

RANCH RAMBLINS

Volume 7, Issue 3

Winter 2014

2014 Year in Review!



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Majestic Hills Ranch
 for Children & Military Veterans



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Majestic Hills Ranch is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit that serves riders in the seven county region around Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN. MHR does not discriminate against anyone due to race, religion, gender, ability, age, sexual orientation, or political beliefs. Riders must meet program criteria before they can participate.

2014 Program Reviews

A Fond Farewell to the Season...

The 2014 riding season was one of joy and sorrow; one of excitement and of concerns; and one that we will always remember.

We introduced Jen Espinoza as the new Director of the Heroes on Horseback Veteran's Program and Laura Peterson as a new instructor in the Children's Program. We had teaching assistants Gay Uttenhove and Sue Anderson help out in both Programs, while barn aide Mary Smith kept the Children's Program on task Mondays and Thursdays.

We started off the year with the loss of one of our core program horses, Freckles, in February and lost a second one, Tobie, in November, both to age related conditions.

We had record number of Veteran participants this year, and they worked not only with riding, but also with lunging and ground driving horses. The Children's program also had a pilot program of working on groundwork with Riley, a privately owned miniature horse.

Kim Howard was nominated and won one of the "Eleven Who Care" award from Kare 11, and was featured on a news segment.

We had a several wonderful fundraisers this year, including the Von Hanson's Meats Brat Stand; the 2014 Ride-A-Thon; the October Autumn Blaze Gala event; and the Give to the Max Day in November. So many riders and volunteers participated in helping us with these, our cups ran over from their generosity.

2015 Program Goals

- To become more streamlined and efficient in all of our paperwork, databases, scheduling and fundraising.
- Teaching and certifying more instructors. Have Laura and Brenda feel confident and ready to pass their PATH certification and guide Gay, Sue, Stephanie, and Pat towards beginning the certification process.
- Recruiting more and retaining the wonderful volunteers that already participate in our programs. We would love to increase the amount of volunteers that have more sporadic scheduling by introducing an on-line volunteer scheduling program with an App. that lets you check to see if there are openings or cancellations in a class.
- Increasing the number of usable program horses so that the Children's program can have 5 riders at a time and that the Heroes on Horseback can have up to 4 adult riders at a time. We are currently looking for 2-3 horses for the programs.
- Work with our driving horse, Apollo, and the carriage so that we can offer classes to those that cannot ride horses.
- Increase interaction and participation between riders and their teams. Introduce more ground time activities to those riders that would like to work more with the horses and add to their horse knowledge.
- Add volunteers that work with the petting zoo animals, basic training of walking on leads and interaction with adults and children.



Autumn Blaze Gala Event

October 11th was a wonderful day. Majestic Hills Ranch Foundation held its annual gala, "Autumn Blaze" at the Braemar Golf Club in Edina, MN. Our goals were to recognize our riders and volunteers, and to raise the funds necessary to support our therapeutic riding programs for children and young adults with special needs and our injured armed forces personnel, active and veterans, to thank them for their service and for all that they have sacrificed.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Stevie Ray, Ex. Director of Stevie Ray's Improv Company kept the evening fun while the wonderful ladies of "After 5" performed Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy in honor of our veterans in attendance. When all the veterans and current active duty personnel were asked to stand and take a round of applause to thank them for their service the response of clapping hands, whistles, and roars was overwhelming and heartfelt. Several corporate sponsors ensured our veterans were able to attend by purchasing sponsor tables for the Minneapolis Veterans Home, the Hastings Veterans Home, and veterans who could not afford to attend otherwise.

We were so excited that when a parent was asked to give a testimonial on behalf of their son who is a rider at Majestic Hills Ranch, the son said he was able to tell his own story and related how the ranch has helped him grow and what benefits he has gained from his journey at the ranch. He threw in a couple of jokes and had the audience laughing and applauding.

With great food, lots of entertainment, silent and live auctions, terrific volunteers, caring wonderful people, and of course our program riders, the evening was a great success. We raised lots of funding in an effort to get through the winter months and look forward to a great 2015 season.

Our Sponsors:



Gold Leaf Sponsor



Board Member
Mary Lee Enfield



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**Yellow Leaf Sponsor
donating table to Veterans**

Thank you to the businesses and individuals that donated items to both our live and silent auctions. Your donations to our event was so greatly appreciated! Listed below are the items donated, though if you donated an item and you don't see it listed, please contact me to let me know.

