

NMSU Alumni Association Outstanding Graduate
College of Agricultural, Environmental and Consumer Sciences
Marisa Trujillo

Equine science instructor Joby Priest proudly says that Marisa Trujillo is “just what we like to send out of here with our name on it.”

Born and raised in Albuquerque, Marisa will receive her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with a major in animal science and minors in chemistry and horse management. From an early age she loved being around horses—she took riding lessons starting at six years old and was a competitive rider for five years. One of her fondest memories is volunteering at Loving Thunder Therapeutic Riding, where she helped during equine-assisted therapy sessions for special needs children.

Knowing she wanted to work with horses, Marisa realized NMSU had the animal science academic program she wanted to pursue in addition to being close to home. Generous scholarship assistance sealed the deal—making Marisa the first Aggie in her family!

In addition to maintaining a 3.9 GPA, Marisa worked at the NMSU horse farm, honing her leadership skills by overseeing the care and feeding of the horses, managing maintenance tasks, and training new hires. Her best academic experiences occurred during her horse management class, in which students are assigned a “crazy, untrained” yearling to work with and prepare for sale during spring auction. Little by little she coaxed the stallion assigned to her, and her persistence paid off in the form of trust—Marisa was finally able to put a halter on him when no one else could. She credits her professors with giving her tools both in and out of the classroom that made her experiences at NMSU so positive.

Joby commends Marisa’s exceptional work ethic, dependability, and willingness to “do the grunt work.” While some of his student workers initially show enthusiasm about being around horses, many of them vanish when they realize that the majority of the work involves physical labor and working with the horses is a tiny part of the job. Not so with Marisa: “She was an honest and solid worker who wanted to learn, asked a lot of questions, and did what she was asked.” Marisa credits her parents for her work ethic, noting, “as a kid, you soak in what you see.” Her parents work hard and push Marisa to set her own goals and work hard to attain them. They are her inspiration to this day.

Marisa says the people at NMSU made her experience “so full.” On the first day of school, she had trouble finding her classes, and a fellow student “spent two hours in the hot sun” helping Marisa find her way around. Later, Marisa discovered that this student was affiliated with a campus ministry. Given Marisa’s deep connection to her faith, she decided to get involved because of how the organization “backs up its words with actions.” One way she got involved was by doing volunteer work at Community of Hope, which Marisa says is a joy to be a part of.

Marisa’s career path is now equine massage therapy. She’ll head out of state early next year to obtain certification, and feels “excitement, joy, and peace” about her path forward.