

November 21, 2011

Conservation Commission of the Town of Acton

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing today to thank you for your past support of Hybrid Farm, 217 Nagog Hill Road, Acton, MA 01720-3227 and to ask for your continued support. Hybrid Farm provides all its riders with hands on experience in the management and care of horses. At Hybrid, children not only learn to ride horses, they learn to work together to care for the animals and to learn the personality of each horse. Hybrid fosters bonds of friendship among the students and bonds of compassion with the horses.

Hybrid Farm was chosen by the nationally recognized non-profit United States Pony Clubs (USPC) as a USPC Riding Center. As a Riding Center, Hybrid Farm enables children to be members of the USPC and to progress through the levels of horsemanship and equestrian knowledge. The mission of the USPC is to "develop character, leadership, confidence and a sense of community in youth through a program that teaches the care of horses and ponies, riding and mounted sports." As a member of the Hybrid Farm Pony Club Riding Center, my daughter directly benefits from this wonderful organization. We feel fortunate that Hybrid continues to offer this in depth program covering all aspects of horse care as well as development of riding ability.

In addition to being a USPC Riding Center, Hybrid Farm offers many other opportunities including their summer camp, lessons for Girl Scouts earning merit badges, as well as individual lessons. Hybrid is a vibrant, worthy farm benefiting hundreds of children. I respectfully ask the Commission to continue its support of Hybrid Farm. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ehlers

81 Farmers Cliff Road, Concord, MA 01742



USPC®

The United States Pony Clubs, Inc.

The Kentucky Horse Park, 4041 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511-8483
859/254-7 669(PONY) Fax 859/233-4652 www.ponyclub.org

September 8, 2010

Rita-Marie McConnon
Hybid Farm
217 Nagog Hill Rd
Acton, MA 01720-3227

Dear Rita:

On behalf of the Board of Governors and the members of the United States Pony Clubs, I want to thank you for your gift of \$280.00 to the 2010 Annual Fund restricted to the National Youth Congress.

Since 1954, USPC has provided a program that teaches riding, mounted sports and the care of horses and ponies, thereby developing responsibility, moral judgment, leadership and self-confidence in our youth across the country. With your generous giving and overall support, USPC continues to provide top-quality educational programs for more than 11,000 members in 625 clubs across the country.

Your contribution is greatly appreciated and makes possible the success of our members and graduates.

Sincerely,

Marian
Marian Wahlgren
Development Director

Thank you - Louisa had wonderful things to say about your facility and program -

NOTE: In accordance with the Internal Revenue Code [Section 170 (F) (8)], the above donor has received no goods or services in exchange for this donation.

SPORTS



Advanced Games team photo, from left: Aly Werth, Liza Beerman, Caroline Kielar, Rachel Ehlers, and Liza Werth. COURTESY PHOTO



Central New England Senior D Quiz team photo, from left: Nicole Kula, Maddie Carey, Isabella Caruso, and Gina Koss-Stephany. COURTESY PHOTO

HORSEBACK RIDING

Good week for Hybrid Farm

The Hybrid Farm Pony Club had a successful week competing in the United States Pony Club Championships at the Virginia Riding Center in Lexington, Va.

After winning the USPC Central New England Regional event in June, the Hybrid Farm Pony Club Advanced Games team, Shock Wave, was invited to represent the Region at the USPC Championships July 29-Aug. 2. The team's riders include Adrienne Beerman, Liza Dawley, Rachel Ehlers, Caroline Kielar and Aly Werth. Riding against other teams over three days and 24 races, Shock Wave

placed fourth overall and was awarded first place in horse management.

Hybrid Farm Pony Club members Maddie Carey, Nicole Kula, and Isabella Caruso as well as Gina Koss-Stephany from the Apple Valley Pony Club competed at the USPC Championships for the Central New England Region's Senior D division quiz team. After three days of classroom, barn, written, and oral examinations they placed first of 17 teams in their division. Over 500 competitors from 26 regions participated in this year's USPC Championships in Lexington, Va.

SPORTS NOTEBOOK

hockey clinic

BASEBALL

DI

11/22/2011

Dear Commission of Acton,

I am writing to you on behalf of my second home, Hybrid Farm, and second Mother, Rita McConnon. My name is Alyssa Piper. I am a twenty year old who, this summer, was struggling to find my way in life. I actually left my college (WPI) and my first career path choice (veterinarian) to try out a few new things. The first new thing on my list was something (I had no idea what) with horses. Ever since I could remember, I was fascinated by horses. I woke up under my pony bed spread and watched Me Little Pony first thing. Then, after having breakfast with my favorite pony-painted bowl, I'd have my best friend over and we'd prance around the yard acting like ponies. My fascination got to the point where my parents gave in and gave me a few lessons, but I always ached for more. I am completely at peace and happy with all when I am around them. I'm sure you could relate to that with one thing or another.

Anyhow, this summer after I pulled myself out of my college, I went to the yellow pages and wrote down the names and numbers of 25 different barns in the area. As soon as I was done with that, I brought my list and the phone out to the back yard and I called each and every single one of them, asking for an apprenticeship to learn how to give horseback riding lessons and to see how the barn facility is run. To this day, Hybrid Farm is the only barn that was courteous enough to call me back. Not only that, but they called back thirty minutes later and scheduled a time to meet for the next day. I was absolutely thrilled!!! You could say I checked off the first part of the list called "Dream Come True."

