

Rick & Mary Lu Norland

Paola, KS 66071

*Mr. Mayor — you have
great people in your town.*

October 5, 2021

Hello to all of my new friends in Russell, Kansas!

This letter is to thank you for all of your help on October 3rd and 4th of 2021.

To recap, my husband, Rick, and I were travelling on Sunday night, October 3rd, with a young friend, Cheyenne Smith, returning from a horse competition in Colorado. We had our 6 horse trailer with 2 horses and 2 small mini ponies. Driving east on I-70, about 7:30 pm, our F-450 pick-up made a weird sound and we pulled off to the side around mile marker 197. The engine was blown.

My husband and I quickly debated about what to do and how to get help.

Randomly I called the Russell Police Department and talked to Amy. I had no idea what an absolute gold mine of help I had accidently found. All I wanted was a police car with a red flashing light so the speeding cars and semis would not smash into us. We all know that not everyone moves over like they are supposed to and we all know that folks are in excess of the posted speed limit.

So...a sheriff arrived. Not long after, the biggest tow truck I've ever seen in my life arrived from A & D Towing. I have no idea who called them. We were dead in the water and didn't know anyone. I would guess that maybe Amy at the Russell Police Dept. arranged this.

Then we had the issue of the horses—horses that hadn't had water since Parker, Colorado. Horses can die from this kind of stress, and we care about our horses like well-loved family dogs. They could be all right but there was all this strange activity. Horses have a one-way digestive system—they don't vomit or burp, they can't. When they get a tummy ache, their stomachs and various innards can expand, then rupture, and then they die. So, getting help for these innocent animals in our care was critical. And SURPRISE! The sheriff's cousin (or ?) runs The Russell Livestock Pens and they could put the animals up for the night with water, with hay, in a safe place for \$5 each. AND the tow truck guy would take us there!

The tow truck people hitched onto us and hauled us—Ford pick-up AND 6 horse trailer and all back to Russell. We went to the livestock pens and some man was there and he helped us with all of the animals. My husband and somebody (?) unhitched the trailer off to the side. By this time, it was pitch dark and this man with a flashlight would probably rather be at home. Nope, he was helping us—totally because he was a kind person. No pay. My handshake.

We were told that The Lodge at Russell was across the street from the livestock place—so the tow truck people said they'd haul us over so we wouldn't have to drag our luggage across the street and into parking lot.

Shannon, the desk clerk at The Lodge, seemed to know we were coming. She knew we had had a breakdown. And I think I heard her say she gave us a discounted rate...? Again, unknown Russell folks were helping us. The next day (Monday), we talked to Miranda who is the manager. I told her that we still weren't sure how long we would be in the room—that we probably would NOT be out at the 11:00 am. We had a dead pick-up and things were not totally settled as to how we were getting home. "Oh, no problem. Just talk to me and, if you are still here at 3:00, then we will figure things out."

We walked across the street to the livestock pens to see how the horses and ponies were doing. I finally met Greg Carey who arranged for a square bale of hay for our "kids." We had figured how much we would need for the trip, but now the trip was extended. So, Greg and the office lady named Kretia (or Cretia?) got us another bit of hay. The animals had plenty of water and appeared to be just fine.

Our son-in-law came about 2:30 pm. We checked out with Shannon and let her know we were finished with the room.

We went across the street, the men hitched the trailer. I went into the office at the livestock office and told Greg and Kretia that we were leaving and how much I appreciated their kind hospitality for my animals.

All of these people—they saved us. They went above and beyond for complete strangers. You've got a great town. This is the only way I can begin to show my gratitude. Love ya' all.

Most sincerely—



Rick & Mary Lu Norland
Cheyenne Smith
Horses—Harry, Connor
Ponies—Sophie, Pickles



Connor