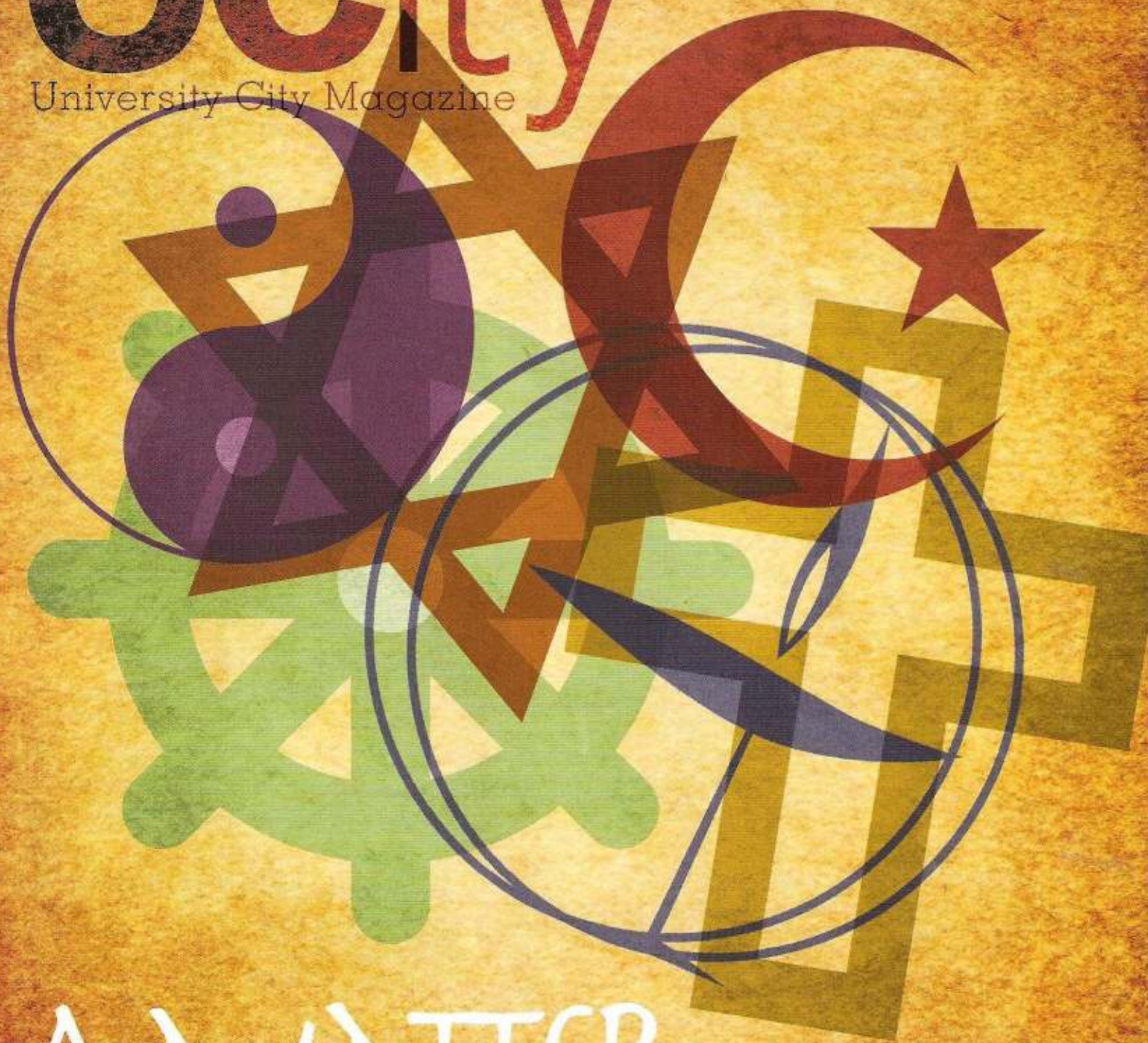


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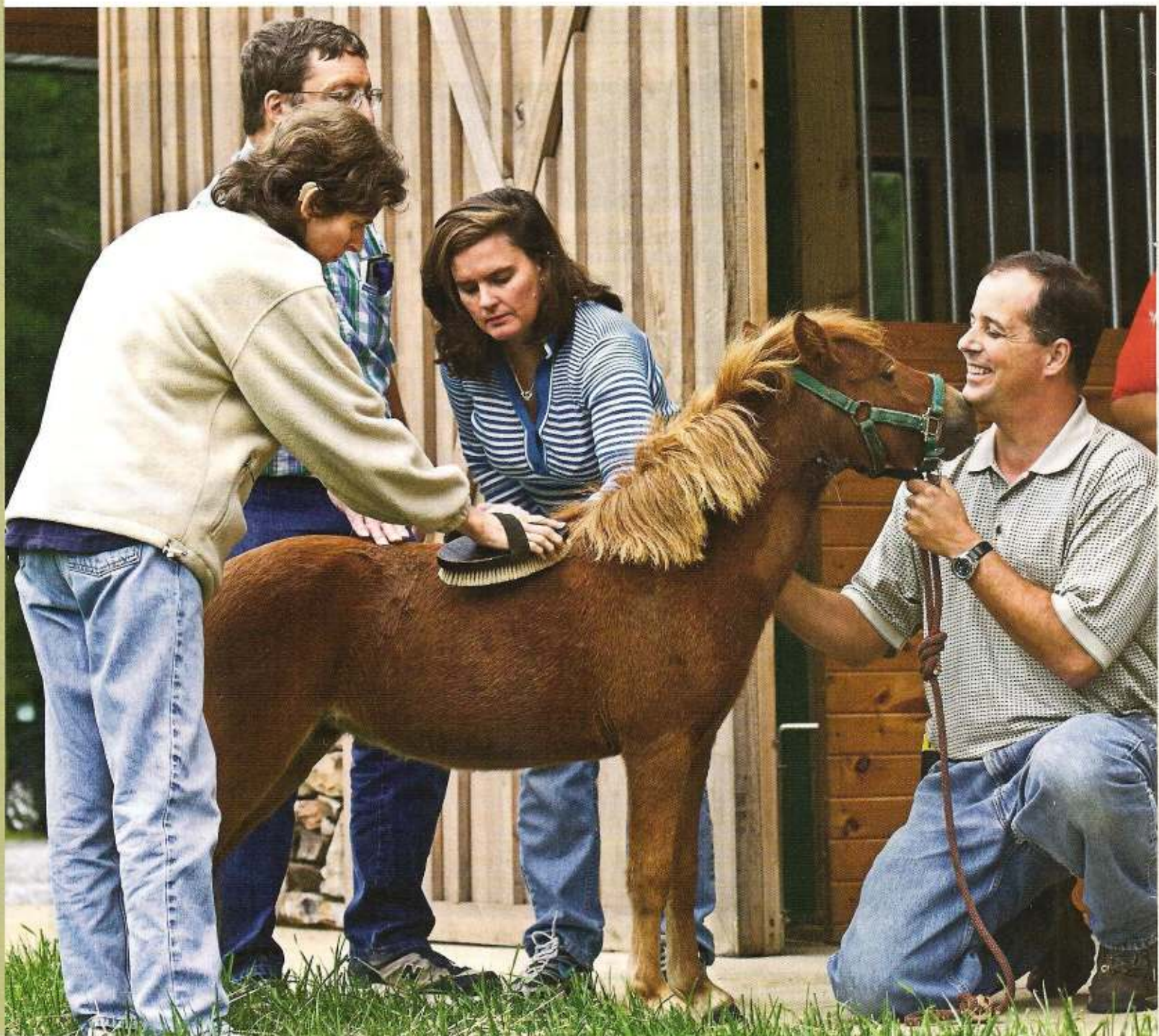
A MATTER OF FAITH

A LOOK AT THE
MANY FORMS OF
WORSHIP IN UCITY

A Place for Healing and Hope

Hinds' Feet Farm Celebrates a Year

By LaTonya Mason | Photos by Richard Rudisill



Hinds' Feet Farm serves people whose lives parallel a description of the road it's situated on – less-traveled and full of twists and turns. Neatly tucked away off Black Farms Road in Huntersville, the farm hosts a therapeutic program for adults with brain injuries.