So, the next day, after plugging in the address to the barn into my GPS and driving through absolutely beautiful backroads and farms, I got to Hybrid Farm. It was in the middle of a camp session, and there were little kids everywhere!! Some were in orange shirts and some weren't. So, I found the eldest looking person and she said Rita was inside. And, long story short, once she came outside and we got started talking, we talked for four hours, almost like we were long lost sisters or something. (And as I've found, many many people feel the same way!) Second part of the list called "Dream Come True"--check! The point is, though, she and everyone there took the time and had the heart to listen and to be there for me in a time when I was truly in need. And it's not just because I'm special or something (though she makes a point to tell me almost every day haha). She does that for every living thing that comes through there, whether it be a person or a horse. And, being a horse person and after going to many many different barns over the past few years, that is rare. Rarer than rare. Most places are all about the money and the time and have their noses too stuck in the air to notice you, let alone embrace you and teach you. At Hybrid, you can go brush a horse and walk around without worrying about being charged... Time stands still as you look around the 300 year old barn and just let the joy of everyone around you soak in... And, as I've already pointed out, everyone has open arms, no matter who you are.

If it wasn't for Rita and for Hybrid Farm, who knows what I would've done or where I would've ended up. Truth is, she and her farm gave me a lot of hope, not just for my own dreams, but for humanity. They are true gifts on this earth, and, I'm sure I can speak for hundreds of people, we do not want to lose them. If Rita has to down size to about half, that means half of my friends have to ride somewhere else. We already have a hard time enough saying who can come to camp and who can't. They have to apply for goodness sakes! She's already told me that if this goes through, she'll have to completely shut down because no one has the heart to say, "Yes, you can come here, and no, you can't." My heart broke when she said this. So, we are asking with the full sincerity of our hearts, please consider other alternatives to down sizing. I will do anything, and I know everyone else would as well.

Thank you for your time,
Alyssa Piper
Chelmsford, MA

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in response to the recent debate regarding the lease renewal of Hybrid Farm's conservation land use. I wanted to express to the committee my views on this subject as a employee and client of Hybrid Farm.

Being at Hybrid Farm for 5 years, I have had the pleasure of being a part of this 'Miracle Farm'. I say this with no exaggeration. The services provided are so special in many ways.

If you have had the chance to walk through the barn and property on any given day then you are familiar with the consistent laughter, learning and love that comes from this property. People of all ages are given the opportunity to learn in a safe and experienced environment. Young teens are given a place to call their second home instead of walking the streets and getting into trouble that teens are so vulnerable of. A cancer survivor is given the chance to connect with her daughter and put aside the fight they have been struggling with. Adults are able to fulfill a dream of riding they were never able to do. Mentally and physically disturbed children are taught in an environment where they can feel safe and confident. Sponsorships are given to the young adults that may not be able to afford college. Birthdays are made a day never forgotten. Pony Club teens are taught responsibility and life long lessons. Young children are given a space to run on land with animals instead of sidewalks and parking lots. Adults are given a chance to de stress and continue an experience from years before. The experiences continue...

Without renewal of this lease I would loose my employment with Hybrid Farm. I am a single parent of two children trying to survive on the income solely from this job. Hybrid has been extremely flexible with my family schedule were in many other work environments I would be terminated. For instance, if my 2 month old infant were to spike a fever at 12pm on a day prior to my scheduled work day. Rita's response would be: "Ok, I will find a sub for your classes. Please take care of your boy and don't worry about today. Give him a kiss for me." Would any other employer bend to these needs? I need Hybrid for my livelihood. With the economy the way it is I do not think I could find another job to support my family.

My 6 year old son, Cameron, has also had the opportunity of experiencing Hybrid Farm. Having an abusive father, it has been a tough road of recovery

for Cameron. He was full of negative and overly hyper behavior. Having the chance to run on the farm, participate in summer camp, join in lessons, go on trail rides and have the love of the counselors around him, has contributed to Cameron's 110% improvement.

Hybid Farm also gave my family the opportunity to rescue a 11 year old Quarter Horse gelding. "Diamond" was in a state of disaster and despair. He was standing on 3 feet of packed in manure, was not up to date on his immunizations, was extremely underweight/emaciated and had not seen the light of day for approx. 2 years. "Diamond" is now on his own road to recovery as a school horse that gets consistent work to repair his muscles, good quality feed/water to put him back to health and general care to keep him in good health. If you had seen this animal before coming to Hybid it would have been thought that it was too late to save him. Now he is bright eyed and healthy after given the chance to be a part of Hybid.

Honestly, I could write a 100 page letter in response to the recent debate. However, without experiencing Hybid itself I'm afraid my words would drag on with no understanding. Please try to take in consideration the people involved with this farm and the people who will find Hybid in the future. I ask you to consider renewing the lease agreement so that the miracle of Hybid can continue the way it has for 31 years.

Sincerely,

Andrea Iodice

November 20, 2011

125 Glezen Lane
Wayland, MA 01778

To the Conservation Commission of the Town of Acton,

I am writing on behalf of Rita McConnon and Hybid Farm Inc. I first began riding at Hybid Farm in 1998 and immediately fell in love with Rita, the horses, and the feeling of being at the barn. At the time I was shy and very timid. Learning to ride horses was not only fun, but it also taught me independence and most important self-confidence. I grew as a rider as well as a person during my ten years riding and working at Hybid Farm.

Being a part of Hybid Farm is like having a second family. Rita and her instructors have always been welcoming and encouraging. They teach discipline and responsibility on top of teaching people of all ages to ride horses. Horseback riding is more than just a sport. It is therapeutic for everyone and also can really help children focus and connect with nature. Hybid Farm has opened their doors to so many groups of people, offering unforgettable experiences to all. Working as a counselor and eventually as the "Barn Manager," I saw how Hybid Farm touched the lives of hundreds of children.

