

Pony Up! Quarter Horse Project comes to Astoria

Auction to support families who've lost children

BY HAILEY HOFFMAN/THE ASTORIAN

For many of us as children, a trip to the grocery store meant a ride on a majestic mechanical pony at the entrance for just one quarter. Now, as these kiddie rides are disappearing one by one, some of us can't help but wonder where are they now?

For 30 of these lucky ponies, local and national artists have turned them into beautiful works of art as part of the Pony Up! Quarter Horse project, which will auction off the ponies to raise money for the Wade J. Woodmark Foundation in Depoe Bay. Three ponies are on display at Bridgewater Bistro in Astoria.

The foundation was started by Talley Woodmark and John Woodmark after their son, Wade John Woodmark, died in 2005 after accidentally being shot by a friend. The non-profit aims to provide support and hope for families who have lost a child by providing a retreat in Depoe Bay for them to recover without distraction. It also provides scholarships, literacy programs and more.

Talley, owner of the Silver Heron Gallery, Blue Heron Gallery and Purple Starfish Gallery, got her inspiration for the project from her husband, John. On their fifth date in 1993, he claimed to own and lease 250 quarter horses. Talley, an equestrian herself, was thoroughly impressed. He invited her to meet one of his horses. They headed to a grocery store in Bandon.

She quickly realized his quarter horses were not the breed found on a racetrack but rather that children ride for a quarter. They road tripped around Oregon together,

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Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian
TOP: 'Phoebe,' the graffitied pony, is on display at the Bridgewater Bistro. **LEFT:** 'Joy' is described as a galloping Appaloosa. **ABOVE:** 'Thunderbolt' is a futuristic steam-punk pony.



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