

RETURNING GLORY assists in the growth toward wholeness for the total person—body, mind, and spirit—with one of God's special "teachers" known as the horse.

Abigail Adams

The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised, and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant, wake into life and form the character.

It is not in the still calm of life... that great characters are formed.

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Returning Glory

19501 South State Route 291
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Glory Trail

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Living in the Moment

"Transition" has truly been the operative word this year. The ministry continues to grow in opportunities to impact hearts. It seems as though we were reminded by the Lord on a daily basis that our mandate is to "touch one heart at a time", though at times we want to look past seemingly insignificant experiences, and turn our focus on opportunities with apparently bigger impacts. To that end, our thinking and focus has been in a constant state of transition, especially with regard to slowing down and letting our spiritual senses come under the authority of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:2 speaks to this challenge, in that we are called to no longer conform to the patterns of this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds to that we can test and approve what is and isn't God's perfect will. The call to be constantly aware of transitions and details in our lives is quite clear – we are encouraged to live in the moment.

I have heard it said that, especially with regard to horse training, you need to start with the end in mind. In stark contrast to this philosophy, I have also heard that life is not a just a destination, it is a journey filled with joys, challenges and necessary transitions. Therein lays the challenge – setting realistic life goals while being engaged in a detail-oriented, day-to-day journey.

No better reminder of the tension of this dichotomy between the end goal and the details of the journey than my recent experiences with Shiloh, our very athletic and very sensitive buckskin mare. Shiloh has been under a directed training to calmly deal with transitions. What was especially challenging about this training was that Roxanne and I were "hands off" during the first 60 days of this process, with trainer only, Coral, having any interaction with Shiloh. The goal during this period was to develop a patient, calm and consistent approach to Shiloh's training. This approach was quite challenging in that we were so often tempted to "check out" Shiloh in the pasture or during feeding to see how she was progressing. At the end of this training period, the plan was to "transition" from Coral to me – talk about a transition!! That's like turning over a detailed surgery to a rough-in carpenter. Coral had a quiet dressage seat, a firm and consistent rein connection, and a level of perception of Shiloh's constantly changing demeanor that could only exist in my dreams. I, on the other hand – not too much finesse. As we began the transition process, I was constantly reminded of my inabilities – "feeling" a change in Shiloh's attitude, slow to recognize a "flipping of the bend" and quick to become frustrated. I wanted the training to be over – all I wanted was to take Shiloh on a trail ride without having to concentrate so much on the details. However, as I forced myself to slow down, focus on the horse instead of me, I discovered that the "rough edges" of my riding were being addressed and that my patience and perception were steadily increasing. I was able to recognize and anticipate Shiloh's needs – the need to be constantly in touch with my hands to help her transition, the need to have someone calmly respond rather than react to her antics, and the need to patiently redirect her movements as opposed to implementing a "punishment" by forcing her into a certain bend or movement. I suddenly became more aware of every little movement, every little weight shift, and subtle changes in her head position. I was "living in the moment" and not focused on the end goal of just riding. The transition from rider to partner had begun ...

In that moment, I was reminded of how much I was like Shiloh. When I mess up, I so often expect some type of "punishment", but instead receive mercy. When I react to someone as opposed to responding with grace, the Lord calmly encourages me in a better way, rather than immediately and forcefully reprimanding me. His goal is to "renew" my mind so I think more like Jesus, teaching me to be more spiritually aware of the transitions. I was again humbly reminded of all the evidences of my recent and on-going spiritual growth in Him – talking more to, not about, Jesus in life's challenging transitions.

I know that my Trainer is in control and my transitions are in His hands, thanks to Shiloh.

Be encouraged in this day and "live in the moment" through all your transitions.

On His Trail ~ Gary

In the Trail this issue:

RoundPen Report

A review of the RoundPen Workshop and other touching stories from the ranch.

Not Just Horsin' Around

Four young ladies cherish their time at the ranch.

Proclamation

A peek into the thoughts, beliefs and background of a Returning Glory intern.



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ROUNDPEN REPORT

What did you enjoy most about the RoundPen Workshop?

"Lessons Roxanne taught us about relationships with Shiloh in the round pen. Loved the experience."

"The last exercise – the integral part was the master and horse relationship." Roxanne and Shiloh in the round pen.

"Everything – the equine experience was eye opening – excellent tool – good setting."

"I enjoyed the jump exercise. The teamwork piece with my kids was uplifting." "Really made you think."

Was there a particular aspect of the workshop you found more helpful than others?

"Close proximity to the horse and feeling my impact on the animal and others."

"It was great, non-threatening and helpful."

"Would like to have another activity with the horses."

"Probably my daughter's comment, "No one in the family every listens." Realized during an equine activity."

What did you learn that will have the greatest positive impact on your life?

"Communication with my family is key."

"Still working on not limiting myself and being aware of the endless options. Not making assumptions. First exercise with the horses was a powerful reminder."

Returning Glory had the privilege of hosting a workshop for Focus Seminars of Kansas City, a coaching and life management service. They had a youth camp in June and requested a follow-up with the youth and their families. Many youth go to camp and are excited about the changes in their lives and the possible changes in their life circumstances –

only to have that fade into the familiar. RoundPen set up equine activities to help in keeping their committed life-changes active. As families of the camp youth worked through these activities, they had the opportunity to "experience" their current family situation and work through relational skills. The families worked through 3 activities – each one building on the other.

There are many other stories that happened at the ranch. There were many tears and much excitement as the horses helped youth and adults examine deep personal issues.

