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Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Horse Spirit Connections. Don't forget to add andre@horsespiritconnections.com to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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Giving Birth!

What a lush summer: the trees, plants, and grasses (and weeds!) are so luxuriant and glossy green; gorgeous flowers fill the world with a rainbow of colours. During this bright and sparkly season, Miss Aria gave birth to a precious and precocious little colt named Starlight Dancer!

Early Monday morning August 11th, on the night of the supermoon, Aria quietly and efficiently engaged in the ageless miracle of giving birth. In the quiet hush of her large stall, with only Contendor and Paris bearing witness, Aria fulfilled her dream of giving birth to an exceptional horse with a more highly evolved consciousness. She had the baby standing up on wobbly legs ready for our inspection at 4 AM. Andre woke up and knew to go down to the barn and check on Mommy. What a thrill to see this new life, just an hour old, starting to teeter about exploring his new world. Aria being such an incredible mother, using her voice as a guide, she showed him how to nurse. A number of weeks earlier, I had made a heart connection with Dancer in the womb. How profound to have a heart to heart connection with Dancer when he was only four hours old - to feel one conscious being connecting with another.



Our proud Mommy Aria is a Paso Fino - a Spanish breed of horse known for their 'brio' or high energy with an elegant, smooth, dancing gait. Aria came to us via Florida where as a young filly she was winning ribbons at shows and accidentally gotten pregnant at a very early age. Off loading from the trailer that transported Aria and Contendor from Florida, we noticed that Aria's back leg would jerk up to her belly from time to time. We found out she had a condition called stringhalt. After repeated efforts to ride, the vet and I decided that Aria would not be winning any more ribbons in the show ring as a riding horse. Aria was so disappointed- she loves to perform and gait in front of a crowd. Aria was presented to us as a sweet and docile mare who had fallen on hard times. When we first met her she was depressed as her baby had just been weaned (taken away from her) at three months of age.

When Aria arrived at our farm we let her become a horse again with very little demands. Interestingly as she felt safe, she slowly revealed her true personality!! Definitely not a sweet and docile mare!!! Aria is highly intelligent and we now affectionately call

her a 'Diva' - at times she has been called much worse! She is a very strong teacher for those people she feels worthy of her attention.

Last August Aria let us know that she wanted to get pregnant and help birth a new horse consciousness, similar to the rainbow and indigo human children. We were in alignment with this noble intent and made arrangements for Camilla Willings' 'Mercenario de Libertad' (Mercy) to be the sire of our new baby. Mercy is a national and world Champion Classic Fino Stallion and his stunning accomplishments are too numerous to mention.

However Contendor, our majestic white stallion (he is really a gelding!), believes HE is the father of Dancer and is taking his role very, very seriously. While he is in an adjoining field, you can always find him close at hand, ready to protect his mare and son.

Today Aria is in her element as a mother and teacher for Dancer. She has her hands full - he is an independent spirit! Full of boundless curiosity and passion to explore his world he has become an escape artist leaving mommy anxiously behind. At three days old he was sprinting ahead of Aria, outrunning her as we watched, with our hearts in our throat, as he sped across the uneven ground. He is delightful and we spend countless hours watching his lively antics.

While presenting at a conference in Colorado this spring, we were approached by someone who did astrology charts for horses. Being intrigued we mentioned we were expecting a new baby and she volunteered to do a reading for him when he was born. Just a few things she mentioned:

huge heart, tons of enthusiasm, very inquisitive, and no fear. He has very unique talents with a transformational effect and ability to heal others. In summary, Dancer is a compassionate, sensitive, and talented horse who will make a major contribution to humanity. Many thanks to Samantha Marshall, Equine Astrology. Visit her website at www.EquineAstrology.com

Many blessings
Wendy



Birth Yourself as a FEEL Certified Facilitator



Horse Spirit Connections founded the Facilitated Equine Experiential Learning FEEL® Certification Program in 2008 to explore, expand, and share the incredible teachings of the horses with now over 100 graduates from across North America. FEEL is a leading-edge modality for developing human potential where participants learn to create a horse-centered, experiential learning environment that supports personal growth. Throughout the training, prospective FEEL facilitators gain self-knowledge and acquire skills and experience to develop their own FEEL programs where horses are valued for their roles as teachers and therapists.

