

October 2, 2026

A Leap of Faith

This week, ***A Bank within Reach*** belongs to Maneka and Zack and a dream appropriately named ***A Leap of Faith Equestrian Center***:

My name is Maneka, and God placed the vision of A Leap of Faith Equestrian Center (ALOF) on my heart many years ago, before Zack and I ever got married.

We have now been married for 10 years and have two beautiful horse-obsessed babies, Ella Jade and Kaden.

The love of horses has been passed down through generations of my family. My great-granddaddy trained horses, my daddy is a farrier, and my brother is a trick rider and Roman rider for Dolly Parton's Stampede. And now I get to live my dream of sharing that same love of horses with others.

Horses were a huge part of my childhood. When friends would come over, they would always tell me how lucky I was to have horses. At the time, I didn't realize just how blessed I really was.

It wasn't until I got older that I understood how much horses had actually given me and how much they had helped me throughout my life.

My passion for horses and my love of teaching children eventually came together. I realized the best way I could share the blessing I had been given was to give other people the opportunity to experience it, too.

That became ALOF.

Today, we offer weekly lessons for all ages and skill levels with a CHA-certified riding instructor, trail rides, Soul Soother sessions, birthday parties and events, and boarding.

There are two things that make me especially proud of what ALOF has become.

The first is hearing clients tell us they instantly feel at peace when they pull down our driveway.

The second is watching our riders become family.

Even kiddos who have moved on still come running up to hug our necks and share their favorite memories with us. Those relationships mean more than I could ever put into words.

Taking Our Leap

Zack and the good Lord above are the main reasons ALOF went from a dream to reality.

In 2018, Zack and I had just purchased our first house and welcomed our baby girl into the world. I had a job with a consistent paycheck, but I wasn't happy, and Ella Jade was struggling with the transition of me going back to work.

Then God spoke to Zack and told him it was time for my dream to come true.

I was terrified.

We had a new house payment, a new baby, and I was considering walking away from the security of a steady paycheck.

But Zack's encouragement and the Lord's faithfulness assured me that it was time to take that leap of faith.

We opened ALOF in Addison on five acres.

We quickly grew and realized we needed a bigger farm. That journey eventually brought us to Cullman, and Cullman welcomed us with open arms and has loved us well.

Because of the support of our local community, I not only get to give lessons and be home with our kiddos, but Zack is now able to work for ALOF and be home with us, too.

That is a blessing we never take for granted.

Why "A Leap of Faith?"

People often ask where the name came from.

When I was in college majoring in Equine Management and Training, I had a fabulous teacher and mentor who asked us to sit down, close our eyes, and think about our future business plans. Part of the assignment was to name our future business.

I prayed for God to show me His plan.

He showed me a big, powerful horse jumping off the side of a giant mountain.

I couldn't see where the horse was going to land, but I knew the horse was on a mission—and I knew he landed safely.

God spoke to my heart:

"Your business is going to be A Leap of Faith."

I had no idea then just how perfectly that name would describe our story.

The Next Generation

This year, Ella Jade and Kaden have ventured into rodeoing and have absolutely loved it. Next rodeo season, we plan to haul some of our riders with us so they can join in on the fun!

For our family, having strong personal relationships within the community is incredibly special.

We love supporting other local businesses because we know the families we are supporting.

And one of the sweetest parts of what we do is that anytime we go out in public, members of our ALOF family—past and present riders—run up to give us hugs.

That's what community means to us.

EvaBank has been so good to our family, and we are forever grateful for the relationships we have made there.

Our kids even get excited when we tell them we are going to EvaBank!

There's something special about walking into your bank and having people smile and call you by name. Hannah, especially, has known us for years and has been a huge part of making sure ALOF is successful.

We are so thankful for her and for a community that has supported our family and our dream.

A Bank within Reach

Maneka's story really doesn't need much commentary from me.

It speaks for itself.

A young family. A new baby. A mortgage. A dependable paycheck. A dream that had been placed on her heart years earlier—and a husband who believed it was time to take the leap.

Then a community that welcomed them when they landed.

That is why relationship banking still matters.

Behind a business name is a family. Behind a loan is often a dream. Behind an account number is a person who deserves to be known by name.

And sometimes being a community bank simply means being close enough to watch someone's leap of faith become something very real.

Thank you, Maneka and Zack, for allowing us to share your story—and thank you for choosing EvaBank to be a small part of it.

