



Cooper's Briefing

News from Cooper's Crossroad

Summer 2023

Have You Ever Been Briefed by a Horse?

Welcome friends! Cooper's Crossroad has been growing by leaps and bounds, and we are so excited about all the forward momentum that's happened so far this year!

Christina's horse Cooper hopes you enjoy our feature articles, spotlights and updates in this Summer 2023 briefing. Cooper also wants to share some goodies with you: a brand new Cooper's Crossroad **short feature film** (we are VERY proud!), fabulous **new hoodies** just in time for fall, and we are extending our reach as a local organization to **Patch Farm in Vermont**, where we hope to start a Farming for Resilience Program extension soon!

Cooper also wants to remind everyone of our **Annual Farm Fest** on September 9 (see below); we hope you can join us. Please be sure to subscribe to Christina's monthly blog and don't miss any of the upcoming exciting developments - go to www.cooperscrossroad.com/signup. But for now, grab a cozy beverage, sit back and enjoy Cooper's Briefing!



Come out to Elm Farm on September 9 and enjoy Cooper's Crossroad's annual "Open House" from 4-5 pm; meet our volunteers, equine friends, and tour the farm.

Following our "Open House," we will be hosting a BBQ dinner, complete with activities, silent auction, bonfire (weather permitting) and live music with Lucius Parshall to celebrate **Cooper's Crossroad's 6th Year Anniversary!** We are excited to mark this milestone with you, our community supporters. This event is rain or shine with plenty of barn space to spare!

Get your tickets at cooperscrossroad.com.

We're excited to see you at Elm Farm!



Meet our Farm Manager: Erin Ballard!

Erin's adventures with horses began at the age of five when she started taking riding lessons. This passion with horses and animals has followed her to date. The animals, and in particular her connection to horses, have helped her through major life transitions. As a teenager she learned about EFL, or Equine Facilitated Learning. During her own treatment experience, the work with horses was an integral part of her healing process. In 2020 Erin began working full time at Dusty Dog Horse farm, teaching riding lessons and assisting with horse care and management.



Erin completed her education with The HERD Institute to gain her degree in EFL and teaching in 2021. She now facilitates Cooper's Crossroad's programs, and was hired as our barn manager. She also oversees and trains Cooper's Crossroad's volunteers at Elm Farm.

Her love and passion for horses, and the healing we can gain through our partnership with horses, are Erin's daily inspiration.

Trust Us - You Need One!

Show your support for Cooper's Crossroad with our stylish new swag! These high quality hoodies are super soft and cozy on the inside and available in sizes S-XXL. Get yours directly at Elm Farm for \$50.

Volunteers at Cooper's Crossroad

35 - the average combined total of weekly volunteer hours. Wow!

Six - number of regular volunteers at Cooper's Crossroad across all age groups

Tasks: feeding the horses and our other barn friends hay, grain and water, administering medications, property management, horse enrichment like riding and especially grooming and handling.

We would love for you to become involved, however much time you can spare! Email us at cooperscrossroad@gmail.com.



Building Life Skills

In May of 2023, Cooper's Crossroad launched a Farming for Resilience after-school program. The goal of the 6-week program is to build life skills. Six students from kindergarten through 3rd grade participated in our first session. This program was designed and facilitated by Erin Ballard and Iria Doescher.

The program imprinted lasting memories of laughter, courage, expression, open-air learning and exploration. Elm Farm is far from a classroom, yet there are so many lessons to be learned through our participants' engagement in new experiences, interactions, and projects.

Read a collage of reflections at www.cooperscrossroad.com/lifekills.



Spotlight on Crouton!

Hello, I'm Crouton, the newest member of our equine team and the only miniature mule on Elm Farm!

I spent my previous life at a miniature horse breeding barn, but I wanted more! I love my new life at Elm Farm, getting all the attention I could ever want and living with my new best friend Scarlett.



My hobbies include braying to all my friends who come by, getting groomed, and being loved on. I also enjoy meeting all our program participants.

I love being around people, which makes me a perfect addition to the farm. Come visit me at Elm Farm, and be sure to bring peppermints!

Cooper's Crossroad Gratitude Corner

Jan Barry

Moira Burnham

Nancy Elliott

JoAnn Fenton

Kasper Family

Jen Gardner

Scott & Deb Hunter

Dave & Yesenia Major

Phaedra McDonough

Carol & Joe Minichiello

Fred Schaaff

Allison Wyatt

All of our Volunteers

Cooper's Crossroad Board

Members and Officers

Tom Ahlborn, Musician

Chesterfield Lion's Club

Chroma Technology Corp.