In this Year of the Horse, we have run four training programs: three in Ontario and one in British Columbia. It is so gratifying for us to be instrumental in bringing such a powerful and healing modality into the world for both humans and horses.

Our next training program starts this November!

November 19 to 23, 2014 - session 1 of 3

March 4 to 9, 2015 - session 2 of 3

June 24 to 29, 2015 - session 3 of 3

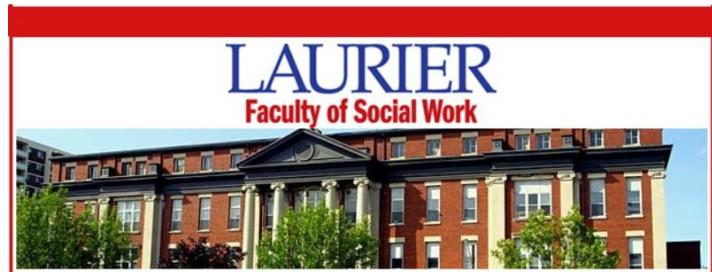
ONLY 2 SPOTS LEFT!

If this is the year for you to empower yourself and your horses and take the FEEL Certification Program please learn more by visiting our website <http://horsespiritconnections.com/learning/feel-certification-program.html> or email Wendy at wendy@horsespiritconnections.com.

Like us on Facebook!

Birthing a New FEEL program for Mental Health Professionals in 2015!

In partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, Dr. Shoshana Pollack, PhD and Wendy Golding are excited to present a unique, eight-day program which has been designed to offer a clear methodology for Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy under the Facilitated Equine Experiential Learning FEEL® Model. It has been created for the mental health professional working with individual clients who would like to broaden their therapeutic practice to include a new partner - the horse!



As a child Shoshana had an affinity with horses and spent many summers trail riding and hanging out at various horse farms. Although never far from her heart, Shoshana moved away from this passion and pursued university studies and eventually a career as a clinical social worker and university professor. Recently she has brought together her two passions; helping people heal from trauma and working with the wisdom of horses. As a clinical social worker for over two decades, she brings an expertise in the treatment of trauma, relational violence, and anxiety to her Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy practice. She sees nonjudgmental relationships and a balanced connection between body, mind, spirit and the environment as essential for fostering health and wellbeing and is thrilled to be able to join with horses in this process. Connecting with the exquisite sensitivities of horses opens up a powerful space of healing in which wounds and silences can be transformed and authenticity can be uncovered.



In 2008 Shoshana worked with Wendy on a small pilot study about the effectiveness of Equine Facilitated Learning with women in addiction treatment. After experiencing the respectful and gentle way that Wendy worked with the horses and the participants in the program, Shoshana decided to get certified in Facilitated Equine Experiential Learning, with Wendy as one of her trainers. Over the past few years, Shoshana has worked with Wendy to bring this innovative and powerful healing method to the social work and mental health fields by providing workshops and seminars to various mental health professionals. She is thrilled to be working with Wendy to offer a FEEL certification for mental health professionals.

This 8 day program runs March 12 to 15, 2015 and July 23 to 26, 2015.

This Training is so new it is not up on our website yet!
 For more information contact Wendy@HorseSpiritConnections.com
 Or click "[here](#)" to apply online at Laurier.

Giving Birth to a New Program for our Troubled Youth!

In June we initiated our first pilot project in the 'HorsePower for Youth' program with New Path Youth and Family Services. Through the HorsePower program, vulnerable youth gain knowledge and valuable life skills to help them re-enter and become a valuable member of their community.

New Path Youth and Family Services of Simcoe County has a residential program in Cookstown for 18 youth ages 11 to 18 years of age who have suffered from many of life's challenges. Andre Leclipteux (Director, Horse Spirit Connections) and Catherine Davies (FEEL Graduate and Program Director, Urban Youth Riding Project) skillfully facilitated the eight week program where a number of youth visited Horse Spirit Connections once a week and interacted with our wise horse teachers. This pilot program was funded by The Urban Youth Riding Project.

