



**Horse Sense of the Carolinas, Inc.**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**New Web Site Educates the Public About Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Training Center Gives Horses a Home**

Asheville, NC-Horse Sense of the Carolinas is a training center for [Equine Assisted Psychotherapy](#) (EAP) and [Equine Assisted Learning](#) (EAL) professionals and offers [individual psychotherapy, group therapy](#) and professional development sessions. This summer Horse Sense announces a new web site, <http://www.HorseSenseOtc.com>. "This web site was built to showcase our love for what we do and our variety of services," states co-owner and president Shannon Knapp. "Our potential clients now have the opportunity to read the stories of the horses and to learn more about this amazing way to grow and challenge yourself," Knapp continues. The web site is educational and encourages the public to visit Horse Sense, a 90-acre farm in Marshall, NC.

Totsie.com Web Site Design Studio in Asheville, NC designed the new web site <http://www.HorseSenseOtc.com>. The site is a Plone design with spectacular photographs, easy navigation, [bios on staff](#) and horses, a calendar of events and workshops, plus pages of educational information. The web site provides descriptions of the professional therapy options available to families, couples and individuals, along with EAP and EAL training opportunities. The site also focuses on [leadership training, personal development and team building](#). Horse Sense also offers weekend retreats and one-day workshops. The web site showcases the [Horse Sense herd](#), including the individual stories of each horse currently living on the farm.

The vision of Horse Sense owners Shannon and Richard Knapp began with a desire to rescue horses in need, especially those that can't be ridden. "I still can't believe that some people think horses are worthless unless they function as beasts of burden," states Knapp. The Knapps began pairing people with horses in 2001. Shortly after, the idea of opening an [Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning Center](#) seemed like a win-win situation. "Horses that have been abused or neglected have an incredible ability to reach out to people with similar problems," says Knapp, "the horses give clients the opportunity to learn about themselves and process mental and emotional issues without judgment."

Horse Sense of the Carolinas invites the public to attend [free demonstrations](#) on site to gain a deeper understanding of the practice and benefits of [Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning](#). Horse Sense currently employs [six staff members](#) with backgrounds and experience in counseling, social work and equine behavior and care. Horse Sense works with local law enforcement, local humane societies and horse rescue organizations to find homes for unwanted, injured or retired horses. For more information or to find out about the next free demonstration visit <http://www.HorseSenseOtc.com>.

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Photo by Horse Sense

### ***The History of Horse Sense***

Horse Sense of the Carolinas, Inc. is a 90-acre farm located in Marshall, North Carolina near the city of Asheville. Horse Sense was created, somewhat unexpectedly, through the heartfelt vision of Shannon and Richard Knapp. After six years of living and working in what Shannon refers to as “concrete America” the Knapps chose to leave their home just North of Dallas, Texas and move to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains.

Originally, Shannon and Richard’s goal was to purchase a farm away from the chaos of city life and rescue abused and neglected horses. Horses were always a large part of their lives, but they had no idea of the opportunity that awaited them. As the farm began to develop and Shannon witnessed the effect these amazing animals had on the people around them she began to explore the relationship between horses and humans and discovered EAGALA, the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association.

After educating herself about Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine Assisted Learning (EAL), Shannon realized she had a new direction and calling. Horse Sense of the Carolinas was born! The Horse Sense of the Carolinas team currently consists of six staff members that include Shannon and Richard, two mental health professionals, and three equine specialists. The form of EAP and EAL practiced at Horse Sense does not involve riding, only interactions between horses and humans. This allows the focus to be on personal connection, awareness, communication and change.

The team also includes fourteen incredible horses, some of which have been with Horse Sense since the beginning. Many of the horses have been rescued from situations of abuse and neglect or retired due to physical injury. Horse Sense of the Carolinas is proud to be home to every member of the herd.



Photo by Horse Sense

### ***About Shannon***



Photo by Coco

Shannon Knapp, founder and president of Horse Sense of the Carolinas, Inc, has worked with and taught horses and people for over twenty years. After a successful ten-year career teaching college, she chose to leave the academic world and begin her work with abused and neglected horses. In 2001 Shannon began pairing "rescued" horses with individual people and was inspired to open an Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Learning Center. Shannon specializes in Equine behavior and is EAGALA Level II, pursuing Level III. She has also studied with Linda Kohanov at EPONA, attended EFMHA trainings and several other equine therapy programs.

In addition to managing group, family and individual psychotherapy, as well as personal and professional development training, Shannon also educates other professionals in the EAP/EAL field. She and her husband Richard continue to work with horses through horse rescue organizations, local humane societies and law enforcement, to help both horses and people find a better way. Horses have been a significant part of her personal journey, and she is honored and grateful to be able to share the horses with others.

## ***About Richard***



Photo by Horse Sense

Richard Knapp entered the military via the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs and graduated with a BS in Space Physics. He then entered Pilot Training at Reese AFB in Lubbock, TX. After working as a flight instructor and an air traffic controller for several years, Richard finished his military career in 1993. Upon leaving the military, Richard entered the business world briefly as a computer programmer until he moved to North Carolina, with his wife Shannon.

