

Hestóvin Hoofbeats

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE HORSE TO TEACH, INSPIRE AND HEAL.

First Volunteer Orientation

We have had an abundance of interest in our therapeutic riding lessons! To safely instruct our riders, we needed more Horse Leaders and Side-Walkers! If you would like to know how you can volunteer please join us. Volunteer Orientations are held the second Friday of the month from 3:30-5:00pm. Please consider being a part of "Team Hestóvin!" We need you!

Mini Photo Sessions

Santa lent us his sleigh and we turned Hestóvin Stables into a winter wonderland! "Smile and say Merry Christmas!" could be heard as our professional barn photographer, Javi Mejia snapped pictures and then edited them for the participants' use. Mark your calendar for next November! These time slots fill up quickly. Special thanks to, Santa and Javi!



Note from the Herd

Thanksgiving morning the horses were up and out for a beautiful sunrise breakfast. I imagined the horses were thankful for their grain and hay twice a day, the warm, dry shelter in their own stalls, the peaceful property they can roam, the automatic waterers both in their stalls and outside, the care they are given, and the love and interest people who come to barn show them.

I am grateful for much of the same...and more!

Food, clothing, and shelter: these are basis needs for all living things. I'm grateful for these and all the "extras" I enjoy in life: family, friends, conveniences that make life easier: such as cars,

UPCOMING EVENTS

READ TO A HORSE

December 8, 2021

3:30-4:30

Choose one of our Christmas storybooks, pull up a stool, and read to one of the Icelandic horses!

THE 13 YULE LADS

December 10, 2022

11:00am - 1:00pm

No Santa Claus in Iceland??? That is correct. But there are 13 wee lads that one at a time come visit the children of Iceland the 13 nights before Christmas Day. Register your child to learn about these mischievous lads.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING AND GIFTS

December 24, 2022

09:00am-10:30am

We have decked the "stalls" with boughs of holly! Join us to sing Christmas carols to Glóa, Gunnar, Tatari, and Sær! We will be collecting Christmas gifts for our friends at *Renew Therapeutic Horse Center* in Holland, MI and/or *Last Stop Horse Rescue and Sanctuary* in Atlanta, Georgia. (You do not need to bring a gift to join us for singing!)

To register for any Upcoming Events, go to Hestovinstables.org, then under EVENTS, click the the event to register.

washing machines, inside plumbing, and electricity. I'm grateful for health, and pets, and work and music and art. The list goes on and on and on!

This year especially, as I spent Thanksgiving morning on the farm with the horses, I reflected on the past 18 months and am overwhelmed with gratitude for the birth of Hestóvin Stables and the difference it is making in our corner of the world.

As time marches on towards Christmas Day, we wish you a merry Christmas, filled with love, joy, and peace. May your days this month be spent with family and friends as we celebrate the greatest gift of all: the birth of our Savior.

Deanri, Lauren, and Laura



EXTRA, EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

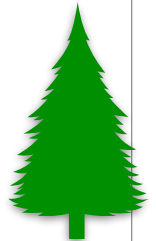
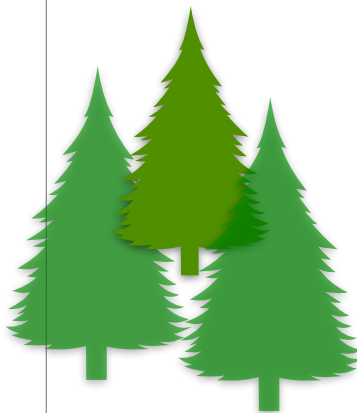
We are most pleased to be mentioned in the most recent issue (Fall 2022) of *Strides!* This award-winning publication of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) is a full-color, quarterly magazine which features a different theme or topic each issue pertaining to the members and the world of equine-assisted services (EAS). I have attached a copy of the article, *Gaited and Gallant Icelandic Horses*, by Martha McNeil.

HORSES' CHRISTMAS LIST

The horses are joining in the Christmas fun of putting together their Christmas list! Stop by the tree in the Observation Room to see what they are wishing for this their first Christmas in Michigan!