The Urban Youth Riding Project is a project of Tides Canada Initiatives (TCI) - a shared administrative platform for nearly 40 innovative social change projects across Canada. TCI projects are dedicated to a variety of environmental and social issues ranging from leadership and capacity building to social inclusion and environmental conservation.



The participants, the staff, and management were so impressed by the transformational changes they observed in these troubled youth, we are now entering phase 2 in the fall. Congratulations to Andre and Catherine AND our Horses and thanks for the continuing support from New Path and the Urban Youth Riding Project to make continued healing possible for these youth.

Comments from New Path Staff:

"Thank you so much for providing New Path with the opportunity to take part in Horse Spirit Connections. The youth attending have enjoyed the experience a great deal and the staff going have raved about the program. Recently, our Program's two Therapists have come to watch and they also had great things to say about your services. As our time with you is winding down, I just wanted to let you know how positively your team (including those amazing horses) have impacted New Path."

Gord Bain, B.A., C.Y.C.,
Residential Program Manager,
New Path Youth and Family Services

"As a therapist with the residential program at New Path Youth and Family Services I have had the opportunity to observe the work that is done by Andre and Catherine at Horse Spirit Connections first hand. Initially when approached regarding this partnership and having our youth engage in this program I was admittedly skeptical of the impacts and outcomes for these youth. Although I did not attend the first few sessions, I was apprised of the work that was being done and positive impacts of this on the youth and staff that attended; as my curiosity was peaked by the feedback I consistently heard, I began attending.

In the sessions that I attended I was moved by the power of the work that was being done with our youth, as well as the impacts and strength of the gains that were being made through engaging with the horses and the learning being done. Without knowing the clinical needs and backgrounds of the youth, Catherine, Andre, and the horses provided a group of youth with behavioural, emotional and social challenges with insight to themselves and to each other in a way that simply

cannot be done in a traditional treatment setting. Furthermore, by being privy to the insights and gains these youth made while engaging with Horse Spirit Connections, it has enhanced and deepened their clinical work in sessions while at New Path as work and activities that these youth do while at Horse Spirit Connections is work that many of the youth that attended struggle to do in their day to day lives for a variety of reasons."

Jill Foley, M.A.
Individual & Family Therapist



Horse Magic and Transformation

We are available to work one on one with clients who desire to experience FEEL (Facilitated Equine Experiential Learning)®.



Sessions can be scheduled weekly, biweekly or monthly as suited to the situation. Goals are created and a suitable plan developed. Activities are chosen to reflect the goals developed. We suggest a minimum of 4 sessions each session being \$125 (plus HST).

We can also create a customized intensive program for individuals, friends, families, groups or teams. Aspects from any of our programs can be put together to offer the best and unique experience with the horses.

Appointments can be booked by calling 905 936 4450.

The Discovery of Unconditional Love

By Brenda Smart
FEEL Graduate

Horses have the incredible ability to display their amazing understanding of what humans feel! This is not the 'surface persona' that we want to display for others on a daily basis, or the 'false self' we think is safe, nor the person we believe that others want us 'to be'. With the help and assistance of a qualified facilitator, horses can force us to face our fears, our insecurities, our vulnerabilities, and our personal strengths. Here is a journey along the path of life, to demonstrate this powerful connection that has been overlooked in the past and is now surfacing for an individual's personal growth and development - spiritually, mentally, and emotionally - with unconditional love.

While visiting my friend's farm on a hot summer day, there was one man who faced all of these challenges. He had a traumatic childhood where the scars continued into his adulthood. The outcome between horse and participant was so profoundly moving not only for the individual, but for me as the facilitator over seeing the exercise. This is his amazing story:

Leaving my work, coming from yet another long exhausting, mind numbing grave shift, I approached my friend's farm. I observed people working in small groups and engaging in a variety of FEEL exercises with horses. The sight filled my heart and, although feeling thoroughly exhausted from another night shift, the exhaustion diminished when it was time to engage in a much larger and more powerful experience!



