

HAHA QUARTERLY

HARNESSING THE POWER OF HORSES TO TRANSFORM THE HUMAN SPIRIT

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MARIAH

BY JOY BANCROFT



Mariah Sidesinger is one of our riding instructors who's been working at HAHA since its earliest beginnings in 2012 (prior to the official launch of HAHA as a 501(c)(3)). She is the daughter of Chris Moran, who is the program director and owner of the stables and property, but she's well qualified to work with our clients. I got together with Mariah to ask her a little bit about her day-to-day life and how she manages being an instructor, trainer, student, and wife all at the same time.

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How does your day start?

In the morning I get up about 7:00 AM. Before I start seeing clients at 9:00, I take care of my dogs, Tucker and Daisy, and then drive to the barn to help out with feeding the animals (HAHA has 16 horses, 4 goats, 1 mini donkey, 3 cats, and 6 chickens). I often bring my dogs to the barn with me and let them play in the back yard while I'm working. Tucker is the Doberman-hound mix who likes to bark at everyone who comes down the driveway, and Daisy is the heeler-hound mix who loves attention.

A DAY IN THE LIFE, CONT.

What does your work at the barn look like?

I work with about 25 clients 5 days a week as a riding instructor. The riding instructor is the one in the therapy session who talks to the clients about horse behavior and helps them build a relationship with their horse on the ground and in the saddle. I also talk to the therapist about horse behaviors I notice that might be a response to how a client is feeling or acting.



Mariah working with Heidi and a client on the circle game, which teaches leadership and trust.

When I'm not instructing, I ride the horses to keep them in shape, physically and mentally. I also help out with basic barn chores like feeding, cleaning, and managing the property.

What experience do you bring to your position?

I've been a riding instructor here for 6 years, but I've been riding, showing, and training horses for 12 years. I showed in hunter jumper for 8 years, and I showed Jameson, one of our therapy horses, for 5 of those years. I sometimes teach private riding lessons. I'm also in school studying social work.

How often are you at school?

When I am not with clients, I am studying. In the fall I'll be taking 12 face-to-face credit hours. I have about two semesters left until I'm done with my bachelor's in social work at Washburn University. Then I'm going to take an accelerated master's program so I can eventually work as a licensed therapist at HAHA.

What do you like best about working at HAHA?

Working for HAHA has given me a deeper understanding of people and why we sometimes react or act in a certain way. Working with so many different people has taught me so much about myself and has helped me follow a career in social work. I think my time at HAHA has made me a more empathetic person, and it helps me look at people for who they are, and not what their diagnosis is. I also love working with people and teaching them about how strong the human-animal bond can be. I look forward to spending many more years with the herd, staff, volunteers, and clients at HAHA.

STAFF PROMOTION



LISA BRUNER NOW EQUINE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Lisa Bruner has been promoted to HAHA Equine Program Director. Her new responsibilities focus on keeping the HAHA herd mentally and physically healthy, as well as supporting staff and volunteers in their horsemanship and client-horse interactions. This entails:

- Assessing the horses for signs of stress and helping them manage their stress as necessary.
- Riding the horses regularly, which provides mental and physical conditioning.
- Assisting the riding instructors in developing lesson plans and assessing client level progression.
- Training the volunteers in horsemanship and supervising their time at the barn.

DINE, DASH, & DONATE WAS A GREAT SUCCESS!

This year for Topeka Gives, HAHA partnered with The Bar'N Grill on 2121 SW Belle Ave, a block from the Topeka Gives location in Fairlawn Mall. Donors could go directly to our booth in the mall or stop by the Bar'N to grab some free appetizers and to chat with staff. Our thanks to Brooke at the Bar'N for working with us, and thanks to all our generous donors! You make our program possible!



29 DONORS

★ **\$4,225.00** ★

Topeka Gives
a fun day of giving



VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM



HAHA has implemented its new volunteer training plan, designed by Lisa Bruner and Joy Bancroft. This plan has four levels for volunteers to support their skill development and involvement in the program. It is designed to introduce new volunteers to the program and teach additional skills to those who wish to come more involved. With this program, we hold volunteer orientations at the beginning of each quarter so that volunteers start in "cohorts" together.

Beginning in January 2018, all volunteers, regardless of previous horse experience, begin as a Level 1 Barn Volunteer. Level 1 volunteers primarily do barn chores and do not interact with clients or work individually with horses. At this level, they are demonstrating that they are committed to the program.

Volunteers can train to move up to the next level by working with Lisa and the riding instructors on their

horsemanship skills. Before they can begin handling horses in sessions with clients, they must pass a Level 2 test that includes demonstration of horsemanship, an observation of a session, and essays about volunteers' roles in the program. Even with prior horse experience, the process of becoming a Level 2 volunteer takes about 6 months to a year.

Because Level 2 volunteers work in sessions with clients, we take their training very seriously, and the volunteer must demonstrate clear understanding of their role during sessions. A Level 2 Horse Handler is typically only part of sessions that include riding. They do not talk with clients during the session and their primary focus is on the horse and its safety and behavior. The riding instructor and therapist are there to observe the client, but the horse handler is there for the horse. All of our current volunteers who work horse handle have passed their Level 2 tests, so all of our volunteers, past and present, are measured by the same standard.

Lisa and the current riding instructors—Mariah Sidesinger, Marley Boldra, Mariana Castenada, Sandra Hazlett, Shannon Forst, and Sharon Johnson—are working on the curriculum for Level 3 and 4. Level 3 is working with clients who are doing groundwork (no riding). Level 4 is working with clients who are riding. Once that training material and its tests are finalized, all current volunteers who wish to instruct at these levels will take the tests as necessary.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM, CONT.

The volunteer training program is a work in progress, but 8 months in, we're feeling confident that we have a good process that ensures volunteers truly understand their roles in sessions and are equipped to handle any situation that may arise in their roles. To read more about the program, please visit our Volunteers page online, or email Joy at joybancroft@gmail.com.

UPCOMING DATES

HOGS & HORSES
SEPT 29, 2018

UPCOMING BARN BREAKS
AUG 28-SEPT 3
OCT 29-NOV 3



4TH ANNUAL HOGS & HORSES

2018 marks the fourth year of the annual Hogs and Horses Poker Run, organized by JW Patterson. Each year, bikers from Topeka and surrounding communities convene at the HAHA barn and then make their way to five stops at local biker-friendly bars in the area. Tickets are sold for raffle items throughout the ride, and the event ends at Victoria's at 5011 SW Topeka Blvd, with a BBQ dinner and live music from Evolution, with our very own Chris Moran playing.

Don't have a bike? Join us at Victoria's at 7 PM to enter raffle drawings and enjoy the live music. This year we will be featuring 8-10 major raffle items. Each item can will be raffled separately, so you can put all your tickets in for those Chiefs tickets or that 20-gauge hunting rifle (prizes are still to be officially determined). All proceeds from the ride and event go to HAHA. This is an adult-only event.

Thanks to JW for making this happen and to all the bikers who support HAHA!

WHAT

Bike ride, poker run, and raffle party

WHEN

Sat, Sept 29, 12pm-10pm

WHERE

Register at HAHA:
10437 SW 53rd Street
Topeka, KS 66612
Kickstands at 2pm