

HorseSensing expanding to add homes

By Todd Martin

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A local nonprofit is renovating houses for folks within the community who are working through emotional issues and attend a free horse grooming course.



Staff photo by Tammy Shaw

Shelby County resident Dr. Sally Broder founded HorseSensing. Horses can be the gateway into programs that help with PTSD, anxiety, ADHD symptoms, addiction, depression and other issues.

The organization offers a free HorseSensing Grooming Education, Certification and Job Placement program to teach locals how to groom horses and to walk away with essentials needed for a job in the horse industry.

Programs

HorseSensing has one-day events to help veterans and people recovering from addiction and also offers free equine training courses for those groups, as well. Broder owns a large horse facility. "All

of our programs are grounded in the knowledge of what helps and what hurts when working with individuals with trauma and/or addictions. All of our programs are overseen by myself, a licensed psychologist."

The program aims to give "a feeling of peace, a relieving of the immediate need to seek drugs and/or alcohol, improvement of ADHD symptoms, improvement of depressive feelings, thoughts and other symptoms, alleviate suicidal feelings, thoughts and actions," Broder said, that often accompany these issues.

Equine education

The HorseSensing Grooming, Education and Job Placement Program educates and certifies military veterans and those in recovery from addiction in equine skills, to work at a high level in the horse industry. HorseSensing uses the Groom Elite Certification Program that racetracks across the nation and the world have used for more than 20 years.

Students get hands on daily instruction and in-depth written curriculum. "Participants learn everything about horses from their history to their minute medical needs and everything in between," said Broder. "Once certified, we place these folks into a job with housing and follow them to ensure a good fit with their new position."

Until then, HorseSensing will house participants in two homes, one for women, another for men.

Housing students

The men's house will open Sept. 1, the women's in November. Interior paint, molding, new cabinets and furnishings are left to do at the men's place. The men's house is JB Inn, and the women's residence is Maison Épave.

These houses aren't shelters. "They are much nicer than shelters. The women's house is on an old farm. The house was built in 1920 and we are keeping the old style but making everything fresh and beautiful," Broder said.

The men's house, a 3-bedroom that will host five men, is already built thanks to an Amish crew who first constructed a horse barn on the Broder property. The home is next to HorseSensing. "We would like to put tiny houses on wheels on a couple of the acres to create a community for both men and women. These would not be permanent structures but rather are temporary domiciles for the veterans going through the program."

The men's house will be on Bagdad Road, while its counterpart for women is on Cropper Road in Pleasureville. "We are going to try to put the women's house on the same property as the men's house at some point," Broder said.

Funding

The Broders, Sally and David, are funding the rehab on these two properties but need a bit of help from the community with furnishings, food and sundries for residents. "We have asked for grants for this purpose from the Shelby County Community Foundation," Broder said.

The Broders own all three sites, the training facility, 25 acres next door with the men's house and the women's house on Cropper Road. "We have wanted to do this for many years, to provide a place for people to heal with no pressure from external forces like money, housing and food."

Purpose

These houses have a dedicated purpose, to break down barriers of residences and transportation for veterans and people in recovery from addiction that want to enroll in the 90-day course.

“Lack of housing and lack of transportation have been the key issues voiced by men and women who would have liked to participate in our programs but they were living in Louisville or elsewhere and had no way to get here,” Broder said.

Now these students can live on site and immerse themselves in the equine program. “When they are ready, we will be able to place them in jobs right here in Shelby County or elsewhere. Our horse industry is crying out for good grooms and we are looking forward to providing them,” she said.

Community

These houses will be a community. “Living together can be challenging and healing at the same time,” Broder said. “The training will be happening on the 30-acre grounds and in the new training facility. We are a trauma-informed equine therapy and job training program. I am a licensed psychologist who specializes in the treatment of trauma and addictive disorders.

“Veterans and people in recovery almost always have past traumas that they have either successfully integrated and are able to navigate life successfully because of it, or conversely the past traumas can keep them stuck in unhealthy patterns like active drug and alcohol use. We are not a treatment center but we do support recovery both from trauma and addiction. We do this through holding recovery meetings, having individual meetings with folks that need the one on one with a psychologist, but mostly through promoting good self-esteem and purpose through the work with our most graceful of animals, the horse.”

A veteran is not required to have addiction issues to be a part of the training or housing program.

Difference

Broder is often asked whether they are connected to the Veteran’s Club or the same as the Veteran’s Club. “It’s easy to understand why people might confuse us or connect us because they also have equine programs,” Broder said. “We are completely separate programs. You won’t reach us through Veteran’s Club.”

Broder invites people to stop by and see the facilities. “However, if someone learns about horses through Veteran’s Club and wants to go further and learn to work in the horse industry, they can do that at HorseSensing. So in that way, we are very complementary programs.”

HorseSensing has been in operation since 2009 and has a licensed psychologist, Broder, during every event, program and plans, working with traumatized people.

“This is extremely important when working with traumatized people,” she said. “You don’t want to inadvertently re-traumatize someone while engaging them in something you think is good for them but actually is a major trigger for them.”

HS is bringing in more horses and will board mares to foal in the spring. “This will be great for our students to learn about. We now have a foaling barn. We will be teaching folks about being on ‘foal watch.’ That is a much-needed job each spring here in Kentucky.”

Donations

Donations are needed for these programs to survive. A check can be sent to 270 Bagdad Road, Shelbyville, KY 40065 or use PayPal at paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/3633429. There are no charges or fees when using this link, Paypal has no fee for nonprofits.

Anyone who needs help or wants to donate can reach the organization at www.horsesensing.com.