

Featured Farm
at **The Judge's Choice**

Willows Edge Farm

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Fjords in the Suburbs Draw Large Crowds

by Corinne Logan

What started as an idea to help promote our Farm Camp, as well as our Norwegian Fjord horses, grew into something we could not have ever imagined.

We wanted to do this cool thing: offer pony rides on all Norwegian Fjord horses and use all the proceeds to benefit one of the local horse rescues. We wanted to make it bigger than just pony rides though. What else could we offer? "We're having Ole's first West coast foal. Let's make it a celebration!" was our thought and then the fun really began.

Even more than a celebration, we wanted to offer a lot of fun things to do...kids get to plant seeds to take home. Go and toss some feed to the hens, pick up some farm fresh eggs and check out the little baby chicks. The tractor and the six-horse trailer along with our carriage were all going to be out on display. We'd have a stall set up as a bunny station. Then there was the creative/education station where we would offer fun coloring pages as well as information on the Fjords and horse ownership in general. Even a sales station which would include Norwegian Fjord horse artwork and jewelry.



We made a webpage and told some of our students. At first things were slow to pick up and we hoped for 150 people. Steadily the numbers grew. Closing in on the two week countdown, we received a call from one of the regional papers. Could they come out and do a story on our Open Barn? That was a no brainer – of course they could. First day a photographer came out, the next day a reporter.

We received most of the front page of the Good Life section and the day of the event – Saturday – we were on the front page of the paper! We were also being passed around in email groups, parent chat rooms and picked up by the local Seattle area parent magazines as an "Editors Pick" for a weekend event. Crazyness!

In addition to everything else, we had a "baby" station – Ole's newest little girl – people were in and out of little Ti's stall all day, two to four at a time all day. But the pony rides were the huge draw. And the Fjords held up like no other! With Elsie out of riding (with baby Ti) we had only 4 Fjords that could be ridden.

At one point we had all four going, which included Ole who was handled by Kelsey our vet tech. Yes, say all you want about not having a stallion in the arena with mares in the spring, with children around. All those thoughts ran through my head as well, but knowing Ole, I knew he could do it and when Kelsey approached me, I knew it was a go.

Round and round they went stopping for little water and cookie breaks, for four hours. Did I mention we had 696 people come through in those four hours? Most of whom had never seen a Norwegian Fjord horse before. Did I mention we did all of this on our little 2 1/2 acre farm in the suburbs of Seattle? Our close proximity to a major metropolitan city is an obvious draw for all those city folks who want to experience "country life".

I enjoy promotions, so this was a really fun thing for me to do. I also know we have a great insurance policy and a wonderful grounds keeper (thanks to my hubby Scott). I know most people don't want to open their farms up to this kind of liability. BUT, if you are interested, feel free to drop me a line. I would love to help you organize an event of your own.

As I write this, I am still in awe of all the volunteers that came to help out – friends, volunteers from the rescue as well as family. We could not have done it without them. 26 volunteers in addition to myself and Scott made this days a HUGE success! Now we wonder, how many more of these we need to do to expose the Fjords to everyone in the Seattle metro area to the Norwegian Fjord horses...the story will continue.



The Judge's Choice sincerely thanks **Willows Edge Farm**, for submitting this article for our reading enjoyment.

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