



## We Remember and Honor *By Cindy Ross*



Snowflake 1988-2010



Kandy 1979-2010



Lucky 1982-2010

As I celebrate my tenth year serving with the Monmouth County Park System, I reflect on the many memories that have accumulated, especially in regard to the horses. So much has changed as my role evolved from volunteer to Instructor-in-Training to program coordinator and culminating in being the Stable Manager. Our location changed as did the horse and human faces.

As our core group of horses matured we knew they could not live forever though sometimes it seemed they might! We have watched many of the horses thrive well into their 20's and even some marking and exceeding their 30<sup>th</sup> year. Equine longevity is a theme at Sunnyside!

And so in 2010 the time came for three of our beloved equine friends, Kandy,

Lucky, and Snowflake ages 31, 28, and 22 respectively, to pass on. With each loss came a mourning period at Sunnyside where everyone felt the loss of a friend. Horses called for their missing buddies and we welled up with tears. Soon the calls quieted and the rhythm of the barn continued as we all accepted our new version of a normal day.

Horses arrive on trial to ensure the program has enough active horses to continue the important work of the SPUR therapeutic riding program. The horses acquired at the age of six are now the teenagers of the barn. And Bugsie, now 31 years old, still enjoys welcoming visitors and participating in non-mounted activities. The horses are the foundation of the program. Students, staff, volunteers and visitors alike are touched by their strength, gentleness and the mysterious way in which they seem to

understand the importance of their jobs. As we focus on the present, plan for the future, and remember the past, we honor Kandy, Lucky and Snowflake for the many people they helped and the hearts they touched. May our friends rest in peace.

**Scholarship  
Raffle**  
**Will you be one  
of the five Lucky  
Winners?**

*See back cover for  
more information.*



# Congratulations to the Newest NARHA Certified Instructors at Sunnyside!

By Liz Haenchen

We are pleased to announce that Stephanie Hunt and Laurie Kelley, the last group of Instructors-in-Training, passed their NARHA Registered Instructor certification this summer!



*Stephanie Hunt with Te*

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*“My love of horses began the moment I first saw one as a toddler.”*

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Stephanie began her experience with the SPUR program as a volunteer at Huber Woods in the early 1990s. “My love of horses began the moment I first saw one as a toddler. After many pony rides, camps and begging, my loving parents brought me to a barn in Freehold for lessons. Though I never desired to get into the show circuit, jumping courses with my favorite thoroughbred Regal was how I spent my high school years.”

She then left to attend Franciscan University in Ohio. After graduating,

Stephanie returned to the Jersey shore and to the SPUR program. “Having volunteered for SPUR... I knew I had to get back into the program and begin a career working with animals. In 2007 my husband Bill and I welcomed our sweet little angel Ben into the world. Once Ben passed his first birthday I made the life changing call [to Sunnyside].”

Stephanie attended the volunteer workshop and began the volunteer training process on a part time basis in 2009. Not long after that she quit her job to focus her attentions on becoming an instructor. Her dedication paid off and she passed the NARHA instructor certification in July.

“Thanks go out to the entire staff and volunteers at Sunnyside for their support during my training and certification process. I am also eternally grateful for my equine educators, especially Te, Blue, Indiana and Azi, who have encouraged and humbled me every step of the way.”



*Laurie Kelley*

Laurie started out as a volunteer with the SPUR program in 2007 after she found a flier about SPUR while hiking at Turkey Swamp Park. At the time she was looking for something to do for herself, since the youngest of her four sons was nearly grown and off doing his own things. “I

was pulled right in,” Laurie said. “I loved everything about the program; the people and of course the horses.”

Laurie owned a horse as a teenager, but had never had any formal training. “I was self-taught [to ride and care for the horse], so needless to say this was a little bit intimidating.” She was a sponge, soaking up any guidance and instruction that she could during her time at Sunnyside. Her desire to learn about the horses and the students was obvious and she was asked to join the instructor training program.

When she began the training process Laurie was working full time with her husband at their auto repair shop. Her days started early with a full day at the shop and then she would trade her greasy shop clothes for barn boots and jeans to work late into the evening. This July, after much hard work and many long days, Laurie passed the NARHA instructor certification.

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*“My biggest joy is seeing the kids as they transform into riders with confidences.”*

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“The support given to me through this process has been overwhelming. Not only from my co-workers, but my husband who has afforded me this opportunity to follow a dream I never thought I would find. I think my biggest joy is seeing the kids as they transform into riders with confidence. I have met so many children with more courage and ambition. It inspires me to work harder to help them be all they can be.”

*Congratulations Stephanie and Laurie!*



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Drawing to be held at Sunnyside Recreation Center, 628 Middletown-Lincroft Rd. Middletown, NJ, 12/6/2010 at 8 pm. TICKETHOLDERS NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN. All proceeds from this raffle will go to support SPUR's Scholarship Fund.

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