what to do and no professionals helped me figure it out. When I found The Shea Center I didn’t feel so alone.”

Terri states, “Colt has worked so very, very hard to be able to speak clearly and express grammatically correct, conversational sentences; he never gave up. I am so proud of him!”

Apraxia also affects Colt’s physical abilities and balance. When he was young, Colt often tripped and fell because he was unable to plan his movements. Candace says, “There was a lot of uncertainty and I felt overwhelmed for many years. It’s just in the last few years that I have begun to relax more.”

Riding instructor Ciara Mestaz helped build Colt’s confidence by encouraging him and teaching him how to have fun with riding. Then, instructor Hayley McConville took Colt’s riding ability to the next level by pushing with just enough tough love to help him discover his abilities were greater than he realized. Two years ago, Colt was in The Shea Center’s annual BBQ riding demonstration happy and proud to show off his abilities, and this year he was the BBQ’s featured rider story.

“What’s important about our services at The Shea Center,” says Janelle Robinson PT and Chief Program Officer, “is that we can continue to provide an atmosphere that progresses and challenges our long-time clients. Colt’s work with Terri transformed Colt’s ability to manage his own world. Then he was ready to progress to new challenges at Shea, but always with the successes he got in speech therapy as his framework for success.” The speech therapy helped build Colt’s ability to communicate and his continued riding has improved his strength and balance and made him more responsible. Colt enjoys all his extracurricular activities, but riding at The Shea Center is still the highlight of his week.

“We drive all the way from Norco, and I pass two other therapeutic riding centers on the way to Shea, but it’s worth it,” comments Candace. “There is nothing else like Shea; I would never consider another place. Many kind people have touched our lives here. This has been a positive journey and has become like family.”

Candace concludes, “I want Colt to be relaxed and treated like a whole person. He is a happy kid who loves horses and is gaining skills and abilities. Most people wouldn’t know he is a person with disabilities. Maybe one day he can become a Shea Center volunteer.”

“The Shea Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.
Executive Director Dana Butler-Moburg, Dana
Bank of America! Thank you for recognizing and celebrating us nonprofits and 2000 nonprofit leaders. $220 million in 49 communities, partnered with 1000 needs. Since 2004, B of A has invested more than $200,000 unrestricted grant to apply to priority program Dana and Agnes will be part of a leadership The Shea Center with this award.” Bank of America partners are celebrating and honoring it, the strength and character of the staff, this place lives The passion for what we do, the quality and how we do doing for so many for so long.” “That we can support this work and highlight is a gift to us as well. We are proud of the partnership we have had with Shea for many years. The Neighborhood Builder Award puts a spotlight on the good work you have been and making change for so many,” remarks Allen Staff. “You are doing all of the hard work in the community and making change for so many,” remarks Allen Staff. “That we train and develop other professionals for your industry to serve the disabled everywhere and the passion you have for your mission and the ability to deliver such substantial services truly gave Shea a great advantage in the review process.” “This is the Shea ethos shining through,” says Board Chair Susan Chaney Purel. “The mission is always first. The passion for what we do, the quality and how we do it, the strength and character of the staff, this place lives what it means to serve others. We are so glad that our Bank of America partners are celebrating and honoring The Shea Center with this award.” Dana and Agnes will be part of a leadership development program, and the organization received a $200,000 unrestricted grant to apply to priority program needs. Since 2004, B of A has invested more than $220 million in 49 communities, partnered with 1000 nonprofits and 2000 nonprofit leaders. Thank you for recognizing and celebrating us Bank of America!

Celebrating Dedication, Leadership and Volunteerism The Shea Center’s Annual Volunteer Celebration and Meeting

Time, treasure and talent were celebrated at The Shea Center’s Annual Volunteer Celebration and Meeting this past June. Board members, committee chairs and lesson volunteers were celebrated for their commitment and service to our clients and families at the annual event where over 225 guests enjoyed refreshments and a riding demonstration before the meeting start.

Board Chair Susan Chaney Purel reported that over 800 volunteers provided more than 30,000 hours of service in 2018. In addition, nearly 15,000 hours of client services set a new record and our military programs nearly doubled in size reaching over 300 members of the military community.

Treasurer Steve Stambaugh presented a financial report and Christopher Hopper reported on the growth of our fundraising events. The Mark E. Aldrich Board Leadership Award celebrates the board members who consistently give of their time, leadership, and treasure, and the 2018 award was presented to Christopher Hopper and Pamela Moellenhoff.

Those honors were followed by many other volunteer awards including Rookie Volunteer of the Year – Greg Talbott; Youth Volunteer of the Year – Carly Green; and Volunteers of the Year – Stephanie Gass and Brian Pattee. The newly-renamed Fran Joswick Award of Excellence awards were given to outstanding volunteers and to honor the commitment and excellence of Shea’s first executive director and instructor, Fran Joswick. Everyone’s favorite horse “Tess” was named Horse of the Year.

The Shea Center thanks all of our volunteers and congratulates all of the 2018 honorees.

Cowboy Camp Returns to Shea Have you ever wanted to be a cowboy? Or cowgirl? Kids at The Shea Center got their chance. For years, the Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo (www.mvrodeo) has been a Presenting Sponsor for our annual BBQ and Family Faire. On August 14, The Shea Center held a Cowboy Camp for client riders in support and promotion of the rodeo held on August 24 & 25.

Cowboys from Rancho Mission Viejo (and Miss Rodeo California 2017) spent an hour and a half teaching 20 youngsters the finer points of calf roping on cow dummies. The kids also practiced leading horses, decorated horseshoes, practiced braiding horse tails, enjoyed refreshments and everyone received straw cowboy hats and bandanas.