Bill Farrell, Videographer

Fenton Family Dealership

Antje Hornbeck, Blue House

Creative

Liberty Mutual

Margaritas Restaurant

Mill Hollow Works

Lucius Parshall, Musician

Takeda Pharmaceuticals

The Works Cafe



Volunteer Spotlight: Rachel!

Meet Rachel, one of Cooper's Crossroads' amazing volunteers! Rachel is a competitive horseback rider at Dusty Dog Farm in Keene. Even though her interest in horses began before the Covid pandemic, due to the shutdown and social distancing recommendations there was a shift in Rachel's life where her horses became her best friends. Honorable mention goes out to Molly (her first horse), and to Dillon, her current horse. She laughs when she tells me how personable Dillon is "like he just wants to sit in your lap and be touched." She enjoys grooming him and can see what type of day he is having when she grooms: is Dillon excitable today or sleepy?

Rachel says she finds the human/horse bond interesting because you have to be willing to work with such a big animal and it can be scary sometimes. When you are with your horse whether on the ground or riding, it makes you so much more aware of what is going on in the moment, and how good it feels to be gentle when handling a horse. I can relate this to Rachel experiencing "compassion in action," one of the core values of the Farming for Resilience program.



Rachel became familiar with Cooper's Crossroad's Farming for Resilience program as a volunteer in the 7th grade during the pandemic while attending Keene Middle School. Students from KMS' Bridges Program have been participating in the Farming for Resilience program, and during Science Labs Rachel learned about the connection of one of her classmates to Cooper's Crossroad.

For Rachel and her classmate, the Farming for Resilience participant, the topic of horses became an opportunity for the two to connect in the classroom as well. Rachel finished her freshman year at Keene High School, and is volunteering in the Pathways to Resilience program this summer. The participant she is working with is eight years old, and their equine friend is our pony Dusty. As the participant was grooming Dusty for the first time, Rachel already sensed a bond forming.

The participant took special notice how Dusty could “fly twitch” which is a horse’s innate response to remove an insect. They also showed great concern and care for picking up Dusty’s hooves and wanted to make sure it wouldn’t hurt him. Rachel led the participant for a walk and the participant set the goal to ride a “big” horse the next time and wants to ride Sierra. They also explored the barn that day as part of their outdoor activity.



Through Rachel’s observation as a volunteer in the equine-facilitated programs offered by Cooper’s Crossroad, she has seen firsthand how participants are forming a strong bond with the horses and how that connection leads to pathways to wellness. Through self-awareness, participants are able to process: how am I feeling around this horse; how does my interaction affect the horse, and how does the horse’s interaction affect me. Rachel sees participants building relationships, connections, and confidence through the unique human/horse partnership. The backdrop of Elm Farm is a majestic classroom of outdoor experience, art projects for our younger participants, and our beloved farm animals – horses, chickens, goats, and sheep. We are so grateful for our incredible volunteer base and people like Rachel who help to support our programs.

Make a Difference by Sponsoring a Horse!

At Cooper’s Crossroad we’ve been able to make great strides with our programs, but it’s all because of the support of friends and donors like you, helping us provide quality care for our horses. On average, the basic care for each horse amounts to \$250 each month.

We invite you to consider a monthly or annual sponsorship in honor of one of our horses, which will contribute towards the cost of hay, feed, hoof and dental care, vaccines and deworming, prescription medicine and needed supplements. We’d love any help you can provide, and we know that our program participants and our hard-working horses will be grateful.

All sponsorships and donations are tax-deductible. Learn more at www.cooperscrossroad.com/sponsorships.



Treat Yourself to Our Brand New Video!

This spring and into summer, we produced a 5-minute video clip to convey the mission of Cooper's Crossroad. This mini documentary turned out amazing and it will go a long way to support us with grant applications, forming new partnerships with schools and other organizations in the area, and garnering support from community members for our programs.

Filming was quite the process, and as always, "it took a village!" Watch the finished clip on our homepage at www.cooperscrossroad.com.

Special thanks goes to:

Videographer Bill Farrell for his passion and love that went into this work
Christina Major and Sue Maydwell for the script and narration
Antje Hornbeck for co-production and logistics
Horse Georgia (and her personal assistant, Janice) for being so patient with us!



How Can YOU Get Involved?

- Sign up to receive our newsletters and announcements at www.cooperscrossroad.com/signup
- Consider volunteering on the farm during our program hours or for care of our animals (even a couple hours per week) or as a board member - email us at cooperscrossroad@gmail.com
- Help out financially by considering a donation or sponsorship, or take a look at our wishlist at www.cooperscrossroad.com/wishlist. We hope to hear from you!

Cooper's Crossroad - Creating Pathways to Wellness
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