In addition to a place for the children, Hybid Farm is a haven for horses of all kinds. Rita is the most caring and generous person I have ever met. She takes in horses that may not have had any other chance. These horses grow and thrive under the care of Rita and her faithful and passionate students. The horses are happy and in turn they make the children happy. The horses are there for children to love, they teach responsibility, and are just a joy to be around.

Hybid Farm is a place that no one could ever forget. Even after leaving for college and since graduating moving out of Acton, Hybid Farm is the one place that I will always come back to. I cannot imagine taking this experience away from any child. As a member of the Hybid Farm community I cannot fathom having to cut back the number of horses, which would inevitably deprive children of the Hybid Farm experience.

I hope that you can see what an integral part of my life Hybid Farm has been and ultimately decide to let Hybid Farm run and continue changing lives as it has been doing for so many years.

Sincerely,

Kara MacNeill

November 15, 2011

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in the hopes that I can adequately communicate some part of what Hybrid Farm means to me personally and professionally. I struggle to write this letter because it is a daunting task to try to put on one small sheet of paper all that Rita McConnon does each day for the kids, for the animals, and for her employees.

I have known Rita since I moved to Boston for a teaching position in 2004. I began working at Hybrid as a riding instructor shortly thereafter on a part-time basis. I was immediately struck by Rita's warmth towards every child who came to the barn. Although winters were cold, subsequent moves made the commute difficult, and I had a full-time job which paid my bills, I never considered walking away from the few hours of teaching at Hybrid each week. This barn is a warm and happy environment, and I was (and am) proud to be a part of the best part of a kid's day. For the past year and a half, teaching riding lessons at Hybrid has become my full-time job. If Rita is forced to reduce her program, she will need to reduce the hours she can provide for her teaching and barn staff: I and several very hard-working and committed women would find it difficult, if not impossible, to make ends meet.

Although this is a serious concern for me, I had to be reminded that the loss of income would be a terrible blow (and it truly would), as my first thoughts were of everything else that would be lost if Rita no longer had the freedom to operate Hybrid as she currently does. Rita has rescued several horses from abusive situations (some to become favorite school horses, others only to have a few weeks or months of compassionate care at the end of hard lives), and taken others when their owners could no longer afford to care for them. Each horse or pony is the favorite of at least several children, and I can't imagine who we could send away. Unlike many of the lesson programs I knew as a child growing up, Rita respects and cares for each horse that has given its time to her- horses who suffer injury or illness are afforded the best care possible, those who do not make a full recovery are retired with dignity.

Most importantly, Hybrid Farm is a place where children learn the importance of empathy and of community, and develop a strong sense of self-worth. It is a place where kids who are less fortunate find a place full of friendly faces (where more often than not, Rita waits to greet them with a smile, a hug, a word of encouragement). I have seen kids with emotional problems set themselves willingly to the tasks put before them, and girls with learning difficulties who eagerly attack new problems or challenges in an effort to better work with their favorite horse. Every child who comes into the barn is told that he or she is a valuable and loved person.

I was asked to write about what Hybrid means to me. To me, it is a great job with a kind employer whom I consider myself lucky to count as a friend, and students who can cheer me on the worst of days. But to me, the value of this place and this program go far beyond what it makes of my day. This little barn, its people, and its ponies make a difference in so many lives- no one ever leaves for good. Instructors from years past come back to visit. High school students have their senior pictures taken with their favorite horse. Kids come to the barn on a day they don't ride just to help out. Parents bring their children to ride here as they once did.

Reading through this letter again, my words are inadequate. I am certain however, that many others will say it better, and hope only to be counted as one of the many voices supporting this wonderful program. I thank you for the time you are taking to hear our perspective and respectfully ask that you consider the incredible good work that Rita does. Please ask yourselves whether the limits you would be placing on her ability to continue such work truly be worth the sacrifices you would ask her to make.

Sincerely,

Sarah O'Neill
74 Conwell Ave #2
Somerville, MA 02144

To Whom It May Concern:

Hybid has always been like a second home to me. I have loved horses since I could barely walk, and riding was always a dream of mine. In the third grade, the dream came true, and now- almost eight years later- it still feels like a dream. I can assure you that Hybid has made that dream even better. Without Hybid, I would have missed out on spending time with, and learning from some of the most amazing, thoughtful, generous people on earth. And I am not just saying this because I want Hybid to stay as it is. I do, absolutely, but I have always said this. I have written countless essays and memoirs for school about Hybid, praise just dripping from the pages. And I honestly do not know where I would be right now without Hybid.

When I first began my time at Hybid, I was a relatively shy little third grader. I knew little about horses, but I loved them anyway. They fascinated me; the big powerful beasts who were always so gentle, so beautiful and kind and loving. I quickly began to spend more and more time at the barn, and by the seventh grade, I spent time almost every day there. I went not to ride, although I still look lessons, but I really went simply because I wanted to. I loved it so much. And once I was there, I worked. I would help younger kids how to tack up, getting to see them learn what I had learned not long before. I would spread hay and pick stalls and feed and anything else I could do to help out. I enjoyed the place so much, why wouldn't I give back?

