As usual, there are a million things going on at Healing with Horses Ranch. It is easy to say that my job is never boring! I am so excited about the growth that we are experiencing. In the month of June alone, we started 13 new students! With that growth, I am happy to announce that Libby Hallett is now working here full-time! We also have 4 instructors-in-training that hope to go through certification in August. Keep your fingers crossed! The new covered arena is coming at just the right time! In fact, it is being unloaded as I type! Please be patient with our growth!

Libby and Crystal have been busy working on horse show preparations. Our conditioning team has been busy desensitizing the horses to the new obstacles that John has been making! I hope you can come see what we do on Sunday, July 2nd from 9-noon.

Elyse and Cari have been so busy getting ready for the Barn Bash on Aug 18th. Samantha Lee and the Family Tree will be entertaining us. Our live Auction and our Silent Raffles are simply amazing. We have Disney tickets, Caribbean vacation packages, artwork, jewelry, and so much more! I hope you can make it and help us grow!
Summertime

Summertime means that it is hot hot hot! We have been taking advantage of the heat and started taking the horses into the creek to cool off and for us to have a little fun! Dawn thinks that she’s in heaven when she is chin deep with the cool water swirling around her!

But summertime also means July 4th celebrations and fireworks! I can’t stress enough to please be mindful of your animals and pets as this can be a highly stressful time for them. Make sure that you keep your four-legged family safe during all of the celebrations. At the ranch, we make sure that perimeter fencing is all safe and keep the horses in big pastures so that they can get to where they perceive it is safe. The dogs stay indoors and the cats stay in the barn. **Remember safety first!**
The Conditioning Team

Dude - Born 3/26/2001 in Oklahoma. He is a registered Quarter Horse - Ima Specific. Dude and his lineage go back to Impressive. He is big and beautiful and loves his job. He is very intuitive with our students. He will occasionally test our volunteers and bulldoze his way past you but we are working on calming his nervous energy.

Lately, Dude has been exhibiting signs similar to horses that have Ulcers. His flank sensitivity and pushiness, his stall issues, etc... Ulcers in horses can be caused by a number of things and can affect a few different areas of the gut. We started him on Omeprazole and will re-evaluate after the horse show but he certainly seems to be feeling better.

One type of Ulcer (ESGUS) affects the upper third of the stomach and is believed to occur when the mucosal lining becomes damaged, likely by bacteria, parasites or a constant barrage of stomach acid. It is particularly susceptible to damage as it lacks the protective mechanisms to defend its mucosal lining from gastric acid.

Risk factors that could be associated with Dude could be a type of grain, sporadic rigorous exercise or just nerves. Classic symptoms include: poor behavior and under-performance

A few Possible treatments: Omeprazole, Ranitidine, Antacids and/or a nutritional digestive supplement.

Less frequent type of Ulcer (EGGUS) causes the integrity of the mucosal lining to deteriorate, its natural defensive mechanisms to gastric acid are also challenged – leading to the development of inflammation and lesions.

Risk factors could include long-term use of NSAIDs, such as Previcox or Bute, Fast exercise on fewer days of the week. It is important to remember that EGGUS can present regardless of the intensity of exercise, or even in a horse that isn’t frequently exercised.

Classic Symptoms include: Resistance under saddle, Irritability and other changes in attitude

A few Possible treatments: Omeprazole, Mucosal protectants, Antibiotics and/or a Nutritional digestive supplement.

Gastric Ulcers May Be Accompanied by Hindgut Ulcers which are harder but not impossible to diagnose.

Risk factors include overuse of NSAIDs, parasite burden, or hindgut acidosis.

Symptoms include Resistance under saddle, Irritability and other changes in attitude, Lack of energy and stamina, Behavior indicating discomfort around the flanks, often characterized by a dislike of brushing/blanketing, intermittent or acute Diarrhea.

The hindgut is huge and vital to the horse’s digestive process and overall health. Treatments for Hindgut are based on finding the true cause which will have to be determined by a veterinarian.

Although all types of ulcers may present in similar ways, the treatment for each is different — so it’s critical to know what all you’re dealing with, and how to prevent it in the future.

Libby comes to the ranch with a vast array of horse experience and has gleefully taken on the role of Conditioning Team Manager. With her knowledge and experience, we will be able to better manage the on-going training of our amazing horses!