Joined by their six dogs, many cats and two horses, Masada and Susan Denero, Richard and Shannon purchased a large farm with the hopes of continuing to rescue and rehabilitate abused and neglected horses. Richard is actively involved with the Horse Sense farm and is certified Level 1 in EAGALA as an Equine Specialist and Parelli Level 2. Richard currently manages Meadows Town, LLC, a horse rehabilitation and training business. In addition, he also sells ABC horse products, Flint River Ranch organic dog and cat food, and almost-organic mixed grass hay grown on the Horse Sense farm.

## **What Others Say About Horse Sense**

*“Our teambuilding experience at Horse Sense has kept us talking, thinking and striving to be honest!”-Jackie Latek, Families Together, Inc.*

*“Horse Sense of the Carolinas is one of the most unique and surprising human development services. They combine human expertise with equine intuition leading their*

*participants to self-awareness. It is truly a marvel to watch and experience. Witnessing the power of these horses is not soon forgotten.*”-Cheri Britton, Professional Speaker & Business Coach, BOOM Thinking.com

*“Working with these magnificent creatures is like nothing else I have ever experienced--the insights about myself were profound. Shannon and her staff are consummate professionals. I highly recommend this work to those who are facing major challenges in their lives, as well as those whose lives are going smoothly”*-Julie Parker, publisher/editor, WNC Woman magazine

*“Horses are amazing animals to interact with. They help you understand yourself better and personal growth naturally occurs.”*-Ashley Madden, Madden Insurance Company

*“I went for a day seminar at Horse Sense and came away with a lifetime of knowledge about myself. The beauty of this great work is through the eyes of the horses and their exceptional staff...They coach you through ways of working through your stuff and bringing you to action. I can honestly say Horse Sense is one of the most powerful personal growth experiences I've had. I recommended it for everyone.”*-Dr. Jennifer Oliver, Blue Ridge Chiropractic

*“I was amazed at how quickly working with multiple horses, or a single horse, on an apparently simple task brought up deep issues for each of us. These powerful, yet subtle, animals seem to reflect our inner selves back to us. Whether you are team building or exploring personal issues this is profound work.”*-Sandi Tomlin-Sutker, publisher, WNC Woman magazine

*“It’s not a playground or a park. It’s not horse sightseeing, and it’s not some phony program that you don’t get anything out of. If you take it seriously, they will take you seriously.”*-T, age 15

*“Equine Therapy opens up different avenues of the mind.”*-M, age 48

## **Learning to Be Me: Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and The Healing Spirit of the Horse**

**By Shannon Knapp**



Photo by Horse Sense

Throughout the ages humans have searched for many ways to understand our selves. A variety of healing and therapeutic modalities have assisted people with life's struggles, taught us about the Self and helped create stories that became myth and legend. As psychology and the study of the human mind evolved, we began to use new techniques. Language became the basis for mental and emotional growth; to lie on the therapist's couch a standard practice. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), therapeutic work done in the presence of horses, a licensed counselor or psychologist, and an equine specialist reminds us that the natural world reflects humanity and teaches us about who we are as individuals and how to live in a more satisfied way. Horses willingly give in an EAP setting and the healing spirits of these animals can change us in ways we never imagined.

### **The Power of Biofeedback**

One of the most common questions I have been asked when discussing my experience with Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) is why horses? Why these animals and not dogs or cats? The answer is simple; horses are animals of prey. Predators, such as dogs and cats can make wonderful companions and are capable of rich and deep relationships. A horse, however, must observe every movement, smell and sound around them in case they have to use their best natural defense: speed. In order to run and escape a predator they must always be registering and paying attention to what is around them, including humans. Horses check to see if our insides match our outsides, they search for the genuine and the authentic in us because it's how they survive. If we appear calm but inside we experience emotional turmoil, horses know. If we appear happy but inside we feel afraid, horses sense the fear. The biofeedback horses are able to provide allows us to see our hidden emotions. We must then claim these emotions as our own and be held accountable for them.

### **Emotional Habits**

One of my favorite writers Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence, talks about group dynamics and the concept of cooperation. Whether personal or professional, working with others is an important skill. Goleman asks the question "How can you know when to lead and when to follow?" Horses live together and they have much to teach us about leadership and relationships, give and take. In an EAP or

EAL session you learn what your leadership and relationship style is. You find out if this style is effective or if changes are necessary. Of course these realizations come in an atmosphere of non-judgment, which allows for greater integration so change can occur. Goleman also often discusses insight and the process of identifying patterns in your emotional life and recognizing similar patterns in others. EAP and EAL create a format in which the horses can reveal to us our emotional habits. You begin to understand and see clearly the patterns that exist and what patterns lead to happiness and satisfaction and what leads to pain and suffering. The healing spirit of the horse shows us we have a choice to live in one world or the other.

### **Invite the Challenge**

Over the course of my life I have learned much from my horses. As an EAP and EAL professional I learn everyday about my fears, weaknesses, strengths and gifts. These things are shown to me by the relationships I share with my horse companions. Horses contain a mystery humans can't fully comprehend and defining them as beasts of burden and animals just to be ridden is to deny the greatest gift they can offer to us. EAP and EAL, as we practice it, involve no riding. The simple act of being in the presence of a horse is to accept the challenge to know yourself better and more completely. I live a fuller life because I accept this challenge every day and I allow the horses to teach me. To learn more about EAP or EAL or to read the stories of horses involved in this incredible work please visit my web site at <http://www.HorseSenseOtc.com>.