Martin "Marty" Foil is the executive director of Hinds' Feet Farm, and is a national advocate for prevention, education, treatment, and outreach for the brain injury community. He speaks at local schools about helmet safety, and at briefings before Congress in lobbying efforts for people living with brain injuries. He has worked to expand the vision and programming of the farm, primarily because of how brain injury has

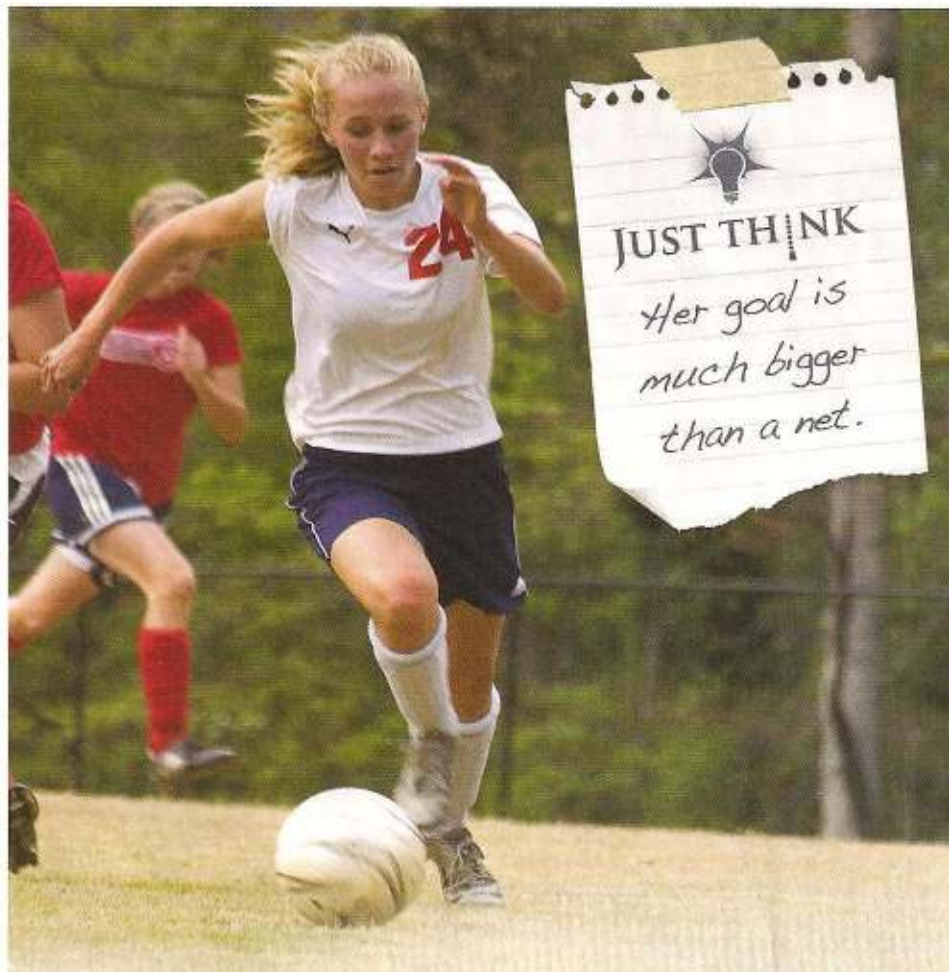
affected his own life. In 1984, his younger brother Phillip sustained a closed head brain injury in a car wreck, and the family's 17-year journey of caring for him began. Phillip received care in Illinois, Atlanta, St. Louis, Durham, and Texas. Finally, his parents Carolyn Van Every and Martin Foil decided to develop a program of their own to help him and others like him.

Van Every founded Hinds' Feet Farm in 2002. Taking what she liked from every program Phillip had been in, she incorporated it into the farm to build a nontraditional rehabilitation program.

