

# CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places & products*

## **Horses for all seasons and adventures**

Horses, horses, and more horses! On a northern Kings County farm, a multitude graze peacefully awaiting their turns to enjoy one of their home's many adventures!

On the North Mountain, just a short distance up Glenmont's Blackhole Road, is Mountain Top Stock Farm and Evangeline Trail Rides - home to Crystal Sheffield, her husband Vince, their two children, two dogs - and 35 horses. Though once dedicated to cattle farming, for the last 10 years the 150-acre family farm has been mainly devoted to a wide variety of horse activities.

"I like my horses to be versatile and not trained to do only one thing," says Crystal, an accomplished rider, trainer, and instructor. "My kids are in 4H, and for projects they help me try different activities throughout the year."

One activity has evolved into a great weekly adventure. No matter what the season, for a group of up to 24 riders the "Wednesday ride" has become a tradition.

"It began when we started doing lessons here on the farm, and we would do a trail ride to cool the horses," says Crystal. "We found we could learn as much on the trail as in the ring." Now the group often "trailers" the horses to experience many different types of trails.

Every winter, Crystal and Vince use two large Belgium horses

for logging as they cut new trails on their own land, and for neighbors. "We groom trails especially for the horses and sleigh. We've also used this team for weddings, proms, and even wagon trains." Those same horses are also movie stars, as they and a third horse have performed in the Nova Scotia-filmed movie *Outlander*.

Each summer, the farm hosts riding camps for kids. "It's fun! The camps are for five days including an overnight camping trip and we set up tents in the barn for the rest of the time." A certified horsemanship instructor with a level three in Western and a level two in English, Crystal holds riding clinics and provides lessons all year round.

Also every summer, in memory of a little girl named Heidi who used to ride at the farm, Evangeline Trail Rides hosts an event to raise money for cystic fibrosis.

"In June, we do a scavenger hunt on our own trails. People either pay to ride or

make donations. We also did a horse pull last summer." Sometimes, the events double as breast cancer research fundraisers.

Though Crystal keeps 22 horses of her own and boards 13 more, she cannot turn away a horse in need. As a SPCA host, she has taken in as many as 20 horses at one time. "We've worked with horses with a lot of problems."

For people who think they may want to buy a horse, Crystal will lease to them. They can ride different horses to see what best suits them. She also prepares horses for sale.

"There isn't much we don't do. We wear many hats - it balances things out!" And with all Crystal and Evangeline Trail Rides have happening under their brims, there will always be adventure for her and her horses.

*Story and photo by Marlene Huntley*



*Crystal Sheffield stands with her Belgium horse team - Lucy is on the front and Lynne watches from behind.*



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