

Spring 2012

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**Wish List:**

- ♦ Volunteers — we are always in need of helping hands, from horse leaders and sidewalkers to teaching assistants, barn aides, and petting zoo mentors.
- ♦ Instructors
- ♦ Board Members  
*and, of course...*
- ♦ An Indoor Arena



## CHANGES IN CHILDREN’S PROGRAM

by Kris Zieska, Director of Children’s Program

As the paperwork goes out to both past riders and volunteers, it will be noticed that we will be changing how the Children’s Program is arranged for 2012. After much discussion and looking at how classes have been arranged in the past, it was decided to see if breaking the riding season into sessions will help with volunteer retention.

The riding season will now have a spring, summer and fall session. The session will be seven weeks in length with 2 weeks afterward that we will be able to hold makeup classes for any that have been cancelled due to holidays or weather. We will then ask volunteers to commit (as much as they can) to the possible nine weeks of the session.

The new schedule should make scheduling riders easier as well. With sessions the families should have more flexibility if they want to ride only in the summer, if they would like a different time in the summer than they had in the spring, or if they would like to ride in the spring and fall only. Billing should also be more straightforward, because invoices will be sent out before each session for the entire 7 weeks. While we will reschedule classes that fall on holidays (Memorial Day on Monday) or that we have to cancel because of weather, we will not be able to reschedule for individual absences.

The sessions will be as follows:

SPRING SESSION	SUMMER SESSION	FALL SESSION
May 7 <sup>th</sup> —June 21 <sup>st</sup>	July 9 <sup>th</sup> —August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	September 10 <sup>th</sup> —October 25 <sup>th</sup>
June 25 <sup>th</sup> —July 5 <sup>th</sup> (Make Up Weeks)	August 27 <sup>th</sup> —September 6 <sup>th</sup> (Make Up Weeks)	October 29 <sup>th</sup> —November 8 <sup>th</sup> (Make Up Weeks)

At the end of the year, Majestic Hills Ranch will send a survey out to all of our volunteers and our rider’s families to see how this change is viewed. We value the input from everyone, though we ask that we give this a full year to work out all of the bugs. Every new change will have its benefits and drawbacks, so let us see how this goes.

### Paperwork sent out for 2012!

The rider paperwork was mailed out to all of the riders that participated in the 2011 riding season as well as those that rode in 2010. Please fill in the registration form and send it back as soon as possible, the physician’s order does not need to be into the office until April 30<sup>th</sup>, just one week before classes begin.

Confirmations were sent out to volunteers via email (if we have the address) or through the mail. If we have paperwork from the previous 2 years we will not need new forms filled out. Once we have your confirmation, I will contact you directly about your paperwork. *Thank you so very much for helping us out in the new year!!*

## EVENTS PLANNED IN 2012:

We have several events planned in the coming year that we are very excited about. Some are old friends, like our “Day at the Ranch” Picnics for Cornerstone and Hopekids, and some are new—like adding riders from the Lupus Foundation to our picnics, hosting a picnic after each session to thank our wonderful volunteers for all the time they have given to our program, and creating a special “Ride a thon” week activity for our riders and volunteers. We are also working with Von Hansen’s Meats in Savage, selling bratwursts & hotdogs on two weekends this spring and summer—with a portion of the proceeds going to our Ranch. The year end event is still in the planning stage, but we are hoping that it will be even more magical than last year’s!

As we come closer to the dates for the events, we will put information in both our website and our Facebook page. Please make sure to “Like” our page if you use Facebook, so that you are kept up to date on all the fun adventures that go on at the Ranch.



*Sunrise at the Ranch, March 13<sup>th</sup>.*

## INSTRUCTOR UPDATES :

In 2012 we will have four instructors working with our children’s and young adult classes, one instructor working with the veteran’s classes and at least one volunteer driver working with our carriage classes.

Majestic Hills Ranch is welcoming Jen Espinoza as our newest PATH Intl. certified instructor with the children’s program. Jen became certified in 2011 and taught some of the advanced riders throughout the year. She will be teaching both regular and advanced classes Monday evenings throughout the upcoming year.

Brenda Steinhauer will continue to teach some of our more advanced riders as well as teaching regular Wednesday evening classes this year. Brenda has been working with the Majestic Hills children’s program for over 7 years, and her years as a personal care assistant; former ranch manager and trainer; and horse owner bring patience, knowledge, and experience to our riders.

During the summer session, Molly Rootes will be returning to teach 2 of the 4 days that we will have morning classes. Molly brings to the ranch her experience at working with special needs children, as she is a Special Education Teacher for District 196. Molly has been one of the main instructors of the therapeutic riding program for the last 9 years, and received her PATH Intl (formally NARHA) Certification in 2006.

Kris Zieska, director of the children’s and young adult program, will continue to teach classes throughout the year, as well as being a backup as needed. She received certification from PATH Intl in 2001.

Craig Swanson, director of the veteran’s Heroes on Horseback program, continues as the instructor of all therapeutic horseback riding as well as equine assisted activities that is done by the veterans. He will also be directing the carriage driving classes.