Freshman year, things changed a bit. I had more work, and less time to spend at the barn. But I still cherished the time I could be there. I'd joined Pony Club a few years before, and had gone to Games Rally a few times. This year, though, something was different. My friend told me that she had been talking to some of the other girls in the club about taking Games to the next level. I met with the girls, some of whom I didn't know, and we decided why not try? We planned and planned, trying to find the best way of presenting our idea to our parents and to Rita- the barn had never done something like this before, and we didn't know how it would be received. We talked to her, spelling out our plans for the fees, training, etc., and she agreed. In the months of preparation that followed, we worked hard. We overcame every obstacle that came our way, every person who said we weren't good enough, all thanks to Rita. She had raised us to be confident young girls. We made it to Championships in Virginia that July, and we did very well. We came home with a first place ribbon in horse management, and a fourth place ribbon in riding. Before we left, the chief Horse Management Judge told us that all the judges were impressed at how polite we were, how caring and responsible we were towards our horses. We were surprised, because we were acting just as we were taught to at Hybid. The pride at being from Hybid Farm at that moment was overwhelming.

Now, in junior year with a big ski season in front of me, I am spending less and less time at Hybid. I think about all the friends from different towns that I don't get to see very often anymore and miss it so much. I think of Rita and how amazing it is to be around her, and miss her so much. I will never be gone from Hybid completely, I will always ride and visit, but not as much as I used to. Looking back now, though, I have begun to realize how much of an impact Hybid has had on my

life. It has truly changed me as a person- I would not be who I am today if it was not for the Hybrid community, and Rita. I am so blessed to have them in my life. Hybrid gave me a strong work ethic, the love of helping others (I have been a counselor for 5 years now) and strong morals. I really, really do believe that I would be a lesser person had I not met Rita and the Hybrid community. They will forever be in my heart.

Aside from that, I have been able to see first hand how Hybrid has impacted other young children. Seeing their faces light up the first time they get on a horse is a amazing, and I cannot imagine a world where Hybrid wasn't available to any young child who loves horses as much as I did, and still do.

Hybrid has impacted my life so much; I hope it can continue to impact more.

Regards,
Liza Dawley

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been around horses for most of my life. I have taken countless lessons and frequented many barns and I have never encountered a barn or riding program as family-friendly as Hybrid Farm or a group of lesson ponies that were better suited to their jobs teaching children to ride. There is simply no better place for a youngster to learn to ride and to become acquainted with horses in a safe and fun environment than Hybrid Farm. I came to Hybrid as the mother of a camper and ended up working for Rita McConnon. I was instrumental in starting the Hybrid Farm Pony Club Riding Center because I truly believe in the United States Pony Club program of instruction AND that children should not have to own their own horse in order to participate in pony club. Acton should celebrate the fact that they are home to the largest USPC Riding Center in the country (and possible the world).

Rita values hard work, kindness to animals and each child's individual achievement. She strives to have every child feel good about what they can do. To change anything about Hybrid Farm would be a shame. As it stands, Rita welcomes many young riders who would be denied access at other barns because they don't look the right way or their parents don't have the right amount of money or they don't have their own horse. To cut her program would mean that she would have to start denying access. If you could see the joy and sense of accomplishment that children experience during their time at Hybrid Farm, you would not change one single thing. I am a teacher. A number of the children who come to Hybrid Farm are struggling at school and in other areas of their life. Their accomplishments on the back of a horse and around the horses empowers them and gives them something to feel good about. You will be hurting the children of Acton as well as the surrounding communities if you cut this program. I urge you to reconsider and make a decision for the greater good.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions,

Sara Macaulay

1651 Main St.

Concord, MA 01742

19 November 2011

Georgia Barry, CF

(978) 621-9270

GeorgiaBatHome@Speakeasy.net

To Whom It May Concern,

As a life-long Acton resident, horseman and farrier (horseshoer), I would like to submit a few thoughts in support of my client Rita McConnon, the owner of Hybrid Farm. I have known Rita for years, boarded a horse with her when I was at R.J Grey, and am now at the farm every six to eight weeks to provide hoof care service to all of their horses. From this vantage point, I would like to impress how much of a positive impact Rita has had on so many in this town. Not only does she bring a lot of business to local enterprises (myself included), but her teaching and devotion to her students has taught many how to be self-reliant, self-confident individuals. This is something that I experienced first hand as a young teenager boarding my horse at Hybrid and continue to see in her students every time I am there. My mother, who is an elementary teacher in Acton, can also attest to this, as she is frequently regaled students with stories about Hybrid ponies.

Another point I would like to make is that, because of its proximity to the conservation land, Hybrid is well positioned to provide safe access to trail riding. I know I gained an appreciation for conservation land because I rode on it all the time. Almost every kid who rides at Hybrid has a chance to trail ride. For them to be able to get out of the ring and spend some time in the woods-without having to worry about being run over by cars on the way-is wonderful. Not everyone likes walking, running, skiing or biking and if it takes a horse to get someone outdoors, so be it.

Riding on Nagog Conservation Land I used to see all kinds of animals. Considering the recent increase in wildlife in my own backyard, I can't imagine that there has been a decline anywhere else. I do not know what the exact situation is now, but when I had my horse at Hybrid the fields that the horses kept "mowed" made excellent border habitat. It would be a shame to have these fields tree covered or for the town to have to pay for their upkeep. A horse is no less natural than a lawn mower and we don't let beavers flood forests or let wildfires create new fields anymore. If there are current field management issues I cannot speak directly to them, but I am sure that they can be resolved without hurting either the land or the business. What I do know is that closing Hybrid down will create a big hole in the fibre of this town.

