

Take Flight Farms

Where Horses Make a Difference

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Contact Gale Faltin
Executive Director (402) 930-3037

Take Flight Farms Announces the Arrival of Smoke the Donkey!

OMAHA, Nebraska – Take Flight Farms and Wounded Warriors Family Support are pleased to announce the arrival of Smoke the Donkey from Iraq. Several Military officers, government officials, foreign journalists and other individuals from multiple countries have contributed to the effort to bring Smoke nearly 7,000 miles to America.

The person who was pivotal in this effort is retired Colonel John Folsom whose unit embraced Smoke as one of their own when they found him malnourished in the Iraqi desert in 2008. Col. Folsom, founder of a support group for Military families, Wounded Warriors Family Support, spearheaded the effort to designate Smoke a U.S. therapy animal.

Take Flight Farms utilizes the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association's (EAGALA) model for its mental health services. EAGALA has almost 4,000 members in 38 countries across the world, and requires licensed mental health professionals and equine specialists to undergo a stringent certification process as well as uphold the highest quality mental health practices. Take Flight's programs integrate the evidenced based practices and programs already supported within the Military. With this approach, Take Flight is able to create individualized, meaningful experiences for service members and their families, while upholding a solid clinical foundation for this work.

Equines involved in mental health services at Take Flight Farms, as Smoke is destined, are free to be themselves in sessions. They are not limited by equipment or riding gear, as riding of the horses is not involved. Horses and donkeys roam freely with participants to provide valuable feedback to licensed mental health specialists and equine specialists.

Take Flight Farms was incorporated in 2002 and is one of only six Distinguished Program members of EAGALA in the world. Take Flight's Executive Director, Gale Faltin, is the Chair of the Military Task Force for EAGALA, working to build relationships with military and government officials across Nebraska and the U.S. to educate and provide Equine Assisted Psychotherapy services for military personnel and their families.

Smoke will spend the next several weeks at an undisclosed location, acclimating to his new home and enjoying some well-deserved rest. In time, he will join the team of equines, mental health professionals and equine specialists at Take Flight Farms to provide quality mental health services for military personnel and their families.