The Children's Hour
kids public radio

Read & Ride

TCH CREW: What did the horse say when it fell?

TCH CREW: I don't know what!

TCH CREW: I've fallen and I can't giddy-up!

KATIE STONE: It's time for the Children's Hour Kids Public Radio! You're listening to an encore edition of the Children's Hour.

[MUSIC, Blanco Brown, The Git Up]

[00:03:37]

KATIE STONE: Blanco Brown, right here on the Childrens Hour. Hello, I'm Katie Stone. I'm really glad to be with all of you today, including all these kids on Zoom. Hello, everybody.

TCH CREW: Hello, hello.

TCH CREW: Hi.

TCH CREW: Hello.

TCH CREW: Hello.

TCH CREW: Hi.

KATIE STONE: Who's with us today?

TCH CREW: I am Corbett.

TCH CREW: Hello, it's Zen.

TCH CREW: Hello, it's Amadeus.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Kodiak.

TCH CREW: Hello, it's Isaac.

TCH CREW: It's Kenny, oh boy.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Maya.

TCH CREW: Well, hi, apprentice, your good pal Lucas.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Lily Mae.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Illuminata.

TCH CREW: Happy day, it's Maya.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Erikia.

TCH CREW: Hi, it's Zoe.

TCH CREW: Hello, friends, it's Melissa.

TCH CREW: Hello, this is Daniel.

KATIE STONE: Well, thank you all so much for being here, and thanks for joining us out there in listener land. Today on the show, we're going to be talking about reading books and reading in general. Are there any readers on our crew here?

TCH CREW: Yes.

TCH CREW: Mostly every day.

TCH CREW: I do.

TCH CREW: I read.

TCH CREW: I read.

TCH CREW: Yeah, I do read every single day a lot.

TCH CREW: I read occasionally.

TCH CREW: I read, like, 24-7.

KATIE STONE: We have a very literate Children's Hour crew. Gosh, you guys, I'm impressed. Well, you know, a lot of folks struggle with reading.Yeah, Maya.

TCH CREW: I wanted to say that I have dyslexia, and I just started reading chapter books this year, and so I'm really excited.

TCH CREW: That's really exciting. Yeah.I still have dyslexia, even though I am able to read. It was really tough when I was younger doing it, and I can tell you that as you practice more, you're only going to get better.

TCH CREW: That's good to know. Thank you, Zen.

KATIE STONE: Aw, Zen, thanks for sharing that. And, Maya, congratulations. That's super exciting. Well, I'm very excited about the guest that we're going to have on our show today, you guys. It's Miss Caitlin Gooch. She's from Wendell, North Carolina, with Saddle Up and Read. Cannot wait for you to learn how she is using horses to help motivate kids to read more. It's a pretty great idea. And we've got a couple of book reviews, one from Maya Falcone and one from Evan Dates. Then we're going to hear from the kids on The Extinction Diaries about why some zebras are being born with very unusual stripes and what that means for the whole herd. All of this is mixed with great music, including this one – this is They Might Be Giants right here on The Childrens Hour.

[MUSIC, They Might Be Giants, I Can Read]

[00:08:24]

KATIE STONE: You're listening to The Children's Hour and with us today on the show is Miss Caitlin Gooch. She is the director and founder of Saddle Up and Read. Welcome to The Children's Hour, Miss Gooch.

CAITLIN GOOCH: Hey, I'm so excited to be here. Y'all are all so beautiful and handsome.

KATIE STONE: You're doing something really neat and you're from an organization called Saddle Up and Read. The kids have a lot of questions for you. Who's ready for our very first question? Go for it.

TCH CREW: What is Saddle Up and Read?

CAITLIN GOOCH: So Saddle Up and Read is a non-profit organization and I started it so I could encourage kids to read books and they read to my horses. I have eight horses so kids get to come out or I go into the neighborhoods and give away books for free and let other kids, just like you all, touch the horses and pet them and feed them treats.

TCH CREW: How can you take care of eight horses?

CAITLIN GOOCH: Well, luckily, I don't have to take care of all eight by myself. When I was you all's age, I worked at our farm. We always have lived on a horse farm and I've always had horses. I had to feed them and clean out their water buckets and clean out the manure in their stalls. But today, because my dad is an entrepreneur, he hires other people to take care of them. So we don't have to do it anymore but I did have to do it up until maybe college.

