

Horses healing humans in Otterville

Auction fundraiser for SonFlower Stables set for Aug. 11

Community Aug 01, 2017 by [Jeff Tribe](#) Norfolk News



Mary Howe's SonFlower Stables offers personalized 'horses healing humans' sessions for those aged 3-90. Her efforts are being supported by a non-alcoholic fundraising dinner/live auction/educational speaker/health and wellness vendor event being held Friday, August 11 from 5-8 p.m. at 2765 Rhineland Road, Delhi. Those seeking more information or tickets (\$45 per individual) are invited to call 519-550-3461. - Jeff Tribe

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Mary Howe's first priority in her second chance at life is helping others.

"That is the nutshell," the resolution therapies specialist said Tuesday morning at the SonFlower Stables facility in Otterville.

Howe is a suicide survivor, the result of being trapped in a physically abusive marriage by "cultural beliefs."

"I was gone," said Howe, who spent over three weeks in a hospital in a coma, her return to consciousness accompanied by determination to leave her husband and begin a new journey with a different outlook.

"It was a second chance without bitterness," she emphasized, one undertaken with empathy for fellow victims.

Howe's determination has evolved into a "horses healing humans" program, recognizing their power as a healing tool.

"I saw the magic in them," she said.

Howe says horses are the only land-based animal other than humans with a limbic area (trauma zone), which allows for mimicking of human emotion. Her process is an alternative to the clinically based norm in that she helps people know themselves better through equine interaction.

It begins with what she terms "meditative grounding," a mutual introduction of horse and human that moves toward an effective relationship, one advanced through grooming, horse-ground manners, and ultimately, resolution therapies successful for a variety of conditions.

Howe said resolution is reached by forming a bond with a horse who may have experienced a related trauma.

"We're not a riding facility," she clarified. "But we do have participants who have been here for six months who are now riding."

She offers personalized children's programs addressing mental health and wellness concerns and cognitive behaviour, along with adult options for what Howe terms "grieving of loss" or grief resolution, a broad term extending well beyond the traditional understanding to include issues such as employment, marriage, anger management and eating disorders.

"Whatever causes our self-worth to be stripped away, we build it back," she said.

'Disconnected' participants are assisted toward wellness and back into a connection with the natural rhythms of nature in part via nonverbal understanding between horse and human, relating to body, eye and ear gestures. After moving her horses to follow contracts, SonFlower has set down roots in Otterville. Howe says her efforts have garnered respect in more traditional quarters, and are supported by around 15 volunteers assisting with the SonFlower stable of 12 horses, two minis, a goat and Mr. Orange, the "receptionist bunny."

Co-conveners Irene Hurley and Virginia Armstrong have also "humbled" Howe by organizing a non-alcoholic fundraising dinner/live auction/educational speaker/health and wellness vendor

event scheduled for Friday, Aug. 11, from 5 to 10 p.m. at 2765 Rhineland Rd. in Delhi.
Individual tickets are \$45 (\$325 for a table of eight) and available by calling 519-550-3461.

Those seeking more information on grief resolution within an equine-supported environment are invited to visit the SonFlower Stables Facebook page or call Howe at 519-718-1432 to set up an appointment.

by **Jeff Tribe**

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