Patti Wallin has worked extensively with Majestic Hills Ranch, both with the children’s program as well as being a board member. Patti provides technical support for the City of Minneapolis in the 311 Center, owns her own horses, and boards them at Majestic Hills Ranch. She will be using her knowledge and passion for driving horses to help us start up our therapeutic carriage driving course.

## UPDATES TO THE HEROES ON HORSEBACK PROGRAM FOR 2012:

We have some exciting new additions to our Heroes on Horseback program which we offer to military veterans. In 2011, Majestic Hills Ranch received restricted grants so that two pieces of specially designed equipment could be created for our use. The first is a hydraulic lift to be used assisting riders in mounting horses, and the second is a horse drawn carriage that also had a hydraulic lift so that veterans that are wheelchair bound can experience the benefits of working with horses.

The hydraulic lift gives the instructor the ability to have riders that are in wheel chairs or that have limited mobility to transfer onto the back of a horse easily and safely. The rider, instructor, and assisting volunteer all step onto the lift and then the instructor raises the platform to the desired height for each horse. The rider's horse is then lead into the mounting area next to the lift and an additional volunteer on the ground helps assist with getting the rider settled onto the back of the horse. The lift is then lowered to the ground again and the team moves away from the mounting area. This flexibility will greatly increase the amount of riders that Majestic Hills Ranch can safely serve.

The carriage (seen below) was designed and built specifically for use by those in wheelchairs, and it also has a hydraulic lift build into the structure. The lift allows anyone in a wheelchair (with physician approval) whether a light weight style or a power driven chair, to work with horses. The carriage driver (called an "Able Bodied Whip") is experienced with carriage driving and will be the one interacting with the veteran the most. The class instructor typically works from the ground, directing the actions of those driving. There are volunteers that are knowledgeable of driving that assist on the ground by holding the horse when the carriage is stopped (called a "Header") and that help assist getting the rider into place and the chair strapped into place. Additionally there will be a volunteer that rides in the carriage once it leaves the arena, just in case a set of hands is needed out in the field.

Carriage driving is a new adventure at Majestic Hills Ranch. Our horses have been participating in local parades pulling our hay wagon for the last several years, so they are experienced professionals with being driven in a variety of settings. We know that driving a horse is a very dynamic activity, which increases the upper body strength, depth perception, and



*Stuart, inspecting the new carriage right after its arrival.  
(The carriage is stored in the hay barn, protected from the elements.)*

### *Thank you*

*To everyone that supports Majestic Hills Ranch. Your contributions help us keep our program costs low.*

#### **Employer Match:**

From BlueCross / BlueShield:

Aleftina Bader

Anne Bueltel

Lindsey Dinan

Jennifer Herman

Paulette Niver

#### **Business Support:**

Walmart / Sam's Club of

Apple Valley

Kim Grinstad of Western

National Insurance

#### **Individual Donations:**

Kevin Odefey

#### **In Kind Donations:**

Mary Smith

problem solving skills of the driver. This social activity will challenge the ability of the driver as they graduate in skill from driving in the arena, to taking the carriage out in the enclosed pastures, and then ultimately onto our groomed trails that circle the edge of our Ranch.

We are all excited to see how far we can take this new addition to our program. If you have questions or would like to participate with our programs, please call our office at 952-888-6077, look at the information on our website at [www.MajesticHillsRanch.org](http://www.MajesticHillsRanch.org), look at our Facebook page of Majestic Hills Ranch for Children, or send an email to [KZieska@MajesticHillsRanch.com](mailto:KZieska@MajesticHillsRanch.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

# MAJESTIC HILLS RANCH FOUNDATION

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## Upcoming Events in 2012

<b>March</b>	All paperwork out Scheduling riding season	
<b>April</b>	Children's Program paperwork due Volunteer trainings Ranch Clean-up Payment for Session 1 due	(April 6) (April 7, 11, 28) (April 20 & 21) (April 27)
<b>May</b>	Volunteer trainings Spring Classes begin (Session 1) Fundraiser with Von Hansen's Meats Memorial Day— <i>Ranch CLOSED</i>	(May 5, 12) (May 7) (May 26 & 27) (May 28)
<b>June</b>	Spring Classes end (regularly scheduled) Make up class for Memorial Day Additional make up weeks CornerStone Picnic (tentative date) Lupus Foundation Picnic (tentative date) Fundraiser with Von Hansen's Meats Payment for Session 2 due	(June 19—21) (June 25) (June 26—July 5) (June 22 or 29) (June 23 or 30) (June 30 & July 1) (June 29)
<b>July</b>	Independence Day— <i>Ranch CLOSED</i> Summer Classes begin (Session 2) HopeKids Picnic	(July 4) (July 9) (yet to be determined)



### **Board of Directors 2012**

#### **Executives**

Kim Howard, Board President  
Larry Johnson, Vice President  
Carol Meagher, Secretary / Treasurer

#### **Members**

Shanon Bjornard  
Mary Lee Enfield, Ph.D.  
Heather Harden  
Virginia Latocki  
Wayne Mertz

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