

# The 100 Day Challenge

## The Journey of Brianna & Her Horse Delaware



*"Shooter Spotlight" – Brianna Ivory, L5, Butler, PA  
By Anne Sloan, SL5, Lewisburg, PA  
Above Photo courtesy of Catching Dreams Photography*

It's a picture postcard view as I was about. In its fifth year, the horrific abuse and hoarding  
drove closer to the training facility ATFO is a program of the Heart of situation with a significant amount



# The 100 Day Challenge

## The Journey of Brianna & Her Horse Delaware



*"Shooter Spotlight" – Brianna Ivory, L5, Butler, PA  
By Anne Sloan, SL5, Lewisburg, PA  
Above Photo courtesy of Catching Dreams Photography*

It's a picture postcard view as I drove closer to the training facility of Brianna Ivory, an L5 from Western Pennsylvania. Nestled in gently rolling hills and surrounded by cornfields and lovely views, her Shooting Star Ranch is neat and tidy with its blue color scheme and western decorations. I chuckled when I saw the pool noodles both tied to fence posts and hanging from above the gate to the round pen. Good trainers seem to use a lot of those I've noticed.

This "Shooter Spotlight" is my first in what I hope will become a series. The goal is to profile the unusual and interesting things that CMSA members do. I got the idea in May 2021 when I read that my friend Brianna was taking part in a 100 day challenge called, "The Appalachian Trainer Face Off". It always fascinates me when I learn about projects that mounted shooters take part in so I immediately took a look at what this

was about. In its fifth year, the ATFO is a program of the Heart of Phoenix horse rescue that wanted an outlet to showcase hard to place rescue horses using a competition format that leads to bidding for and the adoption of trained rescue horses. Several thousand people usually attend the competition itself to see the 60+ horses that have been trained.

About 50% of the horses in the rescue were feral. Many are Appalachian Brumbies, free roaming horses from the strip mines that were rounded up. And with over 160 horses at the rescue, not all of them can be adopted.

It's a competitive and intense vetting process to be selected as a trainer for the 100 day challenge. I kept thinking to myself, "How is this very busy young woman going to pull this off?" And not only that, but Brianna was matched with a horse called Delaware, who came from a

horrific abuse and hoarding situation with a significant amount of trauma associated with Delaware's background.

Can a horse like this be fixed? "The way I look at it, she isn't broken so there isn't anything to fix. You can fix a car or fix your saddle but you can't fix a living being," Brianna told me after I first met Delaware in May. "Delaware is uneducated and needs to be taught how to behave properly," she continued. That kind and patient approach from Brianna actually made for a perfect match of horse and trainer. "I learned a lot about patience by example from my parents," Brianna said. "It's my passion to help horses become the best they can be and it's a bonus when I can find them good homes, so this project just seemed right," as she explained why she applied for the opportunity.





Online, it seemed that every other day, Brianna was posting stories about her work with Delaware to social media with the hashtag #hopteamDelaware. She took Delaware to trick riding lessons, pushed cows, hitched her to carts, took her on trail rides, placed at a show in W/T classes, walked her through wooden covered bridges, gave Delaware her first pair of shoes, and exposed her to endless amounts of obstacles and scary objects. She spent countless hours working with Delaware's body and desensitizing her back legs, even though, as she says, "There will never appear to be enough time so you just have to make the time." Brianna showed up at a CMSA shoot one day with a black eye, a testimony to the fact that she certainly was putting in the time.

I'm jumping over the details of all the expert and patient training that went into the success of all of this but the concerns of how this would all go down are perfectly summarized by her fiancé, Bryan King, an M2. "My first thought was that this would be a great opportunity for Brianna because she loves horses and bonds with them so well. But I also had a little scared feeling in me because I wasn't sure how she would do with a not so broke horse."

Early on, Brianna knew that she wanted to expose Delaware to mounted shooting and potential anxiety for this horse was a real

possibility. "The overall goal I have for Delaware is for her to be a horse that someone wants to own. She doesn't have to accept gunfire because it's all about educating her. I will be working at Delaware's pace so if she feels anxious, we will take it slowly," she explained. Brianna was keenly aware that the goal of this 100 day competition was to work towards the successful adoption of her horse and for Delaware to be a horse that someone wants to own. That took her time and her own money to make it happen. While she went into this knowing the financial burden of the project, Brianna's sparkling personality and unending positivity made the team of Brianna



and Delaware a magnet for #hopteamDelaware sponsors, the majority of which were Cowboy Mounted Shooters.

