



PHOTOS BY TIM FARRELL/THE STAR-LEDGER

Centenary College is conducting a summer renovation project for its Back Barn at the Long Valley home of the college's equine studies program. More than 100 community volunteers have been helping under the supervision of the Morris Habitat for Humanity. Work on the barn, which houses 12 horses, is expected to be completed by the start of the fall semester. Below, Centenary junior and volunteer Susan Cheng tries to find her balance as she works on the barn's roof.



Volunteers lend hand to restore Centenary College's Back Barn

By Alice Spери
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

The horses at Centenary College's equestrian center needed a new barn — but the school was strapped for cash. So it turned to students, faculty and community members for help with the restoration.

More than 140 people turned up at the Back Barn, on a 65-acre facility at the college's equine studies program.

The volunteers, supervised by a construction manager from Morris Habitat for Humanity, tore down the old, rotting barn and began building a new one. The free labor is saving an estimated \$200,000.

When raising donations is a challenge, seeking other forms of help is the way to go, the project's organizers said.

Doug Kirk, 19, of Hackettstown heard the call for volunteers on the local radio and showed up on the first day. And every day since.

"I didn't have a job lined up for the summer and I figured I'd do something good with my time rather than

waste it," said Kirk, a rising sophomore at the University of Delaware. "It feels good doing something not because you have to, but because you like to do it."

Kirk, like most volunteers, had no experience in construction. But he learned quickly and was working on the barn's roof this week.

Building a barn is relatively simple, said Doug Wright, the Habitat manager supervising the work, at no cost.

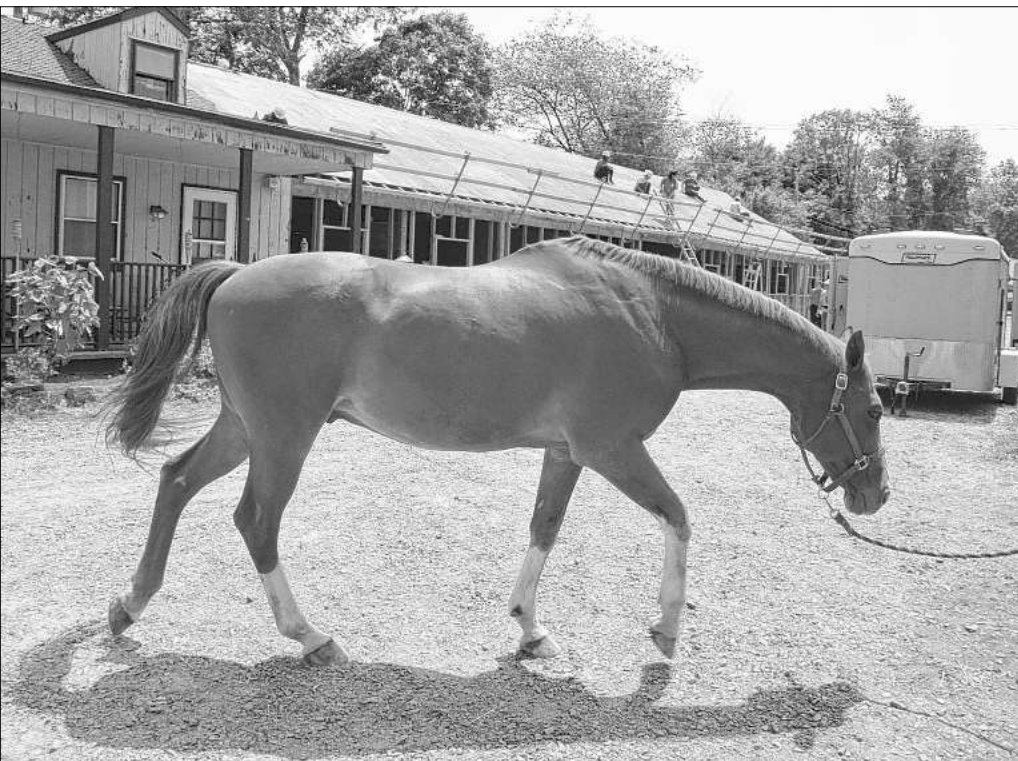
"It's great for volunteers because they can learn quickly and get a feel of how to put this thing together," he said.

The restoration started earlier this month and is expected to be done by the end of August, in time for the fall semester.

"The job needed to get done. And it's been so inspiring," said Kelly Munz, chairwoman of the equine studies department.

To help, contact Simone Knaap-Klinder at (908) 852-1400 ext. 2336 or knaaps@centenarycollege.edu.

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A horse walks back to its stable as Doug Wright, left, and Doug Kirk, 19, of Hackettstown work on the Back Barn. Wright is a Habitat for Humanity manager who is supervising the work at no cost.