CHRISTMAS LIST IDEAS

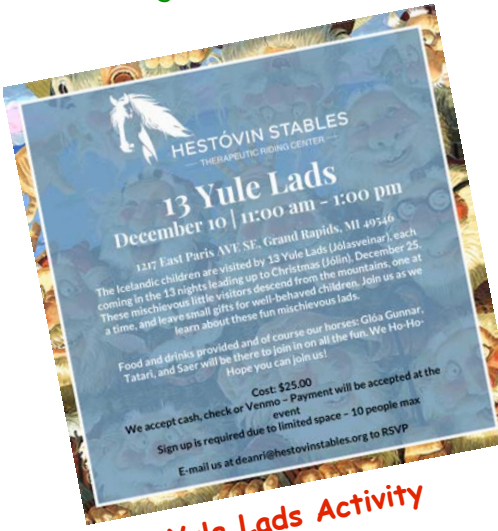
- Sweatshirt
- T-shirt
- Coffee Mug
- Tumbler
- Gift Card



FUN FACT ABOUT:

TATARI

HE DOESN'T LIKE PEPPERMINT



13 Yule Lads Activity



Celebrating Deanri's Birthday



Find the Horse

Follow us on Facebook! Each week we have a Find the Horse contest. First one to respond with the correct answer wins a prize!



Santa's Sleigh Photo Shoot



Glóa inspires an artist.



Sær is watching to see who is naughty or nice!



Christmas Gift Ideas



NON-TRADITIONAL EQUINES ISSUE

Partnering With Longears Power Horses
Wild Horse Wisdom Gaited and Gallant Icelandic Horses
Magnificent Minis



Icelandic has low pronounced hocks, low hocks and a wide chest. The center is usually only visible through the legs because it is 13-14 hands. Photo courtesy of DreamPower Horsemanship.

GAITED AND GALLANT ICELANDIC HORSES

By Martha McNeil

Last December DreamPower Horsemanship received the following Facebook message from a well-known program in the area that wanted to donate two Icelandic Horses to a center where they would be appreciated: "Our participants want to barrel race and do gymkhana games, and they aren't competitive in the speed events, so they are just sitting around. They are great with beginners, super sweet and they need to have a job."

PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Program in Gilroy, CA, the staff and volunteers witnessed what wonderful horses they can be for an equine-assisted services (EAS) program. A young boy who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and was nonverbal arrived at the center as part of a group of children coming from a local organization for DreamPower's Visiting for Mental Health Program. He was not yet able to participate in the vaulting activities, but staff and his parents thought he might enjoy riding.

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EQUINE-ASSISTED SERVICES STEEDS

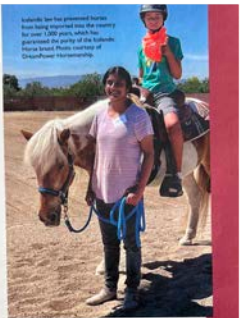
Gigi, the center's smallest Icelandic, was chosen as his mount because she is very calm, quiet and also very short. This made it easy for the boy to mount and for side-saddle support him. Also, she is strong and can carry substantial weight for her height. This boy was very distraught in the beginning and screamed, shrieked and cried when introduced to the horse, so his father demonstrated waiting a helmet, this was the first time on a horse, and he was ecstatic to be riding. There are not many short-statured breeds that can comfortably carry an adult man and also be suitable for a young child. After watching his dad ride, the boy was persuaded to mount and ride Gigi in a small circle. He cried and vocalized loud, disturbing sounds for the entire ride. Gigi was quiet and calm, taking it all in stride. She did not appear to be disturbed by the strange noises at all (although many of the humans were).

The boy came back and rode Gigi through the end of the group session, and every week he rode, he was happier and more confident. The center invited this young man back for the DreamPower Camp for Children with Special Needs this past summer, and he was happy and eager to hop on Gigi. He smiles when he sees her in the arena and rides happily and confidently every time. Not all horses would have been comfortable with the loud and strange noises and movements coming from this rider in the beginning, but Gigi was not fazed and was happy to accommodate this young man in whatever way he needed.

Recently, DreamPower hosted a weekend retreat for law enforcement officers, and the gelding Lofur was chosen to carry adult male law enforcement officers who were learning how to ride. Their strength and carrying ability in proportion to their height makes Icelandic Horses ideal for programs with larger riders. Lofur's energetic approach to riding makes him ideal for confident independent riders who want to go faster.

Gigi and Lofur participate in psychotherapy sessions (both mounted and unmounted), equine-assisted learning, Leadership 2 Partnership and therapeutic riding programs at DreamPower. They are marvelous on the ground and under saddle, with and without a halfter, and they often come to us with extensive training and experience with trail rides, horse shows, parades, etc. Their wonderful temperaments and excellent training and experience make them ideal partners in EAS work.

