

# Children's books support horse rescue

BY ELSIE WALKER

How many times have you looked at life from a horse's point of view? In "Janie's New Legs", Silver, a therapy horse, describes his adventures with his friend, Janie. Janie is a young girl who was in a car accident that left her partially paralyzed and in a wheelchair. Silver has gone through rough times, too. He was abused and neglected until he was rescued and brought to the farm where they work with handicapped children. Together Silver and Janie not only bond, but help each other to learn that love and friendship can surmount obstacles.

The author of "Janie's New Legs" is Stanhope resident Diana Tuorto. Tuorto will be at the Botanical Bay Bookstore in Netcong on August 23 from 1pm - 3pm for a book signing. The event will include music, fun and games for children. A horse lover, Tuorto has donated the proceeds from her works to horse-related organizations. The proceeds from "Janie's New Legs", which retails for \$12, are being donated to the Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center in Oldwick, New Jersey ([www.shhrc.org](http://www.shhrc.org)).

"It's great to have such an energetic and dynamic person here," said Bookstore owner Karen Haynes. "It [her personality] translates into her books which are deeply moving."

In a recent interview, Tuorto said, "I think that there are so many physical and emotional benefits from just being around horses...as well as riding...and there have been many untold stories of children and adults making amazing transformations through working with, and riding, horses. I wanted to capture this in a story from the horse's perspective."

Tuorto explained that she was inspired to write the story when she was 16 after reading about handicapped riding in a non-fiction book on various riding disciplines. She'd also seen the topic covered on TV. The story became a paperback book which was released in March of this year.

"Janie's New Legs" is just one of three books Tuorto has written. "My Desert Sun", about a mustang's quest to regain his freedom, first came out in 2006 and Tuorto is going to re-release it in 2009. (For more information on "My Desert Sun", check out <http://cayuse.8k.com/desertsun.html>). Tuorto latest book has just been released. "Luck of the Draw" which is the story of Lucky, who Tuorto describes as, "one of the slowest racehorses that the world has ever known. He seems to fail at all disciplines, but remains upbeat and hopeful and is determined to find his purpose in life throughout the course of the book." Tuorto hopes to have copies of that book at the booking signing, too. If not,



Stanhope resident Diana Tuorto on her horse Luna.

she will be taking orders for it. All proceeds for "Luck of the Draw", which retails for \$15, will go to ReRun, Inc., a non-profit rescue for Thoroughbred ex-racehorses. (Its site is [www.rerun.org](http://www.rerun.org)).

It should come as no surprise that Tuorto has been around horses for the past 20 years, since she was eight years old.

"... the older I get, the more I just enjoy their overall company. In the past, I've shown in equitation and pleasure, as well as hunter paces, but now I just enjoy pleasure riding and spending lots of one-on-one time with my Morgan horse, Luna. She loves hand-grazing and being groomed. In many ways, her personality is more like an affectionate dog than

a horse!" said Tuorto.

And, not only does Tuorto enjoy the company of horses, but also helps those in need through equine rescue efforts.

"I created Horse Welfare Organizations (<http://horsewelfare.8k.com>) in 1998 because I noticed that there was a growing need for a database of horse rescues throughout the United States. Internet searches weren't as accurate at that time and people were having increasing difficulty in finding horse rescues in their home states. Since then, the site has grown tremendously (houses several hundred links from countries all over the world) and gets up to 500 hits daily from people either looking to adopt or

sponsor a horse, or donate a horse themselves. The site also has a popular "Horse of the Month" page where one rescue gets a spotlight of a horse they are trying to adopt or find sponsors for. In some cases, it's a place to post success stories for horses who have been adopted as well," she said.

Yes, horses are definitely something Tuorto loves and she shares that love through her works. And although she is a "children's author", her books don't necessarily just appeal to children.

"The age range for all of my children's novels is 8-14 and up. However, I've had seven year olds read them, and 85 year-olds too! I really hope that by hearing a story from a horse's point of view, children will develop a greater appreciation for animals as living beings and see them for the wonderful companions that they are," she said.