

# Heckenlaible-Gotto's business forges a new path, bit by bit

■ **New business focuses on positive coaching, healing and personal growth.**

As Myra Heckenlaible-Gotto spoke excitedly about her new business, a guest could not help but notice the words that graced the cover of a pamphlet at her elbow: "The Healing Power of Equine."

Those five words are central to a new business named Crossing Life's Bridges at Heckenlaible-Gotto's farm, just east of Windom.

Heckenlaible-Gotto is certified in the Equine Gestalt Coaching Method.

"Gestalt is a German term that means wholeness—being in the present moment, not stuck in the past, finishing unfinished business," Heckenlaible-Gotto said. "It is becoming aware of what the body and heart are telling you, so you can explore it, transform it and put closure on it. That is when you start to heal."

At Saturday's open house, which runs from 2 to 5 p.m. (at Heckenlaible-Gotto's farm just east of Lakeview Cemetery), guests will see the riding arena, services and what the business is about. Plus, they'll get a chance to meet four horses—Rusty, Ginger, Gabriel and Royal—who are partners in the operation.

"It is a welcoming, inviting place where people can come, whether they want personal growth, healing or empowerment, or are experiencing a life transition such as relationships, divorce and death."

Guests can also learn about business group sessions targeted for team building, communication and leadership.

## The horses

So how are the horses involved?

People quickly learn that horses are not tools, but rather partners in the effort. Also, people do not ride horses at Crossing Life's Bridges. Everything is done on the ground.

Horses tend to be aware of their surroundings. Because their energy level is higher than that of humans, they tend to quickly sense things related to the people around them.

"The horses are very intuitive," Heckenlaible-Gotto said. "It comes by nature."

A horse can pick up cues that Heckenlaible-Gotto may not immediately recognize. That's why she carefully



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**IN MYRA HECKENLAIBLE-GOTTO'S new business she partners with horses, such as Gabriel, to help people become aware of what the body and heart are telling them.**

watches the horses at all times.

"They help me ask different questions," Heckenlaible-Gotto said. "Whether they nuzzle you, or stand beside you and give a nudge, it is all in the moment. The horses have not been trained specially for this work. It is all innate, all in their being."

Meanwhile, Heckenlaible-Gotto, received two years of intensive training before entering the business. She learned to understand the horses' body language and actions, which tell a story.

"I see what the horse is focusing on, which helps guide me to ask questions," she said.

## Individual pacing

A big key at Crossing Life's Bridges is to work at each person's own pace.

"We all have journeys we go through in life and none of these things are done at the snap of your fingers," Heckenlaible-Gotto said. "Some move quickly through it and some do a little at a time. There is no right or wrong way to do it."

The business offers private sessions, individual sessions and sessions for couples and families. The sessions can run from two

hours to a couple of days.

Group sessions of eight or 12 people are also an option. These are more common for workshops, retreats or businesses. The length varies, but can run Friday night through Sunday and can be individualized to meet their needs.

Heckenlaible-Gotto could not be happier with how the business has progressed.

"For many years, I wanted to combine my love of animals and nature with helping people with personal growth and healing.

"Through this, I can really be myself. I have worked for 30 years with people and learned so much from them. Being a teacher and psychologist really has given me that chance. (Heckenlaible-Gotto is not an actively practicing psychologist in her new business, but the background can be helpful.)"

After looking at various horse healing programs, Heckenlaible-Gotto quickly realized that this one matches everything from her core beliefs to her professional beliefs and her love of animals and nature.

"It feels like I am coming home," Heckenlaible-Gotto said. "I know this is the right place for me."