Applebee's, Burnsville	The Hair Shoppe	Northern Tool & Equipment	Schuler Shoes, Maple Grove
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Brave New Workshop	Larry Johnson	Outback Steakhouse, Bloomington	Subway, Chanhassen
Café Latte	Donald & Brenda Kerr	Outing Lodge at Pine Point, Stillwater	Subway, Chaska
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Dale Studios	Lucky's Pub, Burnsville	Penumbra Theatre Company, St. Paul	Target, Lakeville
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	Mystic Lake Casino & Hotel		

Thank you to the 2014 volunteers!

A huge thank you goes out to over 220 volunteers that helped out with the programs, events, horses, and ranch care this year. We especially want to thank our Instructors, Teaching Assistants, and Barn Aide: **Brenda Steinhauer, Gay Uttenhove, Laura Peterson, Mary Smith, & Sue Anderson**, for they are also volunteers. They taught and assisted with over 450 hours of classes in the Children's Program, and we could not have done without them. **Thank you!!!** (I tried to get everyone's names listed below—but if you helped out at the ranch this year and you are not on the list, it is entirely my fault and I apologize. Your help was greatly appreciated and we certainly welcomed it!)

Children's Program

Abbey Singleton
 Adrienne Sherman
 Alexa Nelson
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 Alexandra "Alex" Phoenix
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 Allison Vidmar
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 Anna Leikvold
 Anna McWilliams
 Anne Bueltel
 Barb Davis
 Barbie duFresne
 Becky Schmidt
 Becky Brown
 Brenda Black
 Brenda Steinhauer
 Caitlin Duffy
 Callie Ritter
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 Carrie Leiner
 Carrie McKee-Parker
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 Corrie Bozung
 Courtney Kretzmann
 Danielle Lassonde
 Dawn Hall
 Delaney Cox
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 Emerson "Emmy" Tangen
 Emily Degrood
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 Emily Wick
 Erica Bonham
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 Erin Kessinger
 Fiona Duffy

Ford Takata
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 Gay Uttenhove
 Heidi Simon
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 Taylor Parten
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 Thomas Sherman
 Tonya Johnson
 Vanessa Robbins

Wendy Forsman
 Wendy Mathews
 Wendy Smith

Thanks also to Parents, PCAs, & Therapists that were willing to step in and help when needed! We really did appreciate it!

Heroes on Horseback

Alisha Martinez
 Amy Greenslade
 Becky Schmidt
 Beth Palo
 Bill Engeman
 Christine Engen
 Dave Lambrecht
 Debbie Riggs-Engeman
 Gary Dusterhoff
 Heather Gansen
 Isaac Vasquez
 Jackie Farrell
 Jason Lake
 Jeffrey "Quentin" Cowart
 Jena Partington
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 Kristine Ryan-Zones
 Laura Watts
 Lee Bowman
 Richard "Rogo" Rogozinski
 Stephanie Weede
 Sue Ann Woo
 Tiffany Lambert
 Tony Pace
 Tyler Weinstein
 Valencia Solis
 Vanessa Vela
 Vicki Persons

Thanks also go out to the following groups that have helped at the ranch or with program projects:

Home Depot—Burnsville (Petting Zoo Repair)
 Eagle Scouts—Making benches to sit upon
 Lakeville Area Public Schools Community Education Department—(Fall Clean Up)
 The Toro Company—(Fall Projects)





T(w)o old friends that have passed over the Rainbow Bridge.



Freckles

Freckles came to the ranch years ago as a rescue horse. When he first arrived his gentle and giving spirit was so apparent, he was instantly put into the program. For years he was the first horse many of our riders sat upon - his smooth walk and swaying stride gave our riders the confidence they needed to take on horses with more movement. He was the first choice of our instructors when there was a rider that was scared or nervous, for Freckles always made sure to take care of them with his calm demeanor.

Freckles lived a long and full life, going into semi-retirement over the last year or 2. He was only ridden by a few riders throughout the season, and was kept in a stall at night in the winter (which he hated. He was a wild pony at heart!) Last winter, his health failed quickly and a tumor was discovered as the culprit. In the end, he was surrounded by the staff that loved him and that took such good care of him over the years.

We still miss his nickers and his morning demands for breakfast "soup."



Tobie

Tobie came to the ranch years ago and was part of both programs. He was ridden by the smallest of riders, used as a vaulting horse (where riders do gymnastic-like moves on the back of a horse), and in recent years working with our veteran's program. When we had picnics, he was a eagerly chosen by our guests as their first chance at riding a horse. He worked as our tandem riding horse when we had riders that needed extra support of an experienced volunteer behind them.

