

# NONPAREIL *online*

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## Council Bluffs

### Food and therapy at Hooves & Paws animal rescue

By Emily Kesten, Staff Writer

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GLENWOOD – Hooves & Paws Rescue Inc. has two big goals: To get dog food to budget-stretched pet owners and start a therapeutic riding program.

The first goal is easy. After receiving a generous donation of dry and wet dog food last weekend, Hooves & Paws owners Bill and Genea Stoops want to help dog owners in the area.

“We called area shelters, but we want to help pet owners with low income or tight budgets,” said Genea Stoops. “It’s hard in this economy, especially for the elderly. We would really like to help them feed their pets, their companions, so they do not have to surrender them.”

Genea Stoops and Council Bluffs animal control officer Melinda Brink said they have both seen an increase in owner surrenders.

“We’ve had good luck placing dogs,” said Genea Stoops, “but I can’t believe how many animals have passed through here.” Many of her large dog rescues have come from Kentucky, she noted.

Hooves & Paws is a no-kill rescue for horses and large breed dogs, but it also helps people. Stoops provides riding lessons with Chuck, a horse donated to the rescue for that purpose. Another lesson horse, A.J., was recently donated to start a therapeutic riding program for behavior problems.

“A nurse approached me about a program,” Genea Stoops said. “She has nine special needs children.”

North American Riding for the Handicapped Association works with centers for equine-facilitated physical therapy and now experiments with using horses to help with medical and psychological conditions, including victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse; migraines; substance abuse; thought control disorders; weight control disorders; and those who may pose a danger to themselves or others.

Equine therapy is even used by the U.S. Army to rehabilitate wounded soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hooves & Paws already provides lessons for foster children in the area. The cost of a therapeutic riding lesson would be funded through Iowa’s Title 19. But to get the program running, helmets and saddles need to be purchased – and an arena needs to be built.

“We would love to be able to provide this program year round,” said Genea Stoops.

Lessons are only available twice a week in the summer months.

Hooves & Paws needs to raise enough donations to build a simple arena, either wood or metal, with lighting.

“We do have several volunteers that have offered to help erect a steel building if we can raise enough through donations to purchase one,” Genea Stoops said.



Submitted photo - Bill and Genea Stoops, owners of Hooves & Paws, share a laugh as their lesson horse, Chuck, has a snack.

To inquire about dog food or to donate, contact Bill and Genea Stoops at (712) 527-3721 or (712) 527-9212, e-mail [info@hoovespaws.org](mailto:info@hoovespaws.org), go online to [www.hoovespaws.org](http://www.hoovespaws.org) or send mail to Hooves & Paws Rescue Inc., 27821 U.S. Highway 34, Glenwood, IA, 51535.

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