



January 2016

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## Grace Lake Ministries Newsletter

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GALLOP PARTNERS - Randy & Connie Christopher, Tracy Matern

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## New Herd Member!

Let's welcome our new addition, Murphy! He is an 8 year old Haflinger gelding in training to become a therapy horse. He is friendly, cute, easygoing, and very smart! He came from a wonderful family that bought him to build a 10 year old girl's confidence. And she became so confident in 2 years that she was barrel racing! And since draft horses are not fast enough to win, he has found his home at Grace Lake as a therapy horse.

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## Rider Spotlight

Simon Says.....God is SO GOOD! Mabry is overcoming anxiety of unknown events and a fear of new tasks through her therapeutic riding lessons at Grace Lake. Just having the Fall 2015 Session under her belt has made a noticeable difference at school, as well as at home. Mabry's mom reports one of the physical benefits of riding therapy is Mabry's improved balance in everyday life activities. What she's very excited about are Mabry's newfound confidence and awareness of everything around her. Mabry's first lesson riding Kody left her sitting with her head held high and her chest full of pride....she conquered not ONE, but TWO huge fears that day!



Can you guess what her favorite activities during the lesson are? Yes, you GOT it! Trotting and playing "Simon Says" on horseback keep her coming back for more each week. Instructor Cindy is hopeful that Mabry will even be riding independently soon. That's far more than her family had even hoped for! It was a special blessing for Mabry's grandparents from Atlanta to share her new accomplishments on horseback.

Doc is Mabry's favorite therapist. She keeps a photo of Doc and herself near her bed so that she can see it daily.

We are excited to celebrate each of Mabry's improvements in the future as God continues to use the ministry of Grace Lake powerfully in this young girl's life.



Grace Lake is so excited to begin working with kids with mental health challenges. We have contracted with the Youth Empowerment Services and will begin providing therapeutic horsemanship to these precious children in our Spring Session!<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa/yes/>



## Volunteer Spotlight

2 years + 5 horses = Uncommon blessings for our Grace Lake Angel, Mike Tucker!

Working with the riders and horses at GL has made him a better school teacher. Mike has learned to be more patient when someone doesn't get something the first time. He's more sensitive to when it is time to back off and approach a problem in another way and when it is time to just push on through to success on the other side of the bridge.



He enjoys watching the transition from a very tentative rider getting up on the back of a very large animal for the first time to relaxing and having fun, then developing a hunger for more of this “horse stuff”.

The horses are his therapists as well. He’s always in a better mood and more able to cope with life after each session with one of his very hairy, 1,000 pound therapists! Mike’s experience of working with horses and leading trail rides at church camp while in college prepared him for the role of Horse Handler at Grace Lake. He loves spending time with the horses even when he’s not riding himself or volunteering during a lesson.

Mike has been working with children and young adults for almost 40 years and the riders at GL are some of the most special people that he’s have ever had contact with. “They inspire me and renew my spirit.” The leadership and instructors at GL have a real desire to both depend on God and give Him the glory for what is being accomplished at GL. He’s thankful that Randy and Connie Christopher shared the volunteer opportunity with him.

Mike’s other interests include books, hiking, woodworking, and soccer. He shares his passion of helping others with his wife, son, and daughter who are all teachers as well. He counts other GL volunteers as some of his best friends.

His message for someone considering becoming a volunteer at Grace Lake ~ “God’s shovel is bigger than yours. No matter how much you put into GL, God will bless you MORE.”

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**A big THANK YOU** to our volunteer, Tammy Nix for writing the Rider and Volunteer Spotlights!!

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**Dates to Remember:**

- 2/6 Volunteer Training~Sidewalker & Horse Handler I**
- 2/20 Horse Handler II Training**
- 2/20 Prayer Meeting**
- 2/27 Spring Session Begins**