In order to ensure that our horses are getting the kind of schooling that best suits them and the needs of our students, we are in the process of restructuring the conditioning team and are planning to add an "Advanced Level" to address the horses that need more technical riding. We are also be establishing specific tasks that the horses need schooling on (example: turn on the haunches, collected trot).

So for those of you that are on the conditioning team, you will soon be getting more information. For those interested in joining the conditioning team, talk to Libby to schedule your conditioning team test.

Thank you for doing such a great job working with our horses. We appreciate you giving time to help us keep them in shape!
Vaulting

Vaulting is a sport that falls under the umbrella of equestrian activities that can best be described as gymnastics on horses. Vaulting fits into the horse-world as both an internationally recognized competitive discipline and as an engaging and potentially therapeutic activity for children and adults. We have been using the basic vaulting maneuvers at the Ranch to challenge our riders by practicing balance, trust and focus. While working the horses on a lunge line, which is a long lead rope that allows the horse to move in a large circle around the horse-handler, the rider performs a series of poses aboard the horse. These poses include kneeling on the horse, laying sideways draped over the horse’s back, and even standing up while the horse is walking. Although some of these maneuvers seems scary and intimidating to try at first, our students have found it exciting and empowering to learn how to trust their equine partners and their own bodies in this new, challenging way. Vaulting also serves as a method through which to enrich our horses’ mental stimulation by asking them to work with our riders in a different capacity. This fun and impactful activity had been a wonderful addition to our lesson program and we are excited to be able to encourage our riders to give it a try!

Body Clipping

If you’ve had the chance to hang out at the Ranch recently, you may have noticed that a couple of our equines, Holly and Sweet Pea, have gotten a haircut. We call the technique of shaving a horse’s hair coat “body clipping” and it’s a grooming method that has a variety of purposes. Horse’s coats go through a few cycles throughout the year and their bodies know when to switch gears according to how much sunlight hits their optic nerves during the day. In the summer, when the days are long and hot, their coats are short and sleek, allowing for optimal cooling and evaporation of sweat. In the fall, as the days grow shorter, their bodies prepare for cold weather by beginning to generate a longer, thicker coat. During winter, they maintain this coat and it does a great job of keeping them warm and snug. In the springtime, as the heat creeps back in and the days begin to lengthen again, their shaggy winter layer sheds off bit by bit. In Holly’s case, she does a great job of growing a heavy winter coat but due to her elderly age and possible slowing down of her pituitary gland (that’s what tells her body if she’s warm or cold), Holly was having trouble shedding out into her summer look, so we gave her a hand. As for Sweet Pea, donkeys can tend to have a thicker coat than horses but all that hair is not practical under the sweltering Texas sun so we opted to give him a trim! Body clipping is also a popular way to keep horses that compete in shows throughout the winter months slick and shiny but it’s important to keep in mind that if you clip a horse during winter, you have to help protect them from the elements by using horse blankets. Body clipping can be used for aesthetic, medical and practical purposes but it’s important to learn the tricks of the trade from someone experienced and always make sure your horse has been properly desensitized!
Fernanda grew up in the Southwest Valley in Brownsville, TX, and moved to Austin with her sisters in 2000. They chose Austin to experience life in a bigger city and also more diversity. Fernanda is the second oldest of 6 and has 4 sisters and 1 brother. As sisters go, they are the best of friends but during an occasional squabble, her brother served as a great mediator!

In her professional life, Fernanda has been a realtor for the past 9 years and has really seen the market grow and change. In her personal life, she has always made volunteering a priority. She drove by the ranch many times before finally stopping by to check it out. She completed the volunteer training class in early April of 2017 and has been very involved ever since. She helps with approximately 5 lessons on a weekly basis, helps on the feed team and is prepping to eventually try out for the conditioning team!

She definitely has a soft spot for several of the horses at HHR. Chocolate because of his calm presence, Coolman because he is just sweet and Levi because of his soft heart, she says "he is such a gentle giant".

Her advice to anyone that is considering volunteering at Healing with Horses Ranch is "just get there one day". She says "there are so many opportunities to help at the ranch and in a busy world, you will enjoy the calm"!

**"We are so very glad that you are a part of the volunteer team at HHR Fernanda! You are always willing to jump into any situation and not afraid to learn and try new things. Thank you for all that you do at the ranch"**

Fernanda Gonzalez