

The Healing Hoofbeat: Honoring Women in the EAS Industry



FaithfulHearts
EQUINE LEARNING CENTER

fostering connections between horses and people

Celebrating Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month, and here at *The Healing Hoofbeat*, we want to shine a spotlight on the incredible women who lead, inspire, and transform the equine-assisted services (EAS) industry. Across the country and right here in Colorado, women are at the heart of programs that bring healing, growth, and connection through horses.

Women Leading the Way in EAS

The equine-assisted services field is overwhelmingly female. Studies estimate that **up to 90% of certified equine therapists and instructors are women**, a reflection of the empathy, intuition, and care women bring to this work. From running therapeutic riding programs to mentoring volunteers and students, women define the standards, ethics, and heart of the industry.

Colorado is home to some of the most influential leaders in the field, including **Temple Grandin** and **Meredith Hodges**, women whose contributions have shaped the landscape of equine therapy and horsemanship.

Temple Grandin: Pioneer, Scholar, Advocate

Temple Grandin, professor of animal sciences at Colorado State University, is a globally recognized advocate for humane treatment of animals and for autism awareness. Her work bridges research, education, and therapeutic applications, showing how **horses can be partners in healing and personal growth**.

Grandin's own experiences with autism led her to understand the profound impact animals can have on human development and emotional well-being. Today, the **Temple Grandin Equine Center** in Fort Collins and Denver serves as a hub for equine-assisted therapy, adaptive horsemanship, and education programs that touch lives every day.

"Horses gave Temple Grandin a sense of purpose, responsibility, and belonging — and those same gifts are at the heart of equine-assisted healing," says one program participant.

Meredith Hodges: Educator, Advocate, and Community Builder

Meredith Hodges, based in Loveland, Colorado, is known for her innovative work with horses, mules, and donkeys, as well as her dedication to education and advocacy. Beyond her competitive and training achievements, Hodges has been a **supporter of therapeutic riding programs**, including Hearts & Horses, helping expand access to equine-assisted services through both financial support and donated animals.

Her approach demonstrates how **leadership in EAS goes beyond research or training**—it's about creating opportunities for others to experience the transformative power of the horse-human connection.

"Meredith Hodges reminds us that leadership isn't only found in research or headlines, but in giving resources, space, and opportunity for others to heal with horses," notes a colleague.

The Bigger Picture: Women as Changemakers

Women in the EAS industry aren't just participants—they are **changemakers**. They combine **knowledge, compassion, and dedication** to create safe, inclusive, and effective programs. From certified therapists to volunteers, instructors, and program directors, women lead with heart, shaping the way equine-assisted services impact individuals, families, and communities.

In Colorado and across the nation, women continue to grow the field, advocate for research and best practices, and inspire the next generation of equine professionals. This month, as we celebrate women's history, we honor the women whose leadership allows horses to be teachers, therapists, and lifelong companions.

FaithfulHearts: Women Leading Women

Faithful Hearts Equine Learning Center is an all-women-led organization, staffed entirely by women who serve as instructors, caretakers, and program leaders. This month, we encourage everyone to thank the instructors and leaders of FaithfulHearts who dedicate their time, talent, and hearts to helping horses and humans connect and heal— one hoofbeat at a time!