

Star Gazing Farm

A haven for retired farm animals and wayward goats

26 November, 2016

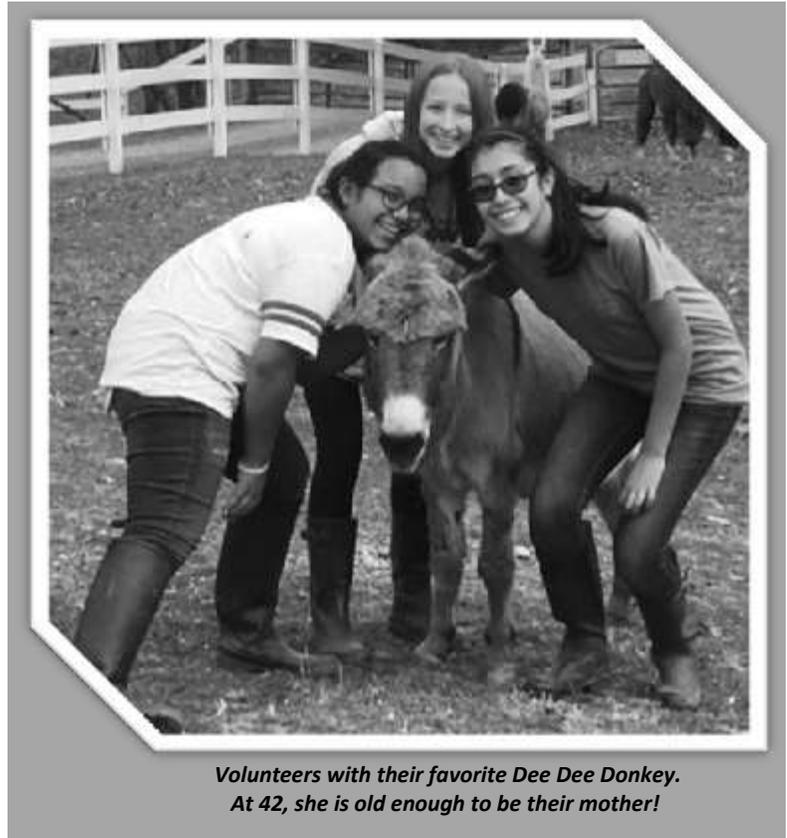
Dear Friends,

I can hardly believe that I am heading into my fifteenth year here at Star Gazing Farm! A few of the animals who started out this farm with me are still here, too, most notably **Dee Dee Donkey** (42 years old), **Spenser the sheep** and **Mr. Newman Goat**, both now entering into their 15th years. I, of course, do not feel that I've aged a day.

It's funny, too, that many of the young people who come here to learn and work were not even born when this farm sanctuary came to be! Yet they are such an integral part of life here that it's hard for me to imagine the farm without them.

I'm so grateful to have been given the advice early on to establish the farm as a non-profit organization. Not only has the charitable status enabled us to accept tax-deductible donations which fund all of our rescue work, but it has ensured that as an organization serving the community we continue to fulfill our mission: rescuing animals in need and providing a safe

and enjoyable environment in which people can learn about their care. As a charitable organization we must be not only transparent, but accountable to you, our donors. You are welcome to browse our financials at guidestar.org. Running a non-profit also means continuously growing our programs that benefit our community. These include our youth workdays, our youth-at-risk program, and the educational presentations we give to thousands of visitors. **But nothing is guaranteed, and we truly need your continued financial support. Please renew your commitment to our cause by making a financial gift this season. Consider donating \$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 or even more!**



*Volunteers with their favorite Dee Dee Donkey.
At 42, she is old enough to be their mother!*

“We help keep them safe, and let them know that someone out there does love them.”

— *Maia, 8th grade*

The level of local involvement in the farm grows each year, and even in the occasional dark and dreary times, I am encouraged and bolstered by the obvious gift of hope and love that these rescued animals give to the people who engage with them – and vice versa! Week after week I witness the joy that the animals bring to our volunteers and visitors.

Did you know that 88% of our revenue comes from donations (the rest comes from sales of goods made on the farm and services)? That means that you, our supporters, are the ones who enable this happy place, this **sanctuary to both animals and people**, to carry on. You feed the animals, give them medical care, provide them coats and heat lamps in the winter and sprinklers and fans in the summer. You make it possible for them to live out their lives cared for and in peace. You also buy the work gloves, pitchforks, wheelbarrows, water bottles and “great snacks” (— *Bruce, 10th grade*) for our young people.



Senna the alpaca and Little Di the miniature silky fainting goat sharing breakfast. They are inseparable.

There is some bit of strife in our land these days, and sadly people are not always getting along. Therefore I find it even more special when I see our animals of many different species walking, talking, eating, and sleeping together in peace. It's a great model for all of us! I love to walk outside and watch the animals 'do their thing' – whether that is wandering around and exploring, grazing, taking a nap, chewing their cud, or just hanging out with each other – this represents to me all that is good and right with the world. Knowing they are safe, content, and loved is also a major motivator for the kids who volunteer here. People who visit can feel 'the positive vibe' right away. As a recent visitor from South America said to me, "this place has good energy."

