

South Jersey

Horse farm produces a champ

Nonprofit stable gives kids an equestrian education

By **BILL DUHART**
Courier-Post Staff

MOUNT LAUREL

The benefactor of a horse farm for needy children said a simple thought keeps her nonprofit going.

"All little girls have a love of horses," said Ellen Healey, who founded Gleneayre Farm in Lumberton with her husband, Bob. "It seems to be a little girl thing. I never had a horse when I was growing up. Couldn't afford one."

The Healeys own a yacht manufacturing company and a real estate company. Their holdings include the refurbished Cherry Hill Towers apartments.

Healey's love of horses, and insight about little girls, seems to be keen. Kelsey Hockenberger, a 15-year-old honor student at Lenape High School, fell for horses when she was in grade school.

Hockenberger is now a champion equestrian and

WEBEXTRA

For more photos of Kelsey Hockenberger, go to www.courierpostonline.com/galleries.

WHERE TO CALL

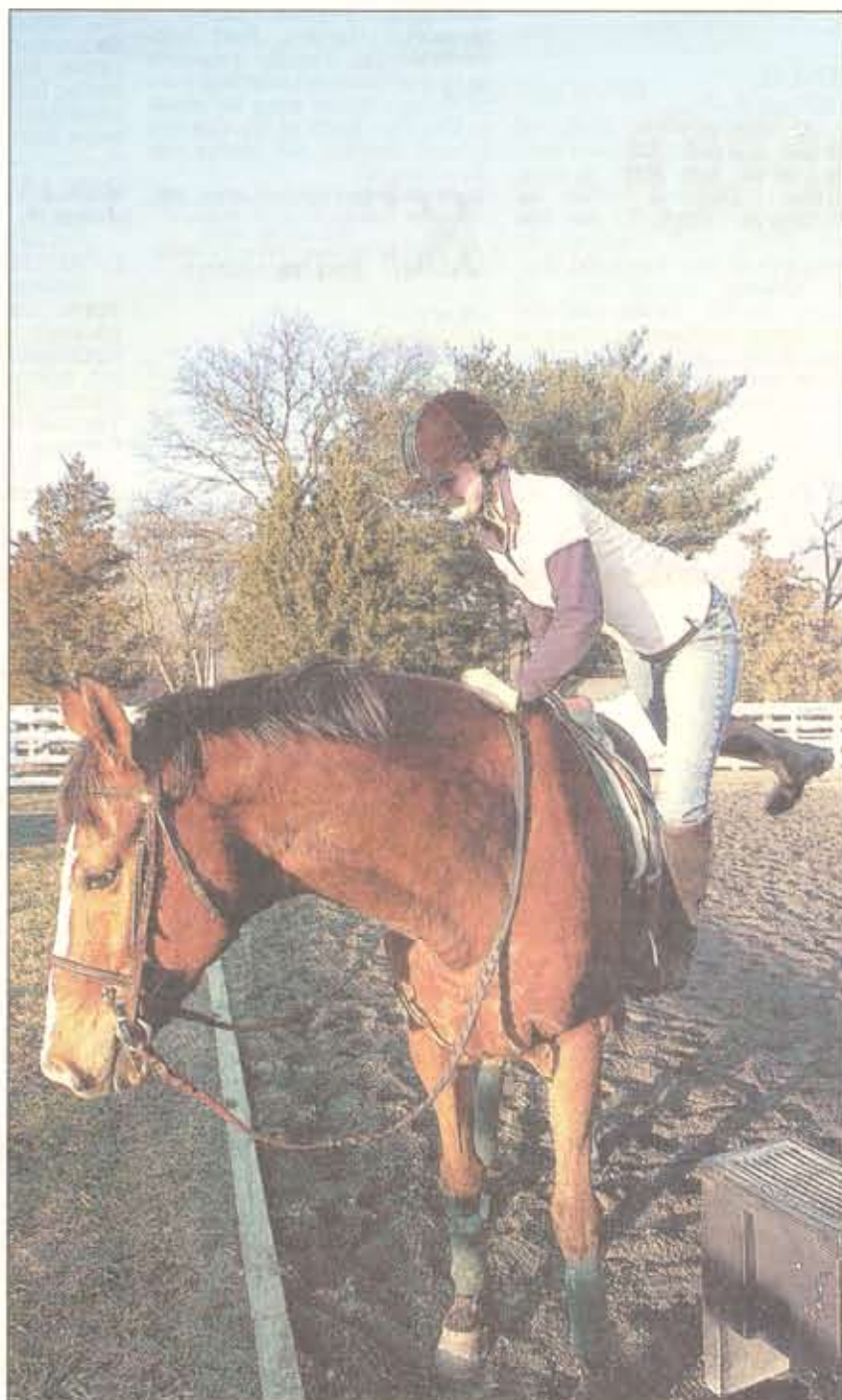
For more information on Gleneayre Farm, call (609) 267-4045.

trains at Gleneayre. She is the 2006 Equestrian of the Year, the state Department of Agriculture announced this week.

Hockenberger won the competition in November for more than just being an award-winning rider. She also had to explain how the riding and rearing of horses has changed her life. She said it was a lesson many can learn from.

"Just being around them and having the responsibility to take care of them really taught me a lot of life skills," said Hockenberger, a Mount Laurel resident. "It

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Photos by PARIS L. GRAY/Courier-Post

Above, Lenape High School student Kelsey Hockenberger, 15, of Mount Laurel, dismounts after riding Tigger at Gleneayre Farm in Lumberton. Left, Kelsey, who was recently named the 2006 Equestrian of the Year by the state Department of Agriculture, prepares Tigger for a workout.



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taught me responsibility and time management. It brings you closer to the community."

Hockenberger and 14 other riders train at Gleneayre Farm. They are required to work two days a week after school, caring for the barn and 26 horses at the 40-acre farm. They are also required to take at least one riding lesson each week, but often spend up to six days a week at the farm.

In exchange, the Healeys provide retired show horses for kids who typically could not afford to have or house one. Many of the horses are donated from places like Beacon Hill Show Stables in Colts Neck, Monmouth County, Healey said.

Hockenberger paired this year with a 12-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding named Amethyst. Other riders at the farm also pair with steeds each year for



PARIS L. GRAY/Courier-Post

Kelsey Hockenberger rides Tigger at Gleneayre Farm, where she and 14 other riders train. They are required to work two days a week after school, caring for 26 horses at the 40-acre farm.

riding competitions.

Amethyst is 16 hands, or about 64 inches tall, and bay, a dark horse with black mane and tail. Healey said getting along with some of the horses is not easy.

"One of the challenges of the program is that show horses are highly trained and difficult and take a tremendous amount of

work," she said. "We're incredibly proud of Kelsey."

In addition to being named Equestrian of the Year, a competition among 10 finalists from around the state, Hockenberger also placed first in Dressage at the 2005 state 4-H Championship Horse Show.

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