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BREED CHARACTERISTICS

Icelandics are sturdy with substantial bone structure and able to carry a significant amount of weight for their size. They weigh between 750-850 pounds and average between 13-14 hands. Though pony height, the Icelandic breed registry refers to them as horses. Icelandic Horses are typically hardy and long-lived. They are usually not started under saddle until age 4 and their structural development is not complete until age 7. The average Icelandic will live to be around 40 years old, with the oldest recorded Icelandic Horse living until 50 years of age!

These colorful horses come in a number of colors and coat patterns, including chestnut, bay, black, palomino, bay, roan, pinto and gray. There are more than 40 basic colorings officially listed, with more than 100 color and pattern variations. Their manes and tails are thick with coarse hair and they have a double coat to protect them from harsh Icelandic winters. No matter where they live, Icelandics usually develop super-thick winter coats.

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PARTNERING WITH ICELANDIC HORSES

The following centers also work with Icelandic Horses in their programs:

GAIT THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center (PAC) in Hartford, PA

Small in stature with a mighty personality, GAIT's Icelandic Horse Little Bear quickly earned his place in the herd after his arrival in the fall of 2016. He was born in New Hampshire and participating in 4H events, gymkhana and competitive trail riding before his "person" left for university. He had been living in a pasture with some goats when his previous owner decided Bear would be happiest if he had a purpose.

Bear's versatility, confidence and experience have made him an asset to GAIT's programs. He is eager to please and a quick learner, adapting to any situation set before him. He primarily participates in therapeutic riding but has also participated in EAL school groups, horsemanship club, PATH International Equine Services for Heroes® and Girl Scout events. Bear is in his 30s and usually limited to carrying younger riders but is more than capable of carrying smaller adults with ease. His small size at 12.3 hands is less intimidating for nervous participants and is easier on volunteer side siders. Lily, a 13-year-old volunteer, describes Bear as "irresistible... his fun personality, adorable appearance and gentle temperament drew everyone to him."

One of Bear's riders is Sophia, a 14-year-old girl with arthrogryposis. This non-progressive, congenital condition is characterized by joint contractures and muscle weakness that commonly affect both arms and legs. Bear's size easily allows side siders to offer assistance when needed and his smooth gait provides Sophia a safe, comfortable ride and freedom of movement without the use of her wheelchair. Sophia is an active teenager who is always ready for adventure and positively glows when astride Little Bear.—Diana Moldovan, Volunteer Coordinator

APPALACHIAN THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER

PATH Intl. PAC in Burnsville, NC

The Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center acquired its Icelandic Horse Marley in 2016. He was born in California and later moved to Idaho. His previous owner moved to Virginia and found that her advancing arthritis prevented her from riding. Marley was all alone in a field, and she wanted him to have a job and some companions.

Initially the center wasn't sure that Marley would be a good fit. He is a strong and forward, and it took about a year to settle him. While standing still is hard for Marley, he is brave and solid, very unlikely to be bothered by unexpected sounds or sights. Marley is 13 hands tall and built like a tank. Due to his age, he is now limited to carrying 120 pounds. His heart status is great when side-saddling with kids who need a lot of support. He is one of the center's "go to" horses for those kids who are hard to hold.

"Marley is a great character. He brings lots of laughter to riding sessions. We love this guy!"—Mika Roloff, Executive Director

DEANRI HUMANS, LAURA HUIZENGA AND LAUREN HERWEYER

PATH Intl. members working towards certification and membership for Hestwin Stables Therapeutic Riding Center in Grand Rapids, MI

Hestwin Stables was named after an Icelandic word that literally means horse oasis, which captures the overall sense of its program. The center strives to enhance the lives of children and adults who desire to explore the emotional and social benefits of therapeutic horsemanship through safe, guided interactions with Icelandic Horses.

Their four Icelandic Horses are recognized as partners and team members of the center. The center has built strong relationships with them through training and always observing them for clear communication. Each of them will play a part in the center's therapeutic riding lessons, as well as its equine-assisted learning programs.

