

PRESS RELEASE
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Contact: Lisa Munniksma
lisa@lisa-writes.com
765-258-3913

Nadia Heffner Chosen as Trainer for Midwest Mustang Challenge

This winter, 58 horse trainers in the Midwest were chosen from a pool of applicants to participate in the first-ever Midwest Mustang Challenge. Nadia Heffner, owner of Double H Horse Farm in West Point, Indiana, was one of two Indiana residents chosen for the three-and-a-half-month training program and subsequent competition.

Heffner, an American Riding Instructors Association-certified instructor, picked up her three-year-old Mustang mare in mid-January. It was not long before this meeting that the horse was first exposed to people. Heffner chose the name How The West Was Won, or “Westie,” to reflect the horse’s heritage as one of America’s wild horses.

The care and training of a previously untouched horse is a big undertaking, but that’s part of what’s attracted Heffner to the program: “I like a challenge, and I love starting colts that no one else has put any training into. It’s like having a fresh canvas and being able to step back at the end and say, ‘I did that.’”

Heffner has ridden horses her whole life and has worked with and started young horses under saddle for the past six years. Since opening her 25-acre training and boarding farm in August 2006, she has enjoyed working with horses of all ages, but none with quite this little experience to start with. She said she sees the Midwest Mustang Challenge as a way to both gain valuable experience and to promote the services she offers.

Putting her training skills to the test, Heffner said she has no plans to rush Westie into situations the horse is not yet ready for.

“My plan is to see what she is willing to let me do first. Her personality will play some role in shaping the strategy I have for my training. In the competition finals, we have a freestyle option to perform whatever we want—I have some things I’d like to accomplish with Westie just for that,” she said.

Heffner has started a blog about her experience with the Midwest Mustang Challenge so her supporters can check in on Westie's progress. The blog is online at www.doublehorsefarm.com under “News Room.”

The Midwest Mustang Challenge is organized by the Mustang Heritage Foundation, whose mission is to increase the adoption of Mustangs to good homes. The Midwest

Mustang Challenge is designed to give the public an opportunity to see the results of wild horses having undergone a period of training and their resulting versatility and value as riding horses. The competition between all of the program's trainers and their horses will take place at the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, Wisconsin, April 18-20. Afterwards, the horses will be adopted to new homes through a competitive bidding process.

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Photo attached: Nadia Heffner bonds with Westie at Double H Horse Farm. Photo credit: Lisa Munniksmma, www.lisa-writes.com

For additional photos or information and to set up an interview with Nadia Heffner, contact Lisa Munniksmma, lisa@lisa-writes.com or 765-258-3913.