Sincerely,

Georgia Barry, CF

South Acton

November 17,2011

To Whomever It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of Hybrid Farm. I came to be involved at this special place five years ago when my daughter had been asked to set Hybrid up as one of the first Pony Club Riding Centers in the U.S. Shortly after they were chartered, she got offered a job teaching in the equestrian program at the college she graduated from. She was in a quandry as to what would happen to the riding center if she left. She asked me if I would help them out, as both of my children and I had been involved with Pony Club for more than 10 years. Since I believe in the values and lessons that Pony Club teaches and I was missing being around ponies and kids, I agreed. I can not tell you how this special place has filled my life.

I wondered why my daughter chose to work at Hybrid after college. She had been offered jobs at other, fancier places, but she saw a place where kids looked at the horses as a privilege to work with and where the children wanted to learn about taking care of these special animals. There is a great sense of cooperation and an air of acceptance that is not usually found at many riding stables. My children were not so fortunate to have this type of atmosphere when they were riding their horses, but they both felt it when they decided to sell their pony to Rita for her lesson program and when they both worked with the riders at Hybrid.

My kids, now 32 and 27 years old, remind me that I don't need to be out in the rain and snow working with children because they are not involved with Pony Club, but when one of the riders learns a new skill and I see the confidence developing, I get an affirmation that I am in the right place. It does as much for me as the 69 year old woman who is working on her "bucket list" or the eight year old that has found her sport. learned to ride a pony around the ring and then hop it over a six inch "jump".

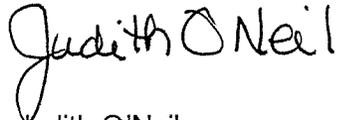
I am VERY proud of my pony club members who have defied the odds and qualified the ponies that no show barn would have to go to Pony Club championships in Virginia and Kentucky. I have been told by the judges that they are a special group of young ladies and they are glad to have them as a part of this National organization. I believe that the attitude and work ethic comes from the top, from Rita McConnon. Every person that comes through those barn doors is welcomed and treated with respect-this is a life lesson that filters down to the staff and the students.

I suggest that before you make a decision to cut this program in half, you talk to some children that have spent hours at Hybrid or their parents that have seen their children blossom while working with the ponies at Hybrid. Spending time and learning to ride horses is something that children can take into adulthood. They will only be able to continue riding if there are open spaces for them to take the horses out to ride in. Not all open space needs to become golf courses or soccer fields. Horses and ponies need open spaces to live and work in. Children

need open spaces to explore..I can't think of a better use of conservation land.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith O'Neil". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Judith O'Neil
CA, Hybrid Farm PC RC
Chelmsford, MA

November 13th, 2011

Dear Conservation Commission,

As I sit down and write begging you to grant Rita McConnon access to the Conservation Land for her horses, and to use the trails, it only brings back positive memories for me. I would like to share them with you.

I was 11 years old when Hybid Farm was introduced to me. I boarded my first pony and quickly learned about responsibility and work. My days started and ended at Hybid on the weekends and during the school week, you could always find me at the barn in the afternoons. Shortly after feeling like Hybid was my home, I was diagnosed with IDDM. (Insulin dependent Diabetes) Hybid Farm then became my "safe haven". I did not feel different from my peers, I temporarily forgot about the horrible disease while at the barn, and felt like a child doing what I loved to do...being with horses.

At 12 years old my parents knew this was not a "stage" I was going through and blessed me with owning my first horse. I took lessons, started showing, and used the trails just to have some "quiet" time with my horse. Sometimes my trail rides would last from dawn to dusk and those memories are still so vivid in my head.

I left Hybid to go to college in 1992 because I wanted to pursue a higher education away from home. Hybid Farm never left my mind or heart....this was the place that made me who I am today.

Fast Forwarding many years later, I got married and had twins. While I was blessed with healthy beautiful children, I secretly hoped that one of my children would have the passion for horses as I did. I knew of the perfect barn.....one of my favorite places on earth.

Though my life seemed great....there was a void in my heart. I soon realized that it was because I was not around horses...the barn...my other home. I decided to take the initiative to call Rita and ask her if there was anything I could do to get my feet back into Hybid Farm's door. Let's just say a miracle or perfect timing happened because she had a job opportunity for me. During this economic crisis, she was able to provide me with a job. A job where I was so happy to go to but also allowed me to be with my children to raise them....I had the best of both worlds!

If Hybrid Farm needs to decrease the number of horses and not be allowed to use the conservation land, I will probably lose my job. Not only has this job given me joy and fulfilled my heart, it has given my family financial support. This has taken a huge stress off my husband and has allowed me to feel part in contributing to family bills.

My daughter has now started riding. Yes, there are many barns in the area where we live, but I drive 40 minutes just to bring her to Hybrid! Hybrid Farm does not concentrate on what others are wearing, how well you ride, where you live, it's a barn filled with knowledge and wonderful families. It gives children the opportunity to build independence, to take on responsibility, gain self-worth and to understand what goes behind taking care of horses. My daughter is in LOVE with Hybrid Farm and I am so excited for her.

I cannot think of a better way to use this land. Horses need to live too and Hybrid horses are lucky to have such a wonderful space to run in.

Please grant Rita what she needs to keep her business running. She is a role model to so many people in her teachings. She is what made Hybrid Farm today.

I look forward to the days when my daughter (7 years old) can tell me about her memories at Hybrid and all of the "magic" that happens.....

Johanna Lewis

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johanna Lewis". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'J' and a long, sweeping tail on the 's'.

Gardner, Mass.

62 Bullard Road
Princeton MA 01541
November 17th, 2011

Conservation Commission
Town of Acton , MA 01720

To whom it may concern,

I am a Pony Club instructor at the wonderful Hybid Farm in Acton, and have been for many years. The farm is a “breath of fresh air” in comparison to other horse barns in the area.

