

LOCAL



Horses offer vets a chance to heal

Shamrock Reins, a 23-acre equine center in Tincum, will open Oct. 6.

By **FREDA R. SAVANA**
STAFF WRITER

Janet Brennan is on a mission.

With a unique place in her heart for both veterans and horses, the Furlong woman is combining her dual passions to create a center for equine-assisted therapies at no cost to veterans and their families.

Across a spacious Tincum hillside, Brennan has carved out Shamrock Reins from a 23-acre property she bought in 2011. Horses can be seen poking their heads from a long barn, as visitors approach the sprawling farm from a tree-lined driveway.

"We want to have a safe,



RICK KINTZEL / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Janet Brennan, founder of Shamrock Reins, and program director Max Resnick will offer a wide array of services using a horse's special gifts to help veterans heal.

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Video online

"Horses are prey animals," Brennan explained, "their instinct is to protect themselves; they are always on high alert."

Many veterans are similarly "hypervigilant," after returning from war, said Brennan. Horses sense that, and establishing a trusting relationship with the animal can foster a bond that can help change a soldier's

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For more information

To learn more about Shamrock Reins, visit www.shamrockreins.org or call 215-766-4988. You can also email jbrennan@shamrockreins.org.

A Beef and Beer Fundraiser, featuring the Irish band Blackthorn, is planned for Nov. 9, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., at Spring Mill Manor in Northampton. Tickets are \$40 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. To purchase tickets, visit the website.

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behavior, she added.

Shamrock Reins, a non-profit, will begin its pilot program with vets participating in a series of weekly sessions, beginning with communication and safety. Before they ever climb onto a horse, there's much to learn, Brennan noted.

Program director Max Resnick is a retired Navy officer and a certified therapeutic riding instructor. He's working side-by-side with Brennan at the center.

"I've always had a passion for horses," he said, as half a dozen paints and quarter horses stuck their heads from their stall windows. "And, I've always had a desire to do something for vets."

He remembered a Navy Seal who was struggling

after his military career ended. "He learned to deal with life by dealing with horses," said Resnick, who has a son on active duty in the Army. "It made a huge difference to him."

Inspired by her own experiences as the daughter of a Vietnam War veteran and a niece of other Vietnam vets, Brennan, 54, has long wanted to give back to those who sacrificed so much.

Retired from a career as an executive with a pharmaceutical research firm, Brennan said, "I've traveled all over the world and gained a greater appreciation for all that we have here."

Shamrock Reins, she said, is an effort to support vets and their families through what can be very trying times.

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RICK KINTZEL / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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