TCH CREW: Are there any benefits with reading to horses instead of like reading to yourself or maybe to your brother or sister? Are there any advantages with particularly horses?

CAITLIN GOOCH: Oh, that's a great question. So a lot of the times when the kids come out and they're reading to horses, they feel like it's a much funner activity. They have more fun doing it. Sometimes horses do things like sneeze and they'll nod like this. And the kids think that the horses can understand everything they're saying. So it's just a coincidence but it's really fun. And I think that with the horses, horses don't talk, we all know that. And so when kids mess up when they're reading, no one says anything bad about it or nobody laughs. The horses help boost their confidence. So I think those are pretty

much the basic advantages. Hopefully later on in Saddle Up and Read we'll be able to do research and prove how it helps.

TCH CREW: When did you start?

CAITLIN GOOCH: I started Saddle Up and Read in 2017 and I partnered with a library here in our town. We have one library and I told them I wanted to share my horses with the kids in the community. And so we worked together so that when kids went to check out a book at the library, they got a chance to come out to the farm for checking out books.

TCH CREW: Do the horses like it when you read to them?

CAITLIN GOOCH: I think they do. Lot of times if they're in their stalls, so a stall is what the horses stay in inside of the barn, they'll peek their heads out and most of the time I think it's just to see if anybody's going to give them a treat or something. But I think they do enjoy the company because horses are herd animals and they're companion animals and they thrive on relationships. So when people come out and they want to rub on their head and their necks and scratch behind the ears, I think they really enjoy it.

TCH CREW: How does the kids act with the horses?

CAITLIN GOOCH: So a lot of times when the kids come out, they are really surprised and sometimes they scream. So I have to tell them not to scream around the horses because it might scare them. Horses don't really like loud noises because it could mean that, you know, they might be in danger. So the kids, once I explain to them the rules, like no screaming, no running around the horses, no jumping at them and all that stuff, you know, it's not a playground. Like the things you would do at a playground, you wouldn't do them at the barn because we all want to be safe. But for the most part, I hear a lot of giggles and laughs and I see a lot of smiles.

KATIE STONE: Is there anyone on this crew who would like to read to horses?

TCH CREW: Of course. It's clearly a great idea.

KATIE STONE: We're talking with Miss Caitlin Gooch. She's from Saddle Up and Read. We're going to play a little bit of music and be right back.

[MUSIC, Ralph's World, Ponyboy]

[00:15:04]

[MUSIC, Buck Howdy, Giddyup!]

[00:17:04]

[MUSIC, Anda Union, Galloping Horses]

[00:18:04]

KATIE STONE: In the background, Anda Union, from the CD The Wind Horse. And you heard the title track from Buck Howdy's Giddy Up CD. That was with Trout Fishing in America. And way back when that was Ralph's World with Ponyboy.

TCH CREW: You're listening to the Children's Hour. We'll be right back.

KATIE STONE: The Children's Hour is produced by the Children's Hour Incorporated. We're a New Mexico based non-profit organization supported by listeners just like you. Learn more about us at childrenshour.org. The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs supports the Children's Hour. Celebrate diverse cultural communities of New Mexico at nmculture.org. Support for the Children's Hour provided by Electric Playhouse in Albuquerque, New Mexico. More info at electricplayhouse.com. music plays

[MUSIC, Aaron Nigel Smith, Welcome to the Village]

[00:21:44]

KATIE STONE: That's Aaron Nigel Smith from a CD called Welcome to the Village. You're listening to the Children's Hour. With us on the

show today is Miss Caitlin Gooch. She's from Saddle Up and Read. Out of Wendell, North Carolina. And this is an organization. That's motivating kids to read. By getting them to read to horses. Miss Gooch, the kids still have a lot more questions for you.

TCH CREW: What inspired you to start Saddle Up and Read?

CAITLIN GOOCH: So, unfortunately in North Carolina. In the United States in general. Our literacy rates here are low. And when I started to research. That in 2017 I saw that the elementary schools around me, the kids were far behind in some of the other countries. And I think reading is very important. And, you know, reading 20 minutes a day. And as you all grow up, you're gonna have to know how to read. And I just thought that what would our future be if kids aren't reading? So that inspired me. And I really wanted to expose children who had never been around horses or wouldn't get that chance to be around horses.