The Shea Center Endowment: Build a Legacy of Always Did you know that The Shea Center has an endowment fund? With a legacy more than 40 years in the making, The Shea Center continues to be a positive and transformational place. Our effective equine assisted therapies require constant innovation, training for volunteers and staff, care for horses and ongoing education to best serve our clients. To remain a leader of equine assisted therapies, The Shea Center needs resources and flexibility, the freedom to take risks, and opportunities to make investments in new services and programs – this is the value of an endowment.

The Shea Center endowment is our community’s pledge to provide the stability, continuity, traditions, and services that have earned us an international reputation for excellence and innovation. For more information, contact Dana Butler-Moburg at (949) 240-8441 x102 or dbutler@sheacenter.org.
“It’s the best night of our lives,” says rider parent Candace Fasl and in reference to her son Colt being the featured rider story. “We met SO many nice folks... It made us feel very much a part in The Shea Center’s continuing story. We too were humbled by many donors stopping us and wanting to pose in a picture with US!

On September 21, 2019, the 41st annual BBQ and Family Faire raised $1.1 million to support the ongoing mission of The Shea Center to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. Of that total, more than $400,000 came from donations to the Fosheim Rider Support Fund.

The joy-filled evening hosted 1,600 guests who enjoyed country fair carnival games, a petting zoo, a 340-item silent auction, barn tours, riding demonstrations, and the client “Parade of Stars.” New this year was the “Ten Things to Do Before Dinner” contest and live entertainment from Pazz Productions.

Stories shared at this year’s BBQ focused on the impact of our programs on the military community. Colt Fasl’s father is a retired Navy Chief and Colt’s mother Candace shared their family story not just from the perspective of rider parent, but also as a military spouse. Navy veteran and former Shea client, Kevin Whitney, shared an update on his story and the many programs at The Shea Center for the military community.

The event is chaired by Shea Center board member Bonnie Eastman. The sponsor team is led by fellow Shea Center board member John M. Frank. The Klein Family and Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo presented the event. Montage Laguna Beach, our six-year event partner, hosted the Sponsor Saloon serving delicious appetizers and they also catered the dinner for all the guests. “This one night in September positively impacts our programs all year long,” says BBQ Chair Bonnie Eastman. “We are profoundly grateful to all involved who make this such a success.”

“Don’t Stop Believin’”
A Record-Breaking Gala Event

With more than $1 million raised in one night, The Shea Center’s 28th annual gala set a new record for generosity and support of Shea programs. The Fosheim Rider Support Fund—named in honor of Penny & Jon Fosheim—raised more than $400,000 for financial aid and horse care.

Four hundred fifty Shea Center friends strolled the lawns of Montage Laguna Beach, enjoyed cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, and the always-delightful “wine wall.” A 195-item silent auction had something for nearly everyone, and then guests entered the Grand Ballroom for a sumptuous Montage dinner.

During the evening, the Michael Lewis Friends of the Disabled Award was presented to Jeff Cunningham for his service to the community and as a tireless six-year Shea Center board and BBQ committee member. The event’s featured rider was Rocket Fischer.

The 80s-themed evening featured guests who dressed in the spirit of the theme (A Gene Simmons and Madonna tribute were thanks to the Hoppers), live entertainment, a spirited live auction featuring experiential items, the Fosheim Rider Support Fund, and concluded with dancing to the live band “Kicks.”

Special thanks go to Presenting sponsor The Klein Family; Event sponsors Irvine BMW/ The Damon & Karyn Shelly Family; and the Moellenhoff Family. Eden and George O’Connell/O’Connell Family Foundation Trust was the Entertainment sponsor. A terrific 22-member gala committee headed by co-chairs Allyson Constantino and Pam Moellenhoff is deeply appreciated for their dedication. Thanks also to the staff of Montage Laguna Beach, the National Charity League Chapters of Monarch Beach and Saddleback Valley, and The Shea Center staff.
SAVE THE DATES!
Drive to Ride Kick-off - February 4, 2020
Wills & Trusts Workshop - February 2020
Ladies Night Out - March 2020
Swallows Day Parade - March 21, 2020
Leaders for Philanthropy - April 2020
Charitable Giving Workshop - May 2020
Annual Gala - June 13, 2020
Annual BBQ - September 19, 2020
Special Needs Trust Workshop - October 2020

Thank You Foundation Partners!
We gratefully thank and acknowledge gifts received between January 1, 2019 and September 30, 2019 from foundation partners in support of our mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

AI & Mary Ann Schoellerman Foundation
Anaheim Ducks Foundation
Angels Baseball
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Francis P. Torino Foundation
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It Takes A Family Foundation, Inc.
J.F. Shea Company Foundation
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Gifts of Strength, Confidence, and Pride of Accomplishment
Holiday Giving to The Shea Center
As you make your giving plans this holiday season, please keep The Shea Center in mind. Consider a gift for someone you love by making a contribution to help others.

Purchase equipment, fund financial aid, sponsor a class, sponsor a horse; all of these and other thoughtful gifts will make a lasting difference in the lives of others and provide the precious gift of support to help change lives. We are thankful for our many friends who partner in support of The Shea Center’s mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

Contact Agnes McGlone Swanson at 949-240-8441 x126 for more information on how to make a year-end or holiday gift.

If you would like to receive monthly Shea Center updates by email, please forward your email address to development@sheacenter.org.