Firstly the horses are very happy, horses are herd animals and at Hybid they are allowed to live outside in a herd. Hybid farm has long been a refuge for horses struggling in less fortunate situations and here they can become content useful creatures again. I, personally, have watched many successful rehabs go from strength to strength. Some of these would otherwise have been on a truck to Canada's slaughter houses as the USA still operates a no kill policy.

Secondly all the children that are able to come here, from all walks of live, love, benefit and blossom from the interaction with these noble creatures. Most riding establishments are geared towards the “well heeled” community and are perhaps not affordable for our girl scouts, at risk youth and nonresidential girls in the area. Hybid farm is very much geared towards the latter.

I feel very strongly that this is not an establishment that we should cut, reduce and put out of business, Hybid farm has a soul and a purpose!

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours Faithfully

Corinne Ashton

Hannah Resnick
22 Eliot Rd
Lexington MA, 02421

Hybid Farm is truly an extraordinary place. On one hot summer day at camp, all the campers and counselors were getting ready to sing our weekly camp song. This week's song was to the tune to "You Belong With Me" by Taylor Swift but the words had been switched to be about the kids lessons, mounted and un-mounted, and to allow the kids to sing about their favorite pony. Rita comes out to hear the surprise and we all burst out into song! "I'm riding 'round the ring with my favorite pony..." then a sudden explosion of names! We all yelled our favorite ponies- from the smallest one to the biggest. We pick up the verse and keep on singing at the top of our lungs with smiles on our faces. The counselors and campers alike were filled with overwhelming joy. I look over to one of the campers and she is belting her little heart out, singing at the top of her lungs: "I can see all the ponies in the side field..." I had never seen any kid so happy, I smiled and she smiled back and that is a smile I will never forget.

That same little girl, only four days earlier was shy and nervous for her first day at camp. On her first morning, I went to her went to her car during drop off and walked her and her mom into the barn. She was shy and nervous but I gained her trust. She had so much fun the first day her mom said she fell asleep on the car ride home. In just one day, she learned to walk, trot, stop and steer in her lesson and she learned how to tack up a horse and clean the stall. The second day she came back to the barn with a huge smile on her face, holding a big bag of carrots and full of hugs and kisses for her first favorite pony Tinkerbelle. That is the beauty of Hybid Farm.

The experience is not unique to this little girl, we have all seen people of all ages and skill level develop themselves, make friends and become more skilled riders. Kids come to Hybid interested in learning to horseback ride and leave loving horses and knowing a great deal about them. We have seen friendships made. From being at the barn since I was seven, I have made such strong friendships. I can easily think of two dozen people that I trust with everything and that I never would have met if it weren't for Hybid Farm. Rita has created a beautiful environment where everyone feels comfortable and belonging. I don't think I could ever find such a welcoming place in all of Massachusetts. To take this barn away would break my heart. I cherish the summers I spend at Hybid. A summer at Hybid is one where a wild imagination is encouraged and for camp, I get to be a superhero one week and a sheriff the next. Every time I go to Hybid, even as a counselor, I am greeted with smiling faces and I know I can be myself there. I love Hybid Farm.

What Hybid means to me....

1. **MY JOB:** First of all, Hybid is my job, my life, my career. I'm an instructor, barn manager, schedule marker and counselor. I started riding at Hybid as a student. As I become older I volunteered as a helper. I helped tack up horses, ran in the rings and mucked stalls. When I was old enough I become a counselor/CIT during camp. From there I started watching lessons, teaching un-mounted and studying for my MA instructor license. After I graduated high school I choice to attend a 3 month instructor training school. This school specialized in therapeutic riding,

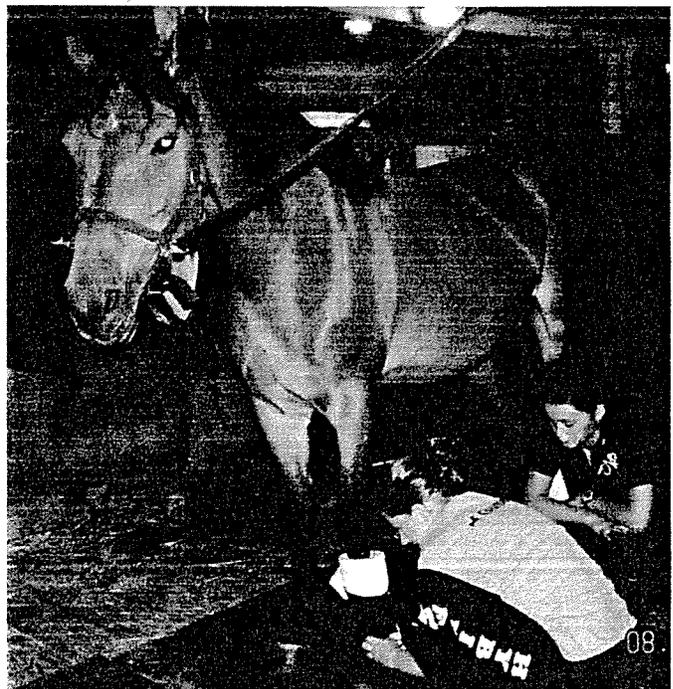


NARHA (North America Riding for the Handicap Association, now called PATH International). After attending to school I got my MA instructors license and also got certified in Centered Riding.

