



## **HOPE SPRINGS FARM, AFTER TRAGIC FIRE, TO HAVE BARN RAISING SEPTEMBER 4, 2018**

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Charles Kuralt, in his “On the Road” series for CBS, once told the story of a New York couple who bought a working farm in Tennessee to keep their developmentally disabled daughter, who was aging out of high school and into an uncertain future, busy and happy.

Nina Rovner saw the segment in her home in Harrisburg PA, and knew then that this would be the answer for her 12-year old developmentally disabled daughter Mimi when she aged out of her school. After much research, Nina and her husband Neil purchased a working family farm in Hershey PA not just for Mimi but to be open to other adults with intellectual disabilities. Neil named it Hope Springs Farm, and it opened in 2005. Today the Farm, with its alpacas, chickens, sheep, horses, goats and pigs, operates at full capacity, with more than 50 adults enrolled in its day program.

On April 23, 2018 an overnight fire destroyed the Hope Springs barn and took the lives of its mini horses, Bunny and Brownie, two rabbits and a couple dozen new chicks. Marigold, a tea-cup pig, pushed out of her stall and miraculously escaped with only minor burns. All the ducks but one flew away. The barn cats ran too, but reappeared soon after things calmed down.

On September 4, 2018, local builders including some from the Mennonite community will come to Hope Springs Farm in Hershey for an old-fashioned barn raising in the old barn footprint. We want to invite all of our friends in the community to come out and see our new barn being built.

The Farm’s goal has been to provide adults who have developmental disabilities and Autism a day program to maximize their abilities. Growers, as they are called, are always busy. They feed and clean the animals, plant and water gardens, do crafts, take classes, and harvest their flowers and vegetables. Growers go out into the community to participate in volunteer programs such as Meals on Wheels. They make nursing home visits, take field trips and shop for the supplies they need for their animals or to do their crafts. Growers come from all over the Hershey-Harrisburg area and the program is at full capacity. 38 Growers attend the program every day and about 30 staff are employed at the Farm.

Growers and staff had a hard time at first coping with the loss of the barn. Two miniature horses to replace Bunny and Brownie were recently donated by another farm, and the rest of the animals are in temporary shelters. The barn raising will be, like it has been throughout time in Pennsylvania, an exciting community affair. ###

### **CBS local news coverage of Hope Springs Farm fire, April 2018:**

<http://local21news.com/news/local/mini-horsesbaby-chicks-die-in-fire-at-farm-that-runs-program-for-adults-with-disabilities>

**Barn Raising date: September 4, 2018**

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