

# The Good Earth Farm

## Saving Animals and Nurturing Families

Story by Frannie Sheridan



Photo by Frannie Sheridan

Nancy Fried-Tobin at The Good Earth Farm

The difference between seeing animals on television and being at Nancy Fried-Tobin's farm, The Good Earth, is as dramatically different as communicating with people over the internet, and then meeting them in person. You don't always fall in love, but sometimes you do, and no matter what you have a much truer experience.

I met many of the 180 animals at Nancy's farm, located on fifteen acres in Loxahatchee Groves, including horses, miniature horses, llamas, sheep, pigs, chick-

ens, goats, peacocks, parrots and ponies. And I did fall in love a few times. But what most impressed me, is Nancy. Zooming around on her golf cart, she is truly a Pastoral Powerhouse, juggling the needs of all of the animals, as well as her students and clients of all ages.

Truthfully, I'm a city chick. How then did I find myself enjoying shampooing Nancy's sheep, Magic? I loved foaming up Magic's soggy curls. Being closer to her physically made me feel an unexpected kind of awe, and somehow more alive. That's the real magic of The Good Earth Farm. It inspires active involvement. And a few good hours were unexpectedly heartwarming.

I believe that Nancy's secret to her turbo-charged energy is her heart. She rescues abused, sick, and abandoned animals, who she refers to as "people," based on the way she treats them. As equals or better, never less than. "Everybody has a tikkun (a calling)," says Nancy who was brought up modern orthodox Jewish. "Since I was a little kid I have always had a lot of animals. I understand them."

For example, Nancy rescued a pony who was 25 years old. She found the pony living at a farm in Miramar, knee-deep in mud, scarred all over her body, full of parasites and starving. She offered to buy the pony from the owners, which she does from time to time in situations like this. As an animal psychic, Nancy has a special connection right away to animals and feels their pain when they are suffering.

"I loved him and he knew what I did for him," says Nancy about the pony, who became a loving, appreciative animal that children enjoyed visiting for years to come on her farm. In fact, the pony lived until the age of 54, which is a remarkable age for a pony to reach. Usually horses live until age 20 to 22, but some can get up to 30 years...so 54 is almost unheard of.

Nancy also rescues birds from Indonesia. In many cases, people bring animals to her front door because they know that she will provide a good life for them. In September and October of 2007, she says there was literally a line at her door of horses people wanted to give away.

"Right now, people are broke. The economy is hurting

everyone. And people with a lot of land can't afford their taxes. So they're trying to relocate their horses," explains Nancy.

However, it costs a minimum of \$15,000 per year to take care of a healthy horse and much more for one who is not healthy.

While Nancy does try to find good homes for many of the animals, she does not allow people to adopt the animals if it's not the right fit. Right now she's practically giving away beautiful, thoroughbred horses. At just \$2,500 per horse, she's selling them at "way below market value." She always makes sure that the adoption will be a good one, providing a loving home for the animal.

The Good Earth Farm is actually a non-profit Animal Sanctuary. It's undeniably fulfilling to be around the beautiful animals that Nancy has rescued, ready for us humans to love. But let's back it up. She has never received a drop, I repeat, not a drop of help from the government. That means she has managed to effectively feed and care for all these animals by herself. And when the economy was in better shape, our Pastoral Superwoman pulled it off with panache. At the moment, keeping this jewel of a Healing Center up and running



**"Mother Sunshine" and "Baby Sophia"  
in front of The Good Earth barn**

is a very big challenge resting on such small shoulders. Instead of charging more for classes and tours, which would result in further deterring her clients, Nancy's dream is to bring in a passionate, professional fundraiser to literally help her "save the farm." And grow the farm.

In addition to the fact that being around animals simply makes people happy, a rather important ingredient to our world, Nancy has been witness to miraculous healing. Children of all ages, including those with special needs, have made connections with her magnificent animals. Bonds that heal. She intends to have a therapeutic riding department for people in need, and she has specialists who are ready to start. She has had

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children from the Make A Wish Foundation and many other organizations come to experience her farm.

"People get divorced and ask me to take their horse, and I do." Nancy says. "But I need a stipend." Elizabeth Thal of Temple Emanuel says, "Nancy is one of those people who, if she's having a bad day, never shows it. Nothing like the farm exists here. I have seen so many children and adults benefit from it. It is our obligation as a community to keep it afloat."

The Good Earth Farm also houses an arena which Nancy wants covered so that neither animals nor clients will be hindered by the weather. There are endless activities available, listed above. The beautiful grounds have also been used for weddings, fairs, and fundraisers.

Lisa Pinsky of the Meyer Academy who has brought her young students to The Good Earth Farm numerous times says, "The farm is truly a labor of love". Kosher food is also available.

Nancy Fried-Tobin has owned the 15-acre farm for ten years now. She built the filtered lake, a very unusual swimming spot for families to enjoy, as well as everything you see on the farm.

"There was nothing here at first. It was just a wooded area, which we made into an amazing place," says Nancy.

Prior to this location, she had a much smaller piece of land in Plantation Acres. She picked Loxahatchee Groves to move to because it's the only spot in the area which is zoned for any animal.

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With a background in education, Nancy brings a lot of talent to the programs on the farm. She has an art degree from the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, a Masters in Teaching from the University of Massachusetts and an MFA from Syracuse University. She served as a college professor at the University of South Carolina for several years and wrote their Commercial Art teaching program.

She always knew she would return to her connection with animals though. At age 30, she bought her first farm



**Camp kids enjoying time at The Good Earth's unique, filtered lake**

**GOOD EARTH VOLUNTEERS/DONORS NEEDED**

If you are interested in grant writing or fund raising to help The Good Earth "stay alive," contact Nancy Fried-Tobin at **(561) 792.2666**.

Volunteers and donations are welcome!

2141 "B" Road

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[www.thegoodearthfarm.org](http://www.thegoodearthfarm.org)

and her first horse in Plantation, Florida.

Today in Loxahatchee Groves at the Good Earth Farm, she sees approximately 9,000 children a year. She always makes sure to "have a talk" with the young visitors on the farm about respect for animals. It's an essential part of the visit.

"I want to change the world because there's too much animal abuse. People, even children sometimes, don't think animals can feel or remember. But they have souls. They sense a lot of things, more than we can."

One of her favorite parts of the usual tour with a group of children is reminding them about the importance of respect for animals, just before they visit the llamas.

"You have to have respect for llamas," says Nancy. "If you don't have respect for them, you're going to get spit on. It's as simple as that."

Everything is very hands-on for visitors of the Good Earth Farm. The experiences people have are good, enriching, sometimes funny, but always memorable.

The vision for the future involves a kindergarten with resources for teaching special needs children. For more information or to get involved in The Good Earth farm, call Nancy at (561) 792-2666.



**Therapeutic riding lessons at The Good Earth farm**

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*Frannie Sheridan is a local writer, performer, and writing coach. Her book "Never Tell Anyone...an unauthorized, highly-fictionalized autobiography," will be out this year. She will also be seen performing her newly re-named one-person show, "Dancing Or Hitler's Grave.". She may be contacted through her website [www.franniesheridan.com](http://www.franniesheridan.com) or at 561.876.4246.*