~ he talked to walls and doors. It was much too difficult for this 10 year old to express himself. Gracie changed that for Timmy. His heart was given to her because she was in pain with arthritis and in that giving he wanted to learn how to be with her, how to help her - Timmy needed to ask questions. He learned to communicate for Gracie. His therapist was amazed at his changes week by week and asked Timmy's parents what they were doing and to definitely keep it up. Timmy came one week and was so excited to report to his Pardner that he no longer talked to walls and doors – and as he walked by Roxanne he announced – "I just prayed for Gracie, that God would help her not to hurt anymore." The smile - - - the change! Thank you, Gracie.

~ she was abused by a family member then adopted as a little girl. Nikkie's new family so

loved her and had compassion for her pain - they could not give her boundaries. Now a teenager, boundaries were not in her life, resulting in many damaging decisions. But Rapha was there to help her understand herself. Nikkie choose Rapha – she was beautiful, she was young, she was 'friendly'. In the first week Nikkie questioned that decision. Rapha was spoiled and did not want to do anything for Nikkie. Rapha's friendliness was actually a horse pushing past respectful boundaries. Nikkie wanted to give up many times, but her Pardner kept praying throughout the weeks that God would reveal



the parallel. WOW! During the review one week, Nikkie put it all together. "Rapha is just like me - spoiled, defiant, and very hard to work with. I can understand why I'm so hard to work with!" As we continued to talk, Nikkie changed before our eyes - she saw herself in her horse. Finishing the next few weeks of RoundPen, Nikkie became a leader for Rapha. Working hard, pushing through her own "I don't want to's, and "This is too hard" - Nikkie ended her time with Rapha with an amazing smile and riding a willing horse, evidence of a great relationship. Thank you – Rapha.

~ With only 4 sessions, Tyler's time at the ranch was sporadic – like his life. I wondered what God could do in such a short time – but trusting He

had something from His heart for this young man. Grabbing a halter and heading to the pasture for Topaz, we enjoy casual conversation and prepare to approach her. At the far end of the pasture feasting on the lush grass, this mare has no desire to be caught. Tyler is patient. We follow and follow, and follow again; he so wants to spend time with his horse and tries different approaches, to no avail. After 30 long minutes, I suggest the possibility of a different horse? Tyler reluctantly agreed, only because two horses began to approach him. He needed to choose again. Tyler haltered Lakota easily but Gracie stayed right beside him and nuzzled his arm. He turned, rubbed her and asked "what is she doing?" "I think she chose you!" I offered. He thought for a moment, the possibility of being chosen running through his mind. He liked the idea. He would choose Gracie who chose him. Together, Tyler and Gracie head to the barn - enjoying their time being chosen. God knew this heart needed to be chosen and given 'Grace'.

A book would be good someday – I can only share a few wonderful stories on the pages of this newsletter. But for now - thank you for your prayers for this work, thank you for your support, thank the horses for their teachings, and above all, I thank God for inviting me to play with horses and equipping me to see with His eyes, hear with His ears, be His voice – so others can know His answers. I hope you are aware of Him in your story.

Roxanne

NOT JUST HORSIN' AROUND

For the second year in a row, Crittenton Children's Center has had the privilege of attending sessions at Returning Glory. I use the word "privilege" with purpose as this is how the 4 young ladies viewed their time on the ranch. Initially the girls were hesitant about what to expect. Who would be their "Pardner", which horse would they be paired with? Both, which was learned later, were matches made in heaven so to speak. As the weeks passed, the horses and Pardners became very near and dear to each of the girls; special bonds were developed as hard lessons were learned, frustrations dealt with, tears shed and fears overcome. Despite the hard work they knew they were embarking on each week, the girls looked forward to each session and worked hard to keep their "spot". The 7 sessions we attended were so well thought out and planned for, the therapeutic value was priceless. The growth each young lady experienced was beautiful and special. I marvel at how brave they were, how they were able to increase their self-awareness and confidence, at times I am certain I had to pick my jaw up off the ground. The experience was truly amazing and beneficial for numerous reasons. We have been blessed to have had such a powerful experience. I thank Roxanne, Paula and the Pardners for the wonderful ministry they do. I look forward to a continued relationship.

Sincerely,
Michelle Gros, Manager of Expressive Therapies
Crittenton Children's Center

FROM THE HERD



Rapha



Shiloh pictured on front page.

Gracie

PROCLAMATION of the RANCH HANDS

Jason served as Returning Glory's new Administrative and Development Intern. He came from the Nonprofit Leadership Department at Rockhurst University. We were so blessed by his heart and his hard work for this ministry. Following is his story ...

I began to get to know Gary and Roxanne via e-mail, and eventually set up an interview with Gary at a coffee shop close to campus. Our "interview" quickly turned into a deep conversation, not only about Returning Glory, but about life. In fact, that first face-to-face meeting is one point in my life I can point to as a milestone in what I now discern to be a call to ministry. In that talk, Gary taught me how important it is to do what you're most passionate about, and find the "hill you wish to die on" in life (to use the Braveheart analogy). I am grateful for Gary and Roxanne's wisdom.

... If funding could be raised, I would jump on board. And guess what ... the funding came in! A special thanks to everyone who was generous enough to hire me to work for this amazing organization, and most of all to the God who continually provides and gives every good gift.

I also got the chance to experience Returning Glory's programming first-hand through a RoundPen session with Shiloh and Roxanne. I was very moved by the whole process: it was challenging and cut to my heart. I am truly a believer in this equine ministry and in awe of the way God blesses it. We, who have been 'part of the herd', are truly blessed!

May He keep you on His Trail ~
Jason Anderson
Called

*"A righteous man has regard
for the life of his beast".*

Proverbs 12:10