Trish met me as I got out of my truck and said: "Oh - I am so happy you are here! I have just the person for you to work with!" To admit, the idea was intimidating because these were her friends; and I thought to myself: "Why me?" I have a great respect and appreciation of her and her solid capabilities as a FEEL facilitator.

The previous evening, Trish attempted to work with this person and felt that she was just not able to make the right connection with him. She described it as: "hitting the brick wall and was unable to get through". I began to feel my own insecurities start to creep up, wondering if I will be able to help make the connection to this young man.

It's important to note, that with a little background information provided, I learned that Adam (not his real name) was "half blooded Indian", from a local reserve. At that point I knew there was an opportunity to make a connection as I too, am a First Nations member.

When I first met with Adam, I asked him what he wanted to do, giving him control to suggest which activities he was interested in. He began by saying he wanted to talk and perhaps pet a horse. Together, we let the energies flow. When he felt comfortable, I heard the story of his horrific childhood. The constant hurt and paralyzing judgment he experienced would stunt anyone's personal development. This took place in his home, the school system, and the community where he grew up. As Adam put it, he was brought up in the "Native Projects" - a program that was designed to move First Nations people off the reserve to the city (Toronto), providing them with housing so that they can earn a living and a chance of a normal, more productive life. Unfortunately, in his case, "The Projects" as he called it, just became a way of life to live off of the "system": food banks, welfare, and donations from the local churches.

We had talked for almost an hour, when I suggested to Adam that we go and pet a horse. I could sense his excitement as it was over flowing. I asked Adam if there was a particular horse that he would like to pet. Without hesitation, he said: "Gryphon!" As we entered the barn and approached Gryphon, the magic flowed mutually between horse and human of love, acceptance, and a place of no judgment. Gryphon, a large retired dressage horse, was still full of grace and beauty. His elderly wisdom was akin to a kind, loving grandpa in his display of love and passion towards his grandchildren. When Adam placed his hand on Gryphon's long, strong, shiny black neck, a childhood smile emerged on his face like a child seeing a beautifully decorated tree on Christmas morning surrounded with presents. Adam was in complete awe of Gryphon's size, how soft he was, and complete shock that Gryphon had allowed Adam into his personal space. This realization brought a flow of tears to his eyes and he said: "I can't stop crying; I am sorry; I think he likes me! I cannot believe he would allow me to do this!" I assured him that there was absolutely



nothing to be sorry about, and he obviously needed to release these tears of emotions.

While observing Adam and Gryphon thoughts came to me saying: "Brush ... brush". So I said: "Adam, would you like to groom Gryphon? We could do an exercise called 'reflective grooming'," to which he replied: "Sure!" After asking Trish if it was okay to groom Gryphon, we got started. Adam asked me if I could "hold" Gryphon as he would feel safer. However, Gryphon would have nothing to do with the halter as he had different plans making

it quite clear in a very loud: "NO WAY!" I couldn't even get close to Gryphon with the halter! It was quite clear that he wanted to be groomed without boundaries! With Gryphon leading the way, I told Adam, we need to listen and follow his direction, to which I added: "He doesn't want us to halter him," In my mind Gryphon was saying that he wanted to be groomed and to allow Adam the experience without any boundaries. When Adam started brushing him, Gryphon planted and never moved a muscle, both of them were at peace. Tears of joy and tears of letting go of all the past stigmas started to flow. Adam commented reflectively: "I never realized how powerful these beings can be."

After putting the brushes away, the two of them continued connecting. Adam was so comfortable that he wanted to keep hugging Gryphon's neck. Gryphon obliged without hesitation and held the space. Adam was very content, saying: "I cannot stop touching him. I think he likes me!" In total agreement, Gryphon started licking and chewing which confirmed Adam's observations.