I work 5 to 6 days a week at Hybid, starting around noon on most days. My days normal consist with updating and checking the schedule, bringing in the lesson horses for the day, feeding, managing the helpers and teaching in and out of the rings. I teach all different ages and levels both in the ring and in the barn. I run the Girl Scout badge program

and sometimes ran a birthday party or two. I'm also in charge of running the un-mounted classes for the Horsemanship program. Pony Club is one of my biggest time spenders. In the summer of 2010 I rated and passed the HA rating (the knowledge highest rating that can be passes in Pony Club). I help Pony Clubber's study and prep for upcoming ratings and rallies. I have also been testing riders at the lower levels and been judging at Pony Club rallies. I am currently leasing and taking lesson on a upper level dressage horse and instructor. Not only will this make my riding better but help me be able to teach better too.

I LOVE my job at Hybid. I'm excited to go to work every day. I enjoy working with both the riders and the wonderful ponies. Rita and the other instructors are amazing to work with. If Hybid were to cut the program in half, my job gets cut too. This is my only job and this is the job I want. I use to live in Stow, a 5 minute drive to the barn. Three years ago I moved to Sterling and had to make a choice. Find a new job close to home or drive the 30 minutes every day to get to Hybid. I choose Hybid. This job pays for my car, my gas, my sheep and my pony. This is my only income. I can imagine losing Hybid.





2. **HYBID PONIES:** I have been to a lot of barns, work with a lot of different ponies and there is NOTHING that compares to the wonderful lesson horses and ponies that live at Hybid. Hybid's ponies are happy to do their job. They are safe, kind, trustworthy and good mannered. Each one is different in its own way. Every pony has a chance to shine at Hybid.



My favorite pony was once a Hybid pony. She was owned by a past broader and was put up for sale. I was heartbroken till Hybid brought her. She was under weight, stressed and had other problems but Hybid was willing to give her a chance. Slowly Heavenly has become a healthy happy horse and when I moved to my farm in Sterling I was able to buy her and bring her home. If it weren't for Hybid I don't know what or where she would be now.

3. **PEACE OF MIND:** Whether they know it or not horses are very therapeutic. Many of Hybid riders came from residential schools and have never been near a horse before. The horse help them came out of their shell and try something new and ever scary. Once they have accomplished these goals of controlling 1000 pound animals other goals in life become easier to do. Many of the other riders who came to ride also use the horses as therapy (most riders don't even know it). I have had lessons were riders ask to go on a trail ride because they have had a hard and stressful school week or riders who just want to come and groom their favorite pony because it makes them feel good. Horses will tell you a lot about how your feeling. They never lie.



4. **Education:** Yes Hybid is a riding program, but Hybid is so much more than that. At Hybid the goal is not only to have good riders but riders that can also take good care of their pony. Students at Hybid learn how to brush and tack up their pony correctly before a lesson. In a lesson they learn how to warm up and cool down their pony to prevent injury and also learn how to stretch and strengthen their own bodies to prevent injure too. In the Horsemanship program and in Pony Club riders learn daily care, vet care, tack care and safely handling of each pony. Girls Scout programs came for 2 hours. Within those hours they brush, tack up, ride, clean stalls, learn about basic nutrition, and talk about horse careers.



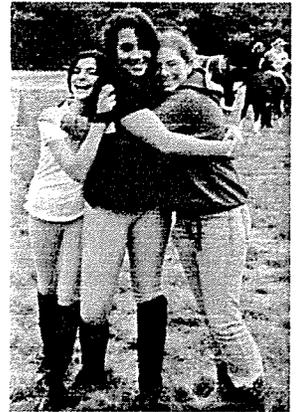
5. **HYBID STUDENTS AND COUNSELORS:** Beside the awesome ponies. Hybrid has awesome

students and the BEST counselors you could ask for. I love teaching each Hybrid student, whether there beginning or advanced, 5 or 15 it doesn't matter. Each student is different. Some are easy to teach and other might be more challenging. Some are there for the riding and other are there for the friendships. During summer camp, Hybrid has camp helper which we like to call counselors/CITs. The counselors are 12 years or older and have been riding at Hybrid for a while. They are some of the hardest, friendliest workers I have ever met. I LOVE them all. Hybrid students don't swear or talk bad about each other. Everyone at the barn is friends.



6. **FRIENDSHIPS:** Everyone is friends at Hybrid. Hybrid is a big family that keeps growing. Some of my BEST friends have been made at the barn. Each person is accepted for who they are. Everyone gets along and works well together. I'm a good example of a Hybrid story. When I was little I can in speech therapy because I was so shy. I never talked, expect when I was at the barn. I was always greeted

by friendly instructors and friends who cheered my on and enjoyed being around. No one at the barn knows me as the shy girl.



I can't imagine life without Hybrid....

Sincerely,

Britt Hallet

Bottany Hunt

I've now worked at Hybrid for two years and just love everything about it! I love all the programs that we offer at the barn. Lessons, camp, school groups, pony club, birthday parties, girl scouts and so many more! We not only teach kids, but we teach people of all ages! At Hybrid they learn so much more than just riding, they learn how to care for the horses and how to be responsible and more independent! I've seen kids go from being shy and quiet to outgoing and confident. I work with some of the school groups and one year we had a girl that didn't really smile or talk much in school turn into a girl who couldn't stop smiling and made so many friends! Her teachers think it's because she got more confident in herself from riding horses and being with us at the barn! Just knowing that makes me smile and know I did a good job! I really hope to do more of this at Hybrid for many years to come! It's not just a job to me, it's something I love doing!

Stephanie-

employee at Hybrid Farm

November 21, 2011

North Bridge Equine Associates, PLLC
1487 Monument St
Concord, MA 01742
978-337-1260

Conservation Commission
Town of Acton

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of Hybrid Farm. As owner and principal veterinarian of North Bridge Equine Associates, I have provided veterinary services for the horses of Hybrid Farm since 2007.

