

Kyley DiLuigi of Downington, PA is the winner of our 2nd prize, the new DVD from trick trainer and horse master Allen Pogue and his partner Sue De Laurentis from Imagine A Horse. Using Treats as a Training Tool.

Here is Kyley's story When I Fell in Love with Horses, My Little Chincoteague Pony. The wonderful account of how Minnow and Kyley met and developed their relationship through trick training is testament to the power of trust.

My Little Chincoteague Pony by Kyley DiLuigi

I've been involved with horses since the day I was born, but I didn't really fall in love with them until I was 18 and Chincoteague Minnow came into my life. He was a short, rotund Chincoteague pony that started his life as a wild pony on Assateague Island. I didn't know much about him except for the fact that an owner in his past had neglected him and his care for several months, and I quickly found that he had deep trust issues as well as a nasty buck.

For two years Minnow and I battled to gain an understanding of each other. He constantly ran away with me and wanted nothing to do with me. He ignored scary situations and refused to confront anything he felt threatened by. But I loved him anyway and I refused to give up on him.

It wasn't until a simple book came into my life that things began to change. Trickometry by Carole Fletcher was a book that detailed a multitude of tricks to teach your horse. As I taught Minnow his very first trick, to give me a kiss, something began to happen. Minnow began to light up as he discovered what it meant to learn. We flew through the book as he learned to play fetch, shake hands, and even bow. Minnow and I were now communicating and understanding each other.

A year passed and I could barely recognize him as the pony that had appeared in my life 3 years earlier. He was bright eyed and excited for my daily visits to see him. He no longer ran away with me and most importantly we were a team. Minnow had showed me how to teach him and in doing so we opened up a whole door to the world of horse training. And I loved him more every day.

Minnow is now an accomplished trick pony as well as an exceptional riding pony. As he now enters into the retirement phase of his life we enjoy spending time together even more. I have him to thank for my love of horses, although I can be sure that I will never love another horse the way I love him.