There is nothing institutional about Hinds' Feet. The contemporary farm is made up of three parts: the Ark, a multi-purpose room where community meetings and therapeutic activities take place; the Farmgrounds, for walking the horses, horseback riding, and meditation, and the Activity Barn, for playing golf and basketball, making crafts and art, and housing the horses.

Van Every hesitated to ask Foil to oversee the program. She did not think he would want to leave his lucrative career as a

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Marty Foil, executive director of Hinds' Feet farm.

Open House: Tuesday, October 21st at 6:30 p.m.

VOICES

Poems written by program participants at Hinds' Feet Farm, reprinted with permission of the farm. Full names are withheld to protect the privacy of participants.

Who Am I?

I am me.
I don't know about me.
I'm trapped inside my mind.
It's trash right now.
I can't go where I want. I can't do what I want.
If I could walk in a straight line, I would be hiking without my cane.
I would drive if I could.
I want to go fishing. I want to run.
I want to have a job. I want to have fun!
I want to gulp drinks without a straw.
I basically want to be a plain person with no disability and no dumbness.
I am not stupid!
Don't treat me like a baby.
I am an adult!

I am unique and special.
I care about people. I give to people.
I try hard. I have patience and humor.
God treats me with respect because I am His child!

I am a thoughtful and creative person.
I live my life with love, patience, hard work, and faith that God will take care of me.

I have talents and skills.
I like to work with wood and like making things out of wood.
I am good at putting things together.
I am good at training dogs. I used to help train puppies to work with blind people.
I like to sing.
Freedom is important to me.
Life is important to me.
Life:
I don't know what life is.
It changes all the time.
I want life to be better.
I'd like to know the right answer because I just don't know.
Life is challenging...because everything that happens will be different.
God says our purpose is to love him...and love other people.

— B.T.



The farm's miniature donkey is named Martin, and the miniature horse's name is Puddin'.



Footsteps

Footsteps are things that we all need to learn to take at one point in time. From the time that you are a baby, to when you have to take those steps to move away from home, footsteps are our journey through life. Some of the members of Hinds' Feet Farm have literally had to learn to take these footsteps all over again.

And even though we aren't always taking foot "steps" in life we are always trying to move forward.

I had to learn to take footsteps all over again in 1996 due to complications after brain tumor surgery. My footsteps were guided by many people, and now being at Hinds' Feet, I feel as if I'm "up and running" again.

— K.T.



"The return-to-work ratio for the brain injured community is really low. It is five to ten percent," said Foil.

"So, we shift our focus from gainful employment to meaningful experiences. We believe in enhancing the quality of their lives." | ucm

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.hindsfeetfarm.org or call 704-992-1424.

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computer software specialist to work at the farm. But at the same time, it turned out that Foil was looking for a career opportunity that would allow him to spend more time with his family.

"It took me 30 seconds to say yes," Foil said. "I was just as eager to build a program for a community that has been shunned from society."

Day Program participants meet Mondays through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and on Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon. Their day begins with animal care and farm chores. An occupational therapist and licensed clinical social worker lead classes where participants learn how to effectively communicate, manage their emotions, raise and manage money, and cook. Volunteers give their time to teach creative writing, theatrical skills, tai chi, meditation and yoga. Participants write and read poetry, and have learned to perform improv. Participants are encouraged to see their limitations as opportunities.

"They love to give back. We partner with the Children's Community School in Davidson, and it's a mutual benefit. The participants love children and are not focused on their disabilities, and the kids enjoy it so much that they forget they're working with the disabled," Foil said.

Foil is excited about growth at the farm. In the near future, it will welcome a six-bed residential facility. Sooner than that, Foil hopes to begin a new literacy promotion program. To make it happen, he needs volunteers, donations, and a digital video camera.

In July, Hinds' Feet celebrated its Day Program's first year. There are only 17 other similar programs in the country. But while those comparable programs focus on helping brain-injured people find employment, Hinds' Feet operates from a different perspective.



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