

## Friends of Bear Creek Stables Fundraising Begins to Finalize Contract with MidPen

Rachael Parakh, Peggy Kauffman,  
and Rick Parfitt

In March, MidPen's board of directors agreed to move forward on writing a long-term contract with Friends of Bear Creek Stables, to convert a historic Los Gatos horse stable into an outdoor-education site. Located in the Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve, the stables will offer horse- and nature-based programs to people of all ages, physical abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds in the Bay Area.

Bear Creek Stables is a haven in our beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains, only 15 minutes from Silicon Valley. To turn this vision into reality, Friends of Bear Creek Stables needs to raise \$250,000 by **Friday, June 6**, to cover startup costs for the first two years of operations. We have already raised \$60,000, but need an additional \$190,000. To donate, scan the QR code, visit [www.friendsofbearcreekstables.org](http://www.friendsofbearcreekstables.org), or mail a check to Friends of Bear Creek Stables, P.O.



Box 546, Redwood Estates, CA, 95044. Give whatever you can. Any amount is appreciated.

Jenny Whitman and Nancy Cole co-founded Friends of Bear Creek Stables in 2013 to bring horse and nature-based programs to our community. Working with horses opens people to new perspectives.

Ashley Byington started riding her horse at Bear Creek Stables when she was nine years old. When asked what lessons she learned, she replied, "I learned self-confidence and



**Ashley Byington has been riding horses at Bear Creek Stables for 25 years.**

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assertiveness, good for a girl in Silicon Valley." Rick Parfitt, the current president of Friends of Bear Creek Stables, agreed: "Raising two daughters of my own around horses and nature broadened their awareness of the world we live in and the importance of protecting our open spaces."

Bear Creek Stables, a

100-year-old ranch within the open space preserve, was managed until last January by commercial operators. Last November, MidPen decided that if it was going to spend several million dollars repairing and rebuilding the facility, it would be best to have programs for the general public run by a nonprofit.

The partnership between Midpen and Friends will create an array of programs for the greater public. Schools, senior-living associations, and veteran organizations will be able to attend workshops in the meadow. Nature-enthusiasts can enjoy miles of newly opened trails on docent-led tours, and over time, horse therapy, riding lessons, and summer camps will be included. The rural pastures and forest setting will also provide opportunities for birding, painting, yoga, and journaling classes. Teens and young adults can volunteer as assistants and will be invited to attend lectures on climate change and environmental sustainability. With all these possibilities, Bear Creek Stables will be a gateway from urban to rural, from stress to calm, and from disconnection to community.

Bringing this new vision for Bear Creek Stables to fruition will take substantial investment. Years of deferred maintenance require Friends of Bear Creek Stables to raise funds and trigger the \$6 million investment planned by Midpen. Friends' nonprofit 501(c)(3) status will enable the reinvestment of all revenue and donations back into facility development and programs so that free, subsidized, and fee-based opportunities are available.

Help us grow Bear Creek Stables into an education center that meets the needs of our community now and for generations to come. Thank you for your support.



**From left, Rick Parfitt, Nancy Cole, Melany Moore, and Jenny Whitman. Rick is accepting a check for \$20,000 from Melany Moore to kick off fundraising for Bear Creek Stables.**

## Heartworm Disease

Fahimeh Zibae, D.V.M.

In the last month, Summit Veterinary Hospital has confirmed three cases of active heartworm infection in local dogs. As the mosquito population in our area rises, so does the risk of heartworm infection in our beloved pets.

The mosquito plays an essential role in the heartworm life cycle. Adult female heartworms living in an infected dog, fox, or coyote produce microscopic baby worms that circulate in the bloodstream. When a mosquito bites an infected animal, it picks up these baby worms, which develop and mature into infective-stage larvae over a period of 10 to 14 days. When the infected mosquito bites another animal, the larvae are deposited onto the surface of the animal's skin and enter the new host through the mosquito's bite wound. Once inside a new host, it takes approximately six months for the larvae to mature into adult heartworms.

These long, slender worms live in the pulmonary arteries, and occasionally within the heart, and can measure up to a foot in length. In cats, heartworm disease primarily causes lung disease. In dogs, they can cause substantial damage to the heart. Prevention and early detection are crucial.

Heartworm preventatives are prescribed by your veterinarian and come in oral, topical, and injectable forms. Blood tests for heartworm infections are recommended yearly for all pets over seven months. If your pet has tested positive for heartworms, your veterinarian will discuss the treatment options available.