One of the many reasons Hestwin chose to partner with Icelandic horses is their unique set of gaits, which includes its tolt and flying pace. The tolt is an extraordinarily comfortable 4-beat gait that allows the rider to move forward almost dance-free, and a flying pace is a high-speed gait often used in races. In addition to their unique gaits, Icelandics are also sort and stocky, making them approachable and easy to handle for participants who may be a little wary around horses at first. Furthermore, they are friendly and kind personalities that make them hard to love.—Laura Huizenga, owner

Icelandic Horses are known for their calm, easy-going nature and are not easily spooked, possibly the result of not being any natural predators in their native Iceland. Photo courtesy of GAIT Therapeutic Riding Center

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that they shed in the spring. Many owners living in milder climates clip their Icelandic Horses in the winter because their Arctic-worthy coat is not needed in milder climates.

Icelandic Horses are known for their calm temperaments and generally easy-going nature. They are not easily spooked, possibly the result of not having any natural predators in their native Iceland. Icelandics have a spirited but gentle temperament. They tend to be friendly, approachable and easy to handle, although many are also described as "confident, intelligent, enthusiastic and independent-minded."

The Icelandic Horse has five natural gaits: the usual walk, trot and canter/gallop and two unique to the breed, the tolt and the flying pace. The tolt is a ground-covering four-beat ambling gait that can be performed at the speed of a typical fast walk up to a typical canter pace. It blends speed and exceptional riding comfort: the rider smoothly glides across the ground without a bounce like the trot and is natural to all Icelandic Horses from birth. When Icelandic Horses perform the tolt, at least one foot is always in contact with the ground.

The flying pace is a fast, smooth two-beat lateral pace that can reach 30 miles per hour and truly feels like flying. Not all Icelandics can perform this gait, and it is intended to be performed by a well-trained horse with a skilled rider. When performed well, there is a point at which no hooves are in contact with the ground. Both the tolt and the flying pace are thought to have developed as the result of a gene mutation unique to the Icelandic breed.

BREED HISTORY

The Icelandic Horse was developed in Iceland, a country with ruggedly beautiful volcanic mountain ranges, glaciers and abundant hot springs and is one of the northernmost inhabited places on Earth. An island country in the north Atlantic Ocean, Iceland lies on the continuously active geologic border between North America and Europe and is called "The Land of Fire and Ice." In fact, the development of the Icelandic Horse breed was devastatingly affected by a volcanic eruption centuries ago. In the 1780s about 70% of the breed starved after the eight-month long volcanic ash poisoning and eruption at Lakagigar. The breed has since recovered from this devastating event and around 30,000 of the 180,000 registered Icelandic Horses in the world now live in Iceland. The climate's harsh winters and rugged landscape helped develop a

hardy, strong, four-footed horse with a thick coat to protect it from the winter winds.

The Icelandic Horse developed from genes brought to Iceland by Norse settlers on Viking ships in the 9th and 10th centuries. Since 1973, Icelandic law has prevented horses (and any livestock) from being imported into the country, and since a horse leaves Iceland, it is never allowed to return. The breed has now been bred in complete isolation in Iceland for more than 1,000 years. This strict control over the national treasure has resulted in five distinct equine diseases in their native Iceland. To prevent equine diseases from being introduced to the island, all equine equipment brought into the country must be new and unused or thoroughly disinfected.

The first breed society for Icelandic Horses was created in 1964 in Iceland. Now there are Icelandic breed organizations in 22 different countries, organized under the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations. In Iceland, horses have their own Horse Naming Commission, which approves and has the right to reject all names given to Icelandic Horses in Iceland. There is also a Naming Committee for humans, which approves all names given to horses being born in Iceland.) The Horse Naming Commission means that you cannot name your horse Silver or Trigger or any other name you like. If the Commission does not approve, it will be rejected, even if you have a good reason. It is a sign of the national respect and value Iceland places on its precious horses.

Tolerant equine societies has created various riding vacations in Iceland where visitors to the island from the back of an Icelandic Horse. It is a commonly held Icelandic belief that you should never ride a horse whose name you do not know or whose meaning you do not understand. For instance, Gugi, whose registered name is Gugi (pronounced Goo-goo), has several meanings, including riddle. The name Lofur belongs to an historical figure in Iceland in the 1700s known as a magician or sorcerer. So, if you ever have a chance to ride an Icelandic Horse in the Land of Fire and Ice, in another country or in the United States, be sure to honor this Icelandic tradition and find out the horse's name and what the name means.

Martha McNeil is the founder and director of DreamPower Horsemanship, a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center in Gilroy, CA. She is a PATH Intl. Certified Instructor and a Certified Instructor, a Licensed Professional and Family Therapist and a Certified Equine Interaction Professional in Mental Health. She can be reached at dreampowerhorsemanship@icloud.com.