

Spirit Ridge Equestrian's 2nd Annual **Christmas in the Stable** BC Children's Hospital Fundraiser



Despite mother nature throwing us a curveball with -10-degree weather and competing with two large other Winter / Christmas craft events on the same weekend – we can say it was another successful Christmas in the Market. Our goal was \$1500 this year to go to BC Children's Hospital and after a few expenses, I am thrilled to announce that we ended up donating \$2300.

This year we had some incredible vendors in the stables, some were equine related, and some had nothing to do with horses, other than enjoying their stalls to sell their wares. Vendors have contact information listed on our website, and I highly recommend checking them out.

At least two of the vendors were under the age of 16 yrs old. Both work hard at their talents to make the funds to support their passion for horses. (Avery Rose Handmade Designs and Bows & Art Works by Sam)

Food of course is always popular and makes great Christmas gifts, Boone & Cricket Farms sold out of their hot chocolate bombs seconds before I was able to make it to their stall. They also had local home-grown honey and bees wax items. Tanya's Homemade Ukrainian Perogies and Cabbage Rolls completely sold out. Tanya is a recently came from the Ukraine with her children, and I can say with first-hand experience – her handmade perogies are truly authentic and the best I've had in this town. This year we also welcomed a new vendor Kats Bakery and her Smash Cakes. And I'm so looking forward to the first birthday party so as to buy one and see it happening in person. Think cake smash meets rage room and the offspring is this cake but not cake chocolate pinata. I know this explanation isn't the best, but I hope it has you intrigued enough to look her up. She can also do adult versions with mini bottles of liquor or adult chocolates.

There were a couple of horse-based vendors, one Joy Kimler was there to sign and sell her new book *Heartfelt: A Moment in Time* – a great gift for any equine enthusiast! And the other, Natural Presence Equine with Talitha Parker – another great anytime gift idea for the horse owner / lover that has everything. Talitha teaches Equine First Aid (multiple specific courses), Disaster Planning, and First Aid for horse specifically geared towards Children. She also offers her own services such as Equine Sports Therapy, Saddle Fitting and Behavior Consultation – all of which certainly compliment each other. And Equine Spirit Therapy who had some of her homemade jewelry and clothing with some equine aroma therapy and would love to talk to you about her services: Equine Assisted Learning & Equine Assisted Therapy. These are some very sought-after forms of mental health that uses horses as your support & therapist.

To round out the Vendors, we had those other wares which you could literally pamper yourself with – some jewelry and home decorations with Faded Flannel; then to make help take care of your skin, and not the way dirt and horse slobber facials work, but through Mary Kay with Roma Beaudoin; then to assist your home or car in smelling less like a barn or wet boots we had Scentsy with Lindsay Dyck and her 101 different aroma options. And to ensure you stay warm through mitts, toques or scarves then reach out to Crochet Gifts by Azita – who also makes some very adorable stuffed Crochets ponies also.

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As always, the area that the children gravitate towards is Santa's visit, pony rides and the addition of our stable with friendly farm animals.

Santa was able to hear many children's Christmas wishes, and luckily all the girls and boys that came to visit him were on the Good List. Santa's reindeer were taking a break in preparation for the big night, so instead the children got to ride a pony through a little maze of activities. Smiles were in the abundance, and many parents with cameras to capture the memories. We encourage anyone that took photos to send us or tag us in social media #spirtridgeequestrian. Our youngest was just over 1 years old, and I think our oldest was a young teenager. Next year we will have some larger horses for those adults that want to give it a try.



This year we had some of our little girls from our riding program assist with the event in the way of side walkers with our ponies as well as our farm animal ambassadors, talking with children and parents about our very special barn pets. They would assist the visitors with being able to come up close and hold or pet one of our Indian Runner or Cayuga Ducks that were hatched here on the farm this summer, get to meet Holly, Peggy & Penelope our Nigerian Miniature Fainting Goats – and yes if they didn't do it that day, they really do faint. And I can assure you it doesn't hurt them. As our rabbits were deciding to not be in a visiting mood that day, it left our 2 adult Kune Kune female pigs Petunia and Rosebud and our 5 piglets to introduce the children to.

With the exception of a few minor expenses, all proceeds that were made through admission, stall rental fees, silent auction, or pony rides – all goes to Spirit Ridge's Charity of Choice – BC Children's Hospital.

As this is our second year of this event, we will continue to learn and grow for the next year. Our date has already been confirmed and we hope to have the weather play better in our favor and be one of the first to kick off the Christmas Market Season – Mark your Calendars for Nov 18th. Already we will improve with having hot food / drink available, Silent Auction, Music, Tractor & Trailer Ride through our decorated tees, Craft Table for the pony riders to make something to remember their time here. If you are already interested in securing a Stable for your spot – please contact us soon.

Written by: Amy Catton