I know that our animals are much luckier than so very many. The animals here are wanted and loved. They are fed good food and given soft, warm bedding. They get top quality veterinary care, and they are visited every week by humans who treat them gently. They are not used for any purpose other than to simply be who they were born to be. We do not separate out our species; this means that many unexpected friendships arise. **I want to never have to deny**

our animals the food, comfort, and care that they deserve. But only you can ensure that this happens through your financial support. One of the very important things that you can do to ensure that this gentle sanctuary life continues is to make a financial gift. Please visit our web site at

www.stargazingfarm.org to make an online donation, or use our form at the end of this letter to send a tax-deductible donation. You can be assured that your money will be put to immediate and good use. You know, I have seen too many farms where concrete floors and steel barriers are the backdrop of a miserable existence, made only tolerable by sometimes edible food. I do everything I can to speak to farmers, advocate on behalf of the animals. Much more important than my current efforts, however, are going to be those future efforts of our young people.

“All the animals deserve love and care and happiness. This is a good cause.”
– *Mariana, 7th grade*

“If you were abused and abandoned, wouldn't you want someone to help you and donate to help you?”
– *Blake, 7th grade*

I am quite sure that the youth who work here have their eyes open and will be the first to speak out if they witness inhumane treatment of animals OR people. These kids truly give me hope! They will not spouting principles learnt in an 'ivory tower' because they have been educated on the front lines, on the ground: restraining our unwilling pig Waldo to do necessary hoof trims, treating an eye infection in our bunny Juancito, gentling new animals like Kimiko the sheep or Henry the dog who have no trust of humans, giving shots to our kicking alpaca Marguerite,

tenderly stroking dear, sweet Emma the sheep when she was so very sick. It may amaze you to learn that the kids who work here get up early every Saturday, no matter the weather, to be with the animals. They haul hay, shovel hundreds of pounds of manure, do animal care, take visitors on tours... and all without the help of their smartphones. Isn't that something? **Your donations are what makes this happen.** Your support not only saves animals lives, but it invests in the future of truly remarkable young people. **Please don't wait to make your contribution to this amazing work: any amount will help us. You can donate online, send a check, or come on out to the farm to see the sanctuary for yourself!** I or one of the young folks will be very glad to show you around.

I see the creation of the human-animal bond happening every weekend and it is an awesome thing. When we bring in new rescues like Mehitabel the donkey, who never saw a blacksmith her whole life and had a broken ankle that was never treated, the kids don't look at her defect - they look at how loving she is and they welcome her with open hearts. Even the geese, inherited from a rescuer who lost her farm, whom some call "the entry sentries" and others simply "those thugs" are cared for by the children – they make sure the geese are safe from cars (or perhaps the other way around!) and they warn visitors about Louie's mean bite. So smart.



Gabe, 11, says Brandy (well into her 2000th pound) is his favorite animal. "We are helping animals who have had a bad past to give them a good future."

Moreover, the young who have graduated and gone on to college were, in so many ways, formed by their experiences here. They report to me that they are studying environmental science, forestry, veterinary medicine, and zoology. When they come back for holidays they often stop by the farm for a day of work. They are not "too cool" for that anymore. I'm not sure I was that noble at their age.

"We rescue the animals and sometimes they might get sick so we need medicine to help care for them; we also need help for food and things for them to survive."
– *Joanne, 7th grade*

Unlike large non-profits, we have very low overhead. Our administrative expenses for 2015 were 10%. It's really important for you to know that your money goes directly into funds for care.

We welcome a lot of visitors at the farm, and even in the hour or two that they spend here, you can see the joy that the animals bring to them. People visiting the farm often comment on how all the animals "simply get along." It is, indeed, a peaceable kingdom here. **YOU, our donors, help us make all this friendship happen. This holiday season, I ask you to renew your pledge to help us help the animals we have already committed to as well as and help fund our abilities to continue to bring in animals in need to the farm.** Please consider writing a check today or visit our web site at www.stargazingfarm.org to make an online donation.

Star Gazing Farm is a safe haven for animals – but it's also one for people. I never get tired of seeing people smile with delight at how friendly and calm our animals are, and how they all coexist in peace. **It's a model that all different kinds of creatures (including humans!) can get along.** That's a powerful message in today's world.



Newman Goat, AKA the Photo Bomber, with his new friends, a girl scout troop from Clarksburg, MD

Help us maintain this safe port in a storm by making a charitable donation this holiday season to Star Gazing Farm – any amount helps us: \$25, \$50, \$100 or even \$500!



We do not know what the next year will bring. One thing is certain, however; we will be called upon regularly to help animals in need. We may help by networking to place animals in loving homes like the 4 elderly Texel ewes whose owner is in extended hospital care. We may help by assisting farmers in finding solutions to better care for and manage their animals and thus stay in their original homes. Or we may adopt the animals and bring them here to our sanctuary. One thing is absolutely certain: I – none of us – will ever stop caring and working on behalf of animals.

*Farm Open House and Holiday Gift Shop
Saturdays, December 3, 10, 17
10-4
Special visit from Santa on December 10!*

Please remember that although we work with the local animal control agencies, taking in and helping to place the unwanted and abused farm animals in their care, **we receive no government funds or grant monies and so rely entirely on donations to help the animals.**

Won't you help by giving to us this holiday season? Please share this with your animal-loving friends! Your donations not only go to feed the rescued animals, they are also feeding young minds and establishing a supportive and loving community. Thank you for your support.

For the love of the animals,

Anne E. Shroeder (Farmer Anne)

P.S. The sanctuary needs your support! Won't you send your tax-deductible donation of \$25, \$50, \$100, or even \$500 today? Thank you.

Help Star Gazing Farm

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Phone _____

Email _____

Check Enclosed for \$_____ [Payable to "Star Gazing Farm"]

Charge \$_____ to my Visa/MasterCard /Discover/Amex

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Exp. Date _____ CSC Code _____ Signature _____

DESIGNATIONS

For animal sponsorship
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In memory of: _____

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or special designations.