Dear Friends,

When I first moved to this farm nearly 16 years ago, my overwhelming wish was to have goats. And then Mr. Newman Goat came along and took over the farm. After he decimated the landscaping, demolished the back porch, and made regular forays to the neighbors (necessitating the building of fencing that seems to be neverending), I reconsidered my position on goats. Goats were expensive. Goats were high maintenance. Goats were always getting into people’s cars and eating things like cash and rolls of stamps. Goats were highly entertaining, highly irritating, always one step ahead of the humans, and somehow, despite it all, completely lovable. Eventually, I said that perhaps two goats were OK — one for each hand. So we got three more.

How FIVE naughty goats in need managed to work their way onto our farm this year indicates some kind of divine intervention (at least on the part of the goats). On the other hand, this farm is no stranger to miracles (even if they benefit goats...). This year our beloved Henry has had a series of health problems. Recently he collapsed and could not stand up at all. The vet told us that lesions on his spine would prevent him from walking again. He said, “Don’t expect him to get up miraculously.” But three days later, after being seriously annoyed by all the nursing attention he was getting, Henry hauled himself up and told us nurses to take a hike. Dignified and proud, he is happy to smile at us and accept his medicine provided it’s hidden in bits of chicken or turkey. Each animal needs to be taken on his own terms. Veterinary medicine, good drugs, and healthy doses of prayer seem to be a good working combination here.

Many of our animals are elderly, or come here with a disability. This requires funds not only for top-notch veterinary care, but medicine, infrastructure adjustments, special food, and a great deal of time from both volunteers and staff. Your contributions can make the difference for these precious animals. Won’t you consider donating $25, $50, $100, $500 or even more to help them?

For example, this year we brought two dear sheep to live here: Bart, a Shropshire sheep who was born with a spinal deformity called kyphosis (a curved back like a camel) – he is now one year old and thriving, and Jane, a darling Shetland lamb who was rescued from a terrible farm where a large percentage of the lambs were dying from parasites and malnutrition. Jane also has a congenital defect in her legs, but will be receiving treatment from the University of Pennsylvania veterinary hospital. She is only 7 months old and is so tiny, she looks like a doll – and is as sweet and sassy as she can be. You can feel so good that your financial gifts to Star Gazing Farm go to make the difference between life and death; the difference between a painful and wretched life and a life of comfort and love.
**A Love So Great**

One thing is certain: we go the distance for our animals. Another amazing recovery this past year was with dear Huckleberry the sheep. He was afflicted with the meningeal worm, a parasite that attacks the nervous system (and is far more common in alpacas and llamas). After 5 weeks at the University hospital doing treatment and physical therapy, he returned home but was very much up and down. All of our volunteers pitched in to work with him, give him massages, walk him around, and come and check on him every few hours – throughout the entire spring and summer. His medications have been changed several times and we seem now to have just the right dosage and while not completely back to his old self, Huck has a great appetite and is even back to head-butching (always a good sign).

**We don’t give up on any of our animals.** We want them to have quality of life, happiness, and comfort. We completely trust our vet and always discuss the best treatments and outcomes for, as she fondly puts it, our “decrepit crowd.” Providing such intensive and comprehensive treatment can be costly, and I want to never have to deny our animals the food, shelter, and veterinary care that they deserve. **But only you can ensure that this happens through your financial support.** A donation via check or credit card (envelope is enclosed for your convenience) or online at our web site [www.stargazingfarm.org/donate](http://www.stargazingfarm.org/donate) is quick and easy. Any amount helps and is gratefully received.

**Our Community**

There is a gentleness about all our volunteers and visitors that I rarely see elsewhere. They may come from a difficult situation at work or home, have “hours and hours” of homework to do; they may be ill or depressed or have family or financial worries; everyone has pressures in their lives. But it’s as though the peaceful atmosphere at the farm seeps into people when they get here and the stresses of the outside world fade away. I love to hear the various conversations that go on at this farm, especially between the people and the animals. A recurring theme is Mr. Newman Goat’s insistence on “helping” with cleaning the barn. Shouts of “Newman, no, NO!” have echoed off of the hills for many years now.

Recently two gentlemen on horseback rode up on the lane by our pasture. All the volunteers and all the animals went up to meet them and their horses and as we chatted, they commented, “what a lovely community you have here.” And I looked around and thought, “yes, we do!” The animals teach us how to get along and focus us on what is important. We are all different: we are all ages, races, religions, and come from all over the world, just like the animals who are many different species and all get along.
Volunteers get to know each other and become friends, young people learn from one another. People bring their friends and extended families. Many volunteers and visitors have told me that this is “their” sanctuary, too.

While not quite the same as being right next to a gigantic, gentle cow who wishes to lick your face, nevertheless, our online community also sends a message of hope and happiness. People who tell me all the time how much they enjoy our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stargazingfarmanimalssanctuary) and web site: seeing the photos, watching the videos, and reading the zany stories of the creatures who live here.

YOU, our supporters, enable us to keep building this community. I ask you to renew your pledge to help us help the animals we have already committed to, and help ensure that we are able to continue to bring in needy – abused, abandoned, neglected – animals to the farm.

Please join us this holiday season and become part of our family. We welcome you!

Our New Staff
And speaking of welcoming, I cannot go without mentioning our newest resident and self-appointed public relations director of the farm, Hazel the piglet. Hazel was abandoned at the animal shelter, but that did not do anything to quash her spirit. Within hours of arriving at the farm, she had squirm ed out of her pig paddock, introduced herself to all animals, big and small, and informed them of how things were to be from now on.

When you come to the farm, she will likely be one of the first people you meet. She accepts scratches and belly rubs, and bribes (within reason – she needs to keep her girlish figure).

Thank You!
To those of you who have donated to the farm, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Alone, we can do only a little. Together, we can build and keep this beautiful place where both people and animals feel safe, comforted, and at peace. Each one of you is so important to the lives of so many.

We do not receive any government funds, even though we frequently take in animals who have been abandoned at local animal control agencies. In fact, nearly 90% of our support comes directly from donations – from people like you!

Not only are you helping us to provide the best environment possible for the animals in our care, you are also helping all the young people who come here to work with and learn about animals. There are very few animal facilities that accept volunteers as young as we do (we start at age 11), and many of “our” kids stay with the farm until they go on to college; many, in fact, come back to visit and volunteer after college! The practical, hands-on experience is priceless for these young folks. I like to think that, as a city person who moved to the country armed with only a graduate degree and absolutely no common sense, I can now impart all the hard-won knowledge and experience I’ve gained! The kids also learn courage, physical strength, and practical skills such as how to give shots, oral medication, and safely work with large animals. Watching them grow is, to me, priceless.
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,

Farmer Anne
Anne E. Shroeder

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.

Our Calendar!
Did you know that this year for the first time, we have produced a gorgeous, full color wall calendar! Each month features a beautiful photo of an animal and his or her story. You can help the farm! Purchase one for yourself and one as a gift! Enjoy being with our animals every day of the year. The cost is $20 (farm pickup) or $22 mailed to you. Please use our enclosed envelope and make a notation that you wish to receive a calendar, or visit our web site to order online: www.stargazingfarm.org/2018-star-gazing-farm-wall-calendar/