



## 2018 Annual Appeal

Hello Friend of Freedom Farm,

This is one of my favorite times of the year! A very special time when we share one of the many miracles which happened this year. The Annual Appeal blesses Freedom Farm with financial support for our horses, teens, veterans and scholarships for our riders.

**Behr's Story** Behr loves to ride! When on his horse Sara or Lily he never stops smiling! One of his favorite words he has learned is "bumpy". As soon as his horse moves faster, his giggle has the entire arena laughing. (See Behr in action riding 'Lily' in a video at [www.freedomfarmmn.org](http://www.freedomfarmmn.org).)



His mom Kelly shares...

Behr (age 5) has a devastating disease called Lennox Gastaut Syndrome (LGS) that leaves him dealing with multiple daily seizures and pretty severe developmental delays. In April 2017, he had brain surgery to help with seizures that ultimately led to a stroke that left him paralyzed on his right side. We decided to have Behr start riding at Freedom Farm, initially to help strengthen that right side and his core muscles. We wanted him to have 'physical' therapy that was fun and motivating to him. When Behr started riding he was nonverbal and not using his right hand/arm at all. We did not consider that he may start talking (and more) as we were mainly concerned with regaining as much use as we could with his muscles and balance. **However, we quickly learned that horse therapy was going to provide motivation for much more than that!**



The very first day that Behr sat up on Sara, his horse, and Susie asked him to say "walk on" his little voice made the "wa" sound. We had never heard that out of him until that moment. **It seemed a miracle might already be taking place.** As weeks progressed, Behr started saying more and more words, phenomenal for a child that was nonverbal for years. And that number is growing every day! Behr can now fully say "walk on" as well as "horse" "neigh" "go" and many more. But can you imagine my astonishment when my little boy started counting just a couple days ago?? I had NO IDEA he could count. I was talking to one of my other children and I said 'eight'. And then our little Behr's sweet voice piped up and said "nine, ten". We all looked at each other kind of shocked. So I said 'one' and Behr said "two" so I said 'three' and he said "four"... you get the picture. Then I thought hmmm... while he is riding, Susie has them stand in the stirrups and count, or let go of the reins and count, and now suddenly Behr counts... not a coincidence! He is learning so much and saying new things every single day.

We have seen extraordinary improvement in his balance and strength. He uses his right hand when brushing and petting his horse, and at home I am seeing him use his right hand a lot more. He uses it to help throw and catch a ball. To pull or break things apart and even to wipe his eyes after splashing in the tub. This was an arm he did not use even a year after the stroke and he is suddenly using it quite a bit. The doctors told us it never will be 100%, but it's starting to be functional and this is another miracle for us! Behr is a true warrior all on his own and we've been blown away with the improvements he's made since he started riding this year.



**Truly thankful and blessed!**  
**Behr Vogelpohl Family**

Your gift is important and will support the following:

- Horse Care
- Rider Scholarships
- At-Risk Teens
- Veterans

This year there are 3 ways to give.

- ⇒ Use the return envelope and **mail your check**
- ⇒ Online [www.freedomfarmmn.org](http://www.freedomfarmmn.org)
- ⇒ TEXT TO GIVE: Text 'riding' to 91999

**The Annual Appeal goal is \$35,000!** With your generous gift, the Circle will continue to grow. Together we can and do change lives... each and every day.



With Love and God's Blessings,

*Susie*

Susie Bjorklund

### Freedom Farm Staff

Susie Bjorklund Sue Claussen Janine Knutson Sarah Olson Corrie Stevens

### Equine Staff



Bear Candy Cassie Dakota Echo Honky Tonk Josey Lily Rebel Sara Stella Moon

It is Freedom Farm's mission to *enrich lives by partnering with the unique attributes of the horse to improve mobility, build confidence and encourage personal growth in children and adults with physical, mental and emotional challenges.*