KATIE STONE: Can you talk a little bit about your childhood? Did you read to horses when you were a kid?

CAITLIN GOOCH: I don't know if I read to horses when I was a kid or not. But I was always at the barn. I know when I was six years old, I asked my dad if I could move my bed into one of the stalls so I could just stay there. And we lived on the farm. So, like, I could just go out the house and I could see all the horses. I could walk right into the barn from the house. But I know I read a lot. Of books, I don't know if I ever read them to my horse. But I rode what's called a trail ride. And I would ride like... It's kind of like going on a hike. But on horseback. And I did that every weekend with my dad. In different places on the east coast. That sounds like so much fun. Does anyone on my crew wish that they could just go on trail rides every weekend?

TCH CREW: I totally do!

TCH CREW: I do!

TCH CREW: I do!

TCH CREW: I do!

TCH CREW: I would do that all the time if I got the chance.

TCH CREW: Oh, me too.

KATIE STONE: Yeah, Maya.

TCH CREW: How has Saddle Up and Read had to adapt to the pandemic?

CAITLIN GOOCH: So, I did not have a truck and trailer before. And one thing that I noticed was that the demographic of children that I wanted to reach for Saddle Up and Read, I couldn't reach them because of transportation. So, when the pandemic happened, I used social media as a tool to get a truck and a trailer. And someone donated a truck, and then someone donated the money for a horse trailer. And in that same week, I got both. And because of the pandemic, I stopped letting kids come to the farm. And I just drove to the kids. So, I would go to parks. I've been in a Walmart parking lot. I've been in different neighborhoods. And I'll take the truck and trailer. With my horse. My miniature horse. Or my other horse. My childhood horse, Goat. I still have her. And the trailer is full of books. And I would just set it up. So that the kids could get. Whatever book they wanted. And that's been a lot of fun. So, that's how we had to adapt.

TCH CREW: What is your favorite book from when you were a kid?

CAITLIN GOOCH: My mom has a cookbook. That she got from my grandmother. Which is her mom. I think it's called Mama's Black Pot or something. But my grandmother actually wrote in it. Like with her handwriting and stuff. My grandmother died when I was two months old. So, my mom always used that cookbook when she was cooking and stuff. So, just to see her handwriting and to use some of those recipes. There's a sweet potato pie recipe in there. So, I memorized it because I make sweet potato pies every Thanksgiving.

TCH CREW: Wait, that's your favorite book? I thought you said cookbook. What is your favorite book from when you were a kid?

CAITLIN GOOCH: There was a book about a strawberry and a mouse. I can't remember the title of it, but I think it's a pretty old book. But it's about this mouse who was trying to hide his strawberry from a bear. And at the end of the book, he cuts the strawberry in half, and he eats half of it. So, the bear doesn't eat the whole strawberry.

TCH CREW: What are your plans with Saddle Up and Read into the future?

CAITLIN GOOCH: In the future, I would like to have my own farm, so I can build a literacy lodge. It won't be exactly like a library. It'll just be a cool place. A safe place. A positive space. For kids to come and learn how to read. And read books. And just explore their creative minds. That is definitely what I want to do in the future with Saddle Up and Read.

KATIE STONE: Caitlin Gooch is the founder and director of Saddle Up and Read. They're out of Wendell, North Carolina. And she is motivating kids to become lifelong readers. You can learn more about her at saddleupandread.org. Ms. Gooch, is there anything that you'd like to leave our listening audience with that maybe we didn't get to today?

CAITLIN GOOCH: Make sure you all are reading 20 minutes a day. You all can read to each other, or call one of your relatives and read a book to them. Reading is so important. And you expand your vocabulary and your imagination when you get lost in a book.

KATIE STONE: Such good advice. Thank you so much for being with us on the Children's Hour, Ms. Gooch.