I work with many different horse owners in my practice but there are none who are as dedicated to their animals as Rita McConnon. Hybrid farm is a very special horse farm and there is no other like it that I know. Rita and the staff of Hybrid are dedicated not only to keeping their horses healthy and happy, but are dedicated to educating young people about the joys of horses and the very special relationship between people and the horse.

The horses at Hybrid receive the best care and are among the healthiest horses in my practice. If one of the horses at Hybrid does become ill, Rita is committed to caring for the animal and working with me to return the horse to full health, whatever is required. This spring when a pony named Wesley contracted pneumonia, Rita and the Hybrid farm family rallied together to nurse the pony back to health. At every visit to check on the pony there would be a large crowd of young people waiting in anticipation for news of Wesley's progress. The pony required intensive care over several months, but I am so pleased to say that Wesley is healthy today.

Hybrid farm is responsible for saving the lives of several horses who were destined to suffer in their previous environments. One horse that exemplifies this is an older pony who was found starved and tied up in a gravel lot. Rita adopted this horse and immediately had me out to the farm to examine her; she was so chronically malnourished that given her age, I was not sure we could

bring her back. Rita was amazingly dedicated to saving this animal and I am so pleased to say that Grace is now fat and happy and healthy. This is only one example of the good work Rita does for horses. A veterinary student who worked with me at Hybrid farm said it best when she said: "If I die and come back as a pony, I want to live at Hybrid farm!"

Hybrid farm is a very unique farm in the work it does with children and horses. I know of no other farm that works with such diverse group of children to teach them the joy of the horse and equestrian activities. I see that with the urbanization of Massachusetts we are losing opportunities for children to learn about horses and our agricultural heritage. Any reduction in the size and scope of Hybrid farms activities would be a great loss to our community.

Hybrid farm is steward of both the horse and the land on which the horses live. They are concerned with minimizing the horses impact on the land and conscientiously manage their farm with this goal in mind.

Sincerely,

J. Fred Nostrant D.V.M.
North Bridge Equine Associates
Concord, MA

978-337-1260
Freddvm@gmail.com

To: Conservation Commission of Acton

Re: Hybrid Farm

To whom it may concern:

This letter is in regard to my concern for the fate of Hybrid farm on Nagog Hill Road in Acton. I've been servicing and caring for horses at the farm for at least six years now. As an equine professional I've seen a lot of horse facilities. I've seen some good ones and some bad ones. Hybrid is a GOOD one. Rita and her staff care deeply for the horses that live there and the riders that live to be there. They handle the farm and the care of their horses far better than others I've seen in my travels.

Dealing with the equine safety is obviously of utmost importance. I have yet to see an issue that would warrant reducing the number of horses by any amount, nor would I have a problem even increasing the number of horses at the farm.

I've seen the passion of the young people (and older) while interacting with the horses at Hybrid farm and it's priceless. Just as people use and enjoy the surrounding woods for great pleasure, so should the farm co-exist to bring great pleasure to the people who travel there.

It's my deepest hope that Hybrid farm continues to operate and that it fulfills its mission and purpose of being a standard of excellence in horse care, teaching, and training.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eino Ketola, D.C.

MA lic #2524

33 Bull Hill Road

Thompson, CT 06255

Michele Russell
October 14, 2009
College Essay

Hybrid Farm Has Made Me The Person I Am Today

I still remember the feeling I had the first time I rode. I felt the horse guiding me along, pushing me to become a better person. Years later the feeling has changed; now I push the horse to greater things. With each stride I realize that I have become a strong, capable, reliable individual; the person of my dreams.

I attribute much of my strength and knowledge comes from my experience as a trainer and teacher. I can train any horse because I take the time to understand which training tools work with each horse. There are many different factors I consider when working with a horse. While working with my friend's horse, Tucker, I had to figure out how to persuade him to go over the new jumps. By slowing the process down and making Tucker comfortable, I was able to get him over the jumps. Once he accomplished that, Tucker was ready for anything. Whether that may be a horse or a child, I know when to push a little harder or back off to get the perfect results. In addition to training horses, I teach the younger children, at the barn, about how to care for them. I develop weekly lesson plans and while teaching I perform an ongoing assessment of the lesson. I ask myself questions like "is this a strong lesson?" and "are the kids are engaged?" Recently, during a lesson about nutrition I was lecturing and noticed the students zoning off. I brainstormed and decided to bring in a white board. As soon as I had the students writing, the energy level rose dramatically and everyone was excited about what they were learning. Whether it be a horse or children, I am capable to sort through problems and solve them affectively; demonstrating my qualities of strength and capability. My job at the barn also includes assisting with the care and up keeping of the horses. The owners of the horses never have to ask if their horse's water is full or if their injuries have been cleaned and dressed. They know that when I am on the job, it will be done and done well. The owner of the barn has me feed her 30 horses when she is away. There is an endless list of things that must get done each night, but I always find time to complete the tasks. I keep the barn so perfectly clean; it looks like no one was ever there. It gives the owner piece of mind to know when she leaves her horses in my hands because she knows everything will be taken care of while she is away. The responsibility she has given me has helped me develop into the reliable person that I am today.

The experiences I have at the barn stretch me to grow as an individual. I can now get on a horse and train him because of the strong person I have grown up to be. When I step into the barn to a group of new students I am capable of educating them. By caring for the large creatures it has shown how reliable I am. Each role that I play at the barn shapes me for the better.