In my case, since I knew the horror of Delaware's background, my husband Kevin Sloan, SM1 and I donated money for hay. DeAnn Sloan, L1, donated red light therapy and massage. Emily Reynolds, L4, donated a saddle pad. Gary Latimer, SM2 gave a salt block and fly mask. Susan and Carissa Wise, L4, gave TSC gift cards. Grace Billotte, L4, made Delaware a rope halter. Beth McKee, SL5 gave various supplies. I had the chance to speak with some other sponsors to hear from them why they jumped in. Paul Treas, M6, told me, "We decided to sponsor the process because we believed in what Bri could do with a horse that just needed a chance in life to become a partner for a future equestrian." He and his wife Jen Treas, L5, donated stalls for Delaware at their East Coast Outlaws shoots this year.

Over these 100 days, as Brianna shared more stories of the progress with Delaware, for those of us who saw the horse in person, the change was almost magnificent. "The biggest change I saw in Delaware was that she put on weight, as well as the willingness and trust that Brianna gained," said her fiancé Bryan. Delaware may never fully get over her food anxiety but at Brianna's, she had unlimited hay and green pasture and seven pounds of grain a day. Part of the Trainer FaceOff challenge included body score goals and trainers can have a horse removed for not meeting goals set by a professional feed expert. As for the trust, we all saw a horse that became so much more willing every time we watched Brianna saddle her up and enter the arena. There was some bucking at first but certainly none by the end of their time together. And Delaware had such an easy and lovely trot, clearly the sign of a happy horse. In addition to her many field trips this summer, she competed in several CMSA fun shoots and had 6 days of exhibitions at CMSA events.





As for the sponsors, the more Brianna posted about her goals for Delaware, the more people took an interest in this entire process. According to Jeff Holtz, SM4, "I sponsored them because I think Brianna has a way with horses and I wanted to see her and the horse to get a chance to show what they could do." By late summer, nearing the 100 day mark, Delaware had conquered all kinds of obstacles and was extremely willing to work and show off her skills.

The funny thing, is that if there was any anxiety in this partnership, it from was the trainer herself, but only a tiny bit and only near the end. This showed through ever so slightly in mid August when I visited Brianna and asked her how everything was going for the competition portion of the Appalachian Trainer FaceOff, scheduled for August 19-21, 2021. While the goal is an adoptable horse, the FaceOff has a portion of the event to showcase technical skills, how to navigate obstacles, as well as a free style portion of 4 minutes of arena time set to music. "Every horse should have a job and a person," she told me, and with this competitive portion visible live on line, and with a professional TV film crew and in front of a large audience, Brianna shared that she doesn't like to show off. But the horse has to be shown well enough to potential adopters.

And guess what? Brianna did it! Not only did Delaware bring in a high bid of \$3,100, nearly 4 times the starting bid but Brianna swept

the competition and earned the Amateur Division Champion award! The event had 75 horses trained and 40 were adopted. And Delaware's new owner will keep Delaware in for additional training with Brianna until Spring 2022. Delaware is being loved by a 13 year old 4H girl, a perfect match!

The success of this 100 days was trainer driven for sure, but Brianna really can't say enough nice things about the community side of all of this. She was amazed at the outpouring of love and support and the financial gifts that helped to cover the direct expenses of this project, a majority of which was from the mounted shooting community. All the items that were donated went home with Delaware to her new owner.

"I have always considered the mounted shooting community my family," Brianna told me. "I have never been comfortable with asking others for help but when I reached out for them to help Delaware, there was no shortage of help. I am so

thankful for the CMSA family that have."

**CMSA Mounted Shooter Sponsors of Financial Gifts, Products and Services:**

- Catching Dreams Photography*
- Rebecca Smith*
- Rustbelt Equine - DeAnn Sloan*
- Mama Bear's Leatherworks - Maryjane Angelo*
- East Coast Outlaws - Jen and Paul Treas*
- In Stable Hands - Cary Worley and Jen Ely*
- JL Horse Hauling - Nicki Dodson*
- Stagecoach West Team Rider - Emily Reynolds*
- Willow Creek Stables - Beth McKee*
- Kaufman Kennel - Karen Kaufman*
- GB Horsemanship - Grace Billotte*
- Park Side Trailers - Rhonda and Charlie Brown*
- Rocket Man and Cowgirl Annie Karen Wertz*
- Jeff Holtz*
- Gary Latimer*
- Susan and Carissa Wise*





*Catching Dreams Photography –  
Rebecca Smith*

*Rustbelt Equine - DeAnn Sloan*

*Mama Bear's Leatherworks -*

*Maryjane Angelo*

*East Coast Outlaws - Jen and Paul  
Treas*

*In Stable Hands - Cary Worley and  
Jen Ely*

*JL Horse Hauling - Nicki Dodson*

*Stagecoach West Team Rider - Emily  
Reynolds*

*Willow Creek Stables - Beth McKee*

*Kaufman Kennel - Karen Kaufman*

*GB Horsemanship – Grace Billotte*

*Park Side Trailers – Rhonda and  
Charlie Brown*

*Rocket Man and Cowgirl Annie*

*Karen Wertz*

*Jeff Holtz*

*Gary Latimer*

*Susan and Carissa Wise*