[MUSIC, Mister G, Love to Read]

[00:30:32]

[MUSIC, Keller Williams, Horseback Rider]

[00:32:33]

[MUSIC, The Story Pirates, Nothing is Impossible]

[00:35:51]

TCH CREW: Hi, this is Evan Deetz and I just read the book My Life in the Fish Tank about a 12-year-old girl called Zinni. Written by Barbara Dean and published by Aladdin, this book really held my attention. It was exciting, funny, sad, and overall just really powerful. Zinni's parents tell her and her siblings that her older brother has smashed up a car and has been acting really weird lately. Because of this, he had to see some doctors and go to a sort of hospital while he gets better. Zinni's parents want everyone in the family to keep this private, but this secret Zinni has to keep makes her life get out of control. With support from her favorite science teacher, Ms. Molina, Zinni is able to help her parents start to make things better at home and find hope for their future. But what's really great about this book is that it builds up tension and you don't know what's going to

KATIE STONE: Evan Dates is on the Children's Hour Kids Crew. Thank you, Evan. Before Evan's book review, you heard Nothing is Impossible. And Keller Williams brought us Horseback Rider. Before that, Love to Read was Mister G. In the background, Lobo Loco with Good Thoughts from Tricone Resonator. Right here on the Children's Hour.

TCH CREW: You're listening to the Children's Hour, Kids Public Radio. We'll be right back.

KATIE STONE: Thanks to the Outpost Performance Space in Albuquerque, New Mexico for hosting the Children's Hour. Support for the Children's Hour is provided by United Way of North Central New Mexico. Support provided by the City of Albuquerque and the Urban Enhancement Trust Fund. Bernalillo County is a proud supporter of the Children's Hour. Many thanks to the users at tokenibus.org who direct funds to the Children's Hour every week.

[MUSIC, Father Goose Music, Live Your Life]

[00:43:57]

TCH CREW: Extinction Diaries. Zebras are starting to be born with strange spots or patterns not normal to them. Scientists believe this is likely from inbreeding. Research has revealed that most animals higher up on the evolutionary chain are instinctively not drawn to mate with a close relative. However, species suffering reduced numbers such as low as a dozen or herds with geographical constraints have no choice but to mate with a relative close enough to create genetic damage. Aberrations not related to inbreeding like melanin mutation that alters pigment are rare among mammals. So biologists are concerned that 5% or more of zebras around a Ugandan lake are striped abnormally. Habitat fragmentation is preventing regional herds from migrating and some smaller groups are literally boxed in without any unrelated genetics. There are approximately 1.5 million wild zebras and though that's not great, there remains significant genetic diversity overall. The problem now is likely specific groups finding themselves cut off from their distant relatives. My name is Aaron Oliveira and this is a Small World Radio production.

[MUSIC, Grey Zebra, Recess Monkey]

[00:47:23]

TCH CREW: Hello, my name is Maya and I'm reviewing a book called Pandemic 2020, a Nine-Year-Old's Perspective by Pritchett Hedda. This book was published in 2020 and it was designed, printed and distributed by Bookweeb. In my opinion, this book was fantastic. The writing is very descriptive. In this book, there are tips and tricks on how to survive and thrive while living in quarantine. The story is very relatable and Pandemic 2020, a Nine-Year-Old's Perspective by Pritchett Hedda is a five-star read. From the Children's Hour, this is Maya Falcone. The story is very relatable and goes into depth about the thought process and how it feels learning that you are surrounded

by a global pandemic. Pandemic 2020, a Nine-Year-Old's Perspective by Pritchett Hedda is a five-star read. From the Childrens Hour, this is Maya.

[MUSIC, The Hipwaders, The Books I Like to Read]

[00:53:59]

KATIE STONE: The Books I Like to Read are The Hipwaders, from Year-Round Sounds. Before Maya's book review, you heard Gray Zebra, that's Recess Monkey from Animal House. And Live Your Life is Father Goose Music's brand new single. You're listening to the Children's Hour. We've got time for one more.

[MUSIC, The Schmooney & Friends, Let's Read a Book]

[00:57:26]

KATIE STONE: The Children's Hour is produced by The Children's Hour Incorporated, a New Mexico non-profit. Our show was written by Katie Stone with lots of help from all of us on the Kids Crew. You can find photos, links, learn-along guides, and more about us at childrenshour.org. Many thanks to Ms. Caitlin Gooch from Saddle Up and Read for being with us on the show today. Today's show was produced by me, Katie Stone, with help from our senior producer, Christina Stella. Find our podcast wherever you listen to podcasts, or go to our patreon.com slash thechildrenshour. Or ask your smart speaker to play the Children's Hour podcast. We post our photos and more on Instagram and Facebook. Find us at TCH Radio. Our theme music was written by C.K. Barlow. The Children's Hour is distributed by PRX and by the Pacifica Radio Network. Thanks for listening to the Children's Hour, Kids Public Radio.