We broke free for a few minutes to help Trish move a horse from another paddock, in order to calm Bentley fretting over his pasture mate's relocation to work with an individual. I asked Adam if he wanted to assist and he was very eager to help. With my permission, Adam had requested if he could walk Bentley into the barn. Bentley is a huge sweet natured draft horse, and he had walked willingly into the stall without a hitch. Adam was so proud of himself; I felt like he was a little boy again with his favorite dog companion. He was so enwrapped in the moment that he couldn't see these horses were accepting him and sending him the much needed love and support he needed. The biggest factor is that they didn't care about his past, background, his wrong doings, or past rejections - just complete acceptance - in the present moment.

Trisha had asked me afterwards if we had any problems. I was content to reply: "No! Not at all! Bentley just waltzed right in!" Trish replied with a quizzical look: "Hmm ... that is interesting, he is usually my stubborn guy that likes to pull away to eat grass."

"Not this time," I responded proudly, "He just followed Adam right in the barn like a big puppy dog!"

With that task completed, I felt Gryphon was calling us again. I suggested to Adam that we return to see Gryphon again. The light of excitement like a child on Christmas morning beamed from within him. (Funny enough, I kept seeing the look of a child at Christmas time and I later discovered that Adam never really had a Christmas during his childhood, as they only received what was delivered to the family from the local food bank.) By this time, there were three horses in

the paddock area just eating grass. When I asked Adam: "Do you remember the energy layers that Trish was showing you yesterday?" He acknowledged that he did recall this and I suggested that he look to see if he could find Gryphon's strongest energy location and try to establish a heart connection with him. With a review of the exercise, I knew he understood what was expected. I knew there was a strong pull from Gryphon to Adam. It was as if Gryphon was pulling Adam into his space to protect, shelter, and love Adam. Another horse wanted to come in and get some attention and Gryphon would have not part of it. He shooed the other horse away and creating a boundary between them and everyone else.

I asked Adam how he felt. He said he felt protected, and actually believed that Gryphon really liked him without regards to his past, his upbringing, the past hurts and abuses, etc. It was very powerful and established a sacred place of possibilities. He said he couldn't stop crying as he had never felt this way before. We stayed with Gryphon a bit longer and then went back to debrief.

To describe this event, would be like an aura around them, they were in a deep, heart connection. Adam said he felt loved, repeated again that he felt that Gryphon really liked him. I concluded my session with Adam by sharing these words:

"You see Adam, Gryphon doesn't care where you are from, how much money you have, whatever you have done in your past that you are ashamed of ... he only wants to be here and now with you. He loves you for the person you are inside, the person you have lost touch with or perhaps the person you cannot see from all the past garbage. He just loves you - for you!"

Learning to Breathe!

By Susan Andison
A FEEL Graduate

Her story starts as a young child sitting quietly beside her dying Grandmother. The one child of four allowed to sit with her. The child's intuition gave her Grandmother the gift of peace in her last few days. The child intuitively held her breath for fear of disturbing the peace in the room. Gran was dying, breathing was life, not death? As she watched the ambulance leave, she understood what not breathing truly meant.





The young child became a young girl who wouldn't breathe for fear of being noticed. Being noticed meant pain. Breathing means life. Life for that girl meant being forced to hide her true self. Her self did not fit the perception of what a dutiful daughter should be. She wasn't good enough in every aspect of being.

Girlhood turned into womanhood. Breathing still meant being noticed. Being noticed meant being abused. Breath held, waiting for the rug to be pulled out from underneath her. Breath held, waiting for the emotional and physical bruises that inevitably came.

Breathing was pain.

Somehow, strength came in later in life; breathing means life. Life, precious and brief deserved to be lived. A moment's pause, a path taken led to the wisest of teachers, a horse. The unexpected gifts, the peace, the joy of breathing the teacher taught her. The magnificent and wise creatures are showing her the way of life and truth. Breath is calm. Awareness of life beyond fear.

Aug. 11, 2014
(the same date that Dancer was born!)

"Horses teach us the importance of being in relationship, with ourselves, others (be it humans horses or others), and all the time!"

Kathleen Barry Ingram,
Pioneer in the field of Equine Facilitated Learning,
Contributor and guest lecturer at Horse Spirit Connections.



Startlight Dancer meets Liam as Aria looks on.

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Horse Medicine Lodge website

FEEL Alumni webpage

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