Seven veterans (ages 23-31), visiting Jackson with the Wounded Warrior Project, rode with JHTRA on September 23. These men were injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. One soldier just returned from the front lines two months prior. Arriving from CA, TX, WY, and OH, some of their disabilities included leg amputations, traumatic brain injuries, and post traumatic stress disorder.

I would like to share with you that morning’s ride, which took place at Snake River Ranch:

Beautiful weather!
The staff hauled the horses to Snake River Ranch (SRR) at 8:00AM to be groomed and for tack put on the assigned horse. Horses were assigned based on the riders’ disabilities. The veterans met at the arena for helmets. We were concerned that they wouldn’t want to ride with helmets, but was just the opposite. One said, “I can’t afford to have anymore brain injuries.” We shuttled to SRR and took the men on a trail ride that lasted about an hour. It was a huge success. The staff and volunteers made sure the riders were safe and having fun. In the middle of our ride we came upon a bull elk bugling, twenty plus cow elk and three bachelors (all with huge racks). The veterans were elated. We observed these animals for some time. We then headed for the bank of the Snake River. As soon as we got on the bank, we saw the elk swimming across the river. We turned to head down the river bank when a huge bald eagle flew right over the veterans…as if to say thank you. He spread his wings and landed on a branch twenty feet away with another eagle. The eagles watched the men and then flew off. We could not have asked for a better experience. Of course the veterans were grateful and expressed how much fun they had. How nice it was to make them feel good.
Our fees to riders cover only 10% of our expenses. We are a 501 (c)(3) non profit funded mainly through donations which are tax deductible. Please consider a 2008 year end gift using the enclosed envelope.

Volunteer Appreciation by Kelcy Smith

This year’s Volunteer Appreciation Party at the Calico was a hit! There were several new awards created with lots of thought and care given to very commendable, worthy and admirable volunteers. The trinity of awards was named in honor of JHTRA’s three founders: Robin Lightner, Dede McDonald, & Elaine Infanger. It is a huge honor to receive one of the trinity awards because they were molded after these very impressive women. All of our volunteers were so incredible this year and deserve all the praise in the world. I can only hope that some of the small recognition we gave to them will be even more of a reason to continue with our team: Robin Lightner Award: Shannon Brown, Dede McDonald Award: Emily Bain, Elaine Infanger Award: Ellen Winkler, Volunteer of the Year: AJ Albright, Vaulting Volunteer Award: Christi Biolchini, Family Volunteer Award: Abby & Emily Smith & Raylene & Marty Scholtens, Rookie Volunteer Award: Danielle Petriccione, Volunteer Couple of the Year: Sue & Steve Morriss, Volunteer Attachment Award: Jessie Aufderheide, Jasmine DeShaw, Bobbie Laughlin, Best Emergency Reaction Volunteer: Patty Chapman, Volunteer Smile Award: Wendy Ewing, Endearing Volunteer Award: Shaun Tonozzi, Generous Spirit Volunteer Award: Daryl Hensel, Stoic Volunteer Award: Caroline Talbot, Staff Supportive Volunteer Award: Lee Allison, Mind-Reader Volunteer Award: Lisa Ryan. Congratulations to all of the volunteers and thank you again for such an amazingly successful year!

For a complete list of volunteer opportunities with JHTRA please go to our website jhtra.org or call Kelcy, JHTRA volunteer Coordinator, at 733-1374. An informative three hour training is required. Please call for a training date.
2008 Stomping the Divots

This year’s Stomping the Divots was a huge success. After our guests enjoyed a lively game of polo, cocktails, and a therapeutic riding demonstration the silent and live auction delivered the largest amount of money since our polo event started six years ago. The money raised at this fundraiser makes up almost half of JHTRA’s annual budget. With your support our association netted $207,000. Please mark your calendars for 2009 Stomping the Divots.

Saturday, August 1, 2009

Toby Named 2008 Horse of the Year
Written by Nealy Angell

As a class is coming to an end, a small white and sandy brown horse begins to ‘talk.’ The small rider, who is incredibly shy, comes to life verbally and responds back to him. This is usually the character of this small horse. He is distinguished among the other horses because he is the “horse that talks.” Usually at the close of each lesson, when the riders give their thank yous to the volunteers and horse, Toby is giving his with a subtle nicker.

Toby is a 13 year old Haflinger cross. 2008 was his first year in the program. Tom Laughlin spotted this priceless gem in Arizona and we were fortunate to have the funds to purchase him. Toby is a perfect match for our independent riders. He is honest and takes care of his riders. For a rider that is ready to canter for the first time, Toby is the first choice among riders and instructors for the job. Instructors trust that Toby will make this a positive experience for the rider while being safe. During his debut at Special Olympics in Casper, Toby’s good looks and outstanding performance were recognized by many other therapeutic riding programs. Way to make us proud, Toby!!!
Thank you to all of our wonderful donors and volunteers. With your support JHTRA met the 2008 goals: we started our riding season earlier in the winter, purchased and implemented new donor software, and launched our new website. In preparation for 2009’s economy, JHTRA will not hire another full time instructor, as planned. We look forward to serving the special needs of Jackson’s community in 2009.