

Area Veteran and Homestead Stables to be featured on Lifetime TV's "Military Makeover with Montel"

Heritage Ministries Vice-President of Marketing and Development, Lisa Haglund, has announced that Homestead Stables by Heritage, in conjunction with N.E.I.G.H. and the Constance Project, will serve as a filming location for "Military Makeover with Montel," hosted by Montel Williams in May 2019.

The show, which airs on Lifetime TV, will feature the story of Ashville, NY resident Cody Willett, who currently works as a computer specialist with the Chautauqua County Sheriff's Department, and his wife Jessica. A weapons supply technician for special operations teams in the United States Air Force, Willett was four months into his second deployment when his base was attacked. He was severely injured in a rocket propelled grenade attack, leaving him with a fractured lower spine, dislocated shoulder, and a damaged ankle. Evacuated for medical treatment in Germany, Cody was eventually able to return home to New York, where he met his wife.

Upon his return, Willett began working with Cindy Reidy of the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer to Peer Program. The program's goal is to link veterans together for socialization and friendship and utilizes peer support from those who can relate to the struggles of transitioning into civilian life.

It was at this point that Homestead Stables and equine assisted therapy specialist, Dawn Samuelson, founder of The Constance Project, entered the picture. Named after Dawn's late sister, Constance Marie Davenport, a U.S. Air Force veteran that took her own life at the age of 25. The program is designed to aid in the prevention of suicide and work with veterans that experience PTSD, bereavement, anxiety, depression, and anger issues. The Constance Project not only works with veterans, but active military and their families as well. Samuelson recently joined forces with Homestead Stables by Heritage to provide equine assisted therapy to many people, including veterans, who face unique challenges as they return home. The N.E.I.G.H. (National Educational Institute of Growth through Horses) program empowers individuals by equipping them with the tools necessary to improve communication, confidence, respect, and goal setting. Workshops allow humans to interact and connect with horses and each other in a non-threatening, non-judgmental atmosphere. In addition to the Constance Project, the N.E.I.G.H. program also includes a component known as "Beyond the Reins" which focuses on experiences for at-risk youth, battered women, and communication workshops for corporations, as well as Horse and Handler and N.E.I.G.H. University, which offers certification, apprenticeships, and practitioner training.

Samuelson shared, *"I am both honored and blessed to have Heritage work with me to present N.E.I.G.H. at Homestead Stables. They truly believe in giving back to our veterans, and their mission of serving others mirrors my desire to work with active military members, veterans, and their families to help prevent suicide and aid them in the many struggles they face - both physical and emotional."*

Shortly after the birth of their second child, Cody learned of "Military Makeover With Montel," a home improvement show on Lifetime that, according to the series, "aims to respect those who have served our country, rebuild the homes — and even the lives — of these brave service men

and women, and repay veterans for the service and sacrifice they've made for us." He applied to the show, believing that a home makeover would be a wonderful gift for his wife and children as a thank you for being "his rock" as he navigates the physical and mental struggles of PTSD from his time in the military.

When selecting a site to film scenes for the show outside of the makeover site, executives agreed that Homestead Stable's commitment to working with veterans made them a perfect fit.

"Homestead Stables by Heritage, is extremely proud to be selected as not only the filming site, but as a community partner, who for over 130 years has served seniors and veterans, and with our programming at the stables, we are privileged to serve all ages. As a local not-for-profit, it's our responsibility to live our mission, and serve those within our community, and remain a trusted industry leader in offering human services. Being able to come alongside the show with N.E.I.G.H. and the Constance Project is an absolute blessing to us and fits within our mission to promote HOPE, DIGNITY and PURPOSEFUL LIVING," said Lisa Haglund, Heritage Vice-President of Marketing and Development.

Homestead Stables, a state-of-the-art equestrian center, provides intergenerational equestrian opportunities as well as boarding, training, and lessons, and feature 41 stalls. A 112-foot wide by 219-foot long riding arena gives horses room to trot and interact with trainers and guests. Movable fences can also make the riding area smaller or bigger to accommodate different events. Bleachers on the first floor and balcony seating are available for those who want to view horses outside of the viewing area.

Heather Payne, owner of Payne Show Horses and a graduate of the University of Findlay in Ohio with a degree in equine science, oversees operations at Homestead Stables as the Stable Manager and Head Trainer.

The show will film in May, with an air date to be announced by Lifetime and other national syndicates.

Heritage Ministries, the parent company of Homestead Stables, was founded as the Orphanage and Homes of the Free Methodist Church in 1886 and has grown from its original campus in Gerry, NY, to six locations in New York with additional affiliations in the states of Washington, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. As a not-for-profit provider of senior care and housing, Heritage is a leader in the industry, employing approximately 1,500 team members, and serving over 2,500 individuals annually. With locations in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Washington, Heritage and its affiliates provide rehabilitation and skilled nursing services, independent retirement housing, and assisted living. The Homestead Stables provides intergenerational equestrian opportunities as well as boarding, training, and lessons. In addition, childcare is provided at two campuses, allowing for intergenerational programs. For more information on Heritage Ministries, please visit www.heritage1886.org

Additional info: video of arena – <https://youtu.be/AUWZGr1mcj0>