Over the years, Tobie developed arthritis in his hind leg which caused some uncomfortable days for him. This summer his condition worsened and his leg became so painful that at times he could barely walk. After much discussion with our vet, it was decided that with the winter looking to be harsh that we decided the best action would be to put him to sleep in a controlled time. It was a very difficult decision, but we did not want him to be in pain any more.

He was loved by all, and will be so greatly missed.

2014 Ride-A-Thon

The Children's Program had it's third annual Ride A Thon this year, and we had a crime solving spree! For a change of pace, all riders and their volunteer teams needed to solve the clues to find out who stole the horse muffins that the horses would get at the end of the class. We had suspects from all over the barn yard: Scout Pony, Clyde Goat, Penny Hen, Rocky Rooster, Shawn Sheep, and (of course) Stuart Cat.

Each suspect had a reason and the riders needed to play out the scene and interrogate the other suspects. They really enjoyed the mystery and since every class had a different criminal—even the volunteers were surprised to figure out who had done it. Everyone figured it out in the end, so the horses were pleased to receive their special "horse muffin" molasses oat treat.

This year the logo design was a picture of one of our riders enjoying a trot on Trio, and his smile shows how much fun he

is having. Prizes included not only the t-shirt, but also with enough donations a MHR baseball hat, a plush Apollo – looking horse with a MHR bandana, and a MHR hoodie sweatshirt.

Our top fundraising rider, Gideon, raised almost \$1000, with Mikala coming in a close second. Our top fundraising volunteer, Sheri raised over \$700 with Robin a close second. Thank you everyone for your support of the programs! We applied the money towards the horses care and upkeep—which means we paid for grain, hay, farrier work and fall vaccinations! The horses greatly appreciate it!



Suspect Stuart Cat



Suspect Shawn Sheep

Thank you to those who donated to the cause! Your support was just wonderful!

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In Memory of...

Dakota
 Freckles
 Tobie

Gayle Cowan
 Mary Smith
 Patti Wallin
 Kris Zieska

In Honor of...

For our cowboy Padraig
 Phillip B.
 For the wild and wonderful Mary Williams, who loves horses and her kiddos with challenges to the moon and back!! Happy Birthday MGW!
 Makayla—Ride Cowgirl Ride! xoxo
 Logan B.
 Well done Sherry! love Kim
 For Gideon S.!!

from Eileen Foley
 from Elaine Bailey
 from Barbara Sobert
 from Pontiana Family
 from Michael B Kerber
 from Kim Watson
 from Kim Dorste





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Statistics for 2014

- Total number of riders served by the **Children's Program**: 75
 - 9% 5 years old or under
 - 36% Between ages 6 and 10 years old
 - 39% Between ages 11 and 15 years old
 - 16% Over 16 years
- 64% of our riders were male; 36% were female
- While over 29 different diagnosis were present, below are the top 4 that affected 72% of total riders that participated with the programs.
 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 2. Attention deficit disorder / Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD)
 3. Developmental Delay (DD)
 4. Cerebral palsy (CP)
- We offered classes to riders throughout the 7 county metro area, but 89% fell to the cities south of the Minnesota River. Of those cities, listed below are the top 4:
 1. Lakeville (23%)
 2. Apple Valley (16%)
 3. Eagan & Burnsville (11%)

Our Volunteers

- We had over 275 volunteers helping out with our riding programs and special events.
 - Children's Program = 3700 hours Projects/Events = 1120 hours
 - Veteran's Program = 1150 hours
- Total Volunteer Hours = 5970 Hours**

- Total amount of visits and hours for those that participated in the **MHR Heroes on Horseback Program**: 270 visits / 682.75 hours.
 - 51% Army
 - 29% Navy
 - 3% Air Force
 - 11% Marine
 - 6% Army Reserve
- 94% of our veterans were male; 6% were female
- While over dozens of different diagnoses were present, below are a few that affected many of the riders that participated with the programs.
 - ◆ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 - ◆ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - ◆ Anxiety Disorder
 - ◆ Major Depression
 - ◆ Chemical/Alcohol Dependency
- We worked closely with several military organizations and most riders were referred by the following groups:
 - 55% Outpatient Referrals
 - 26% Veterans' Home—Hastings Branch
 - 14% Veterans' Home—Minneapolis Branch
 - 5% VA Medical Center

Our Horses

MHR owns 15 horses, of which 13 are used in our riding programs plus 3 privately owned horses are used for select classes. In 2014 these 16 horses had a total of 1200 rider hours throughout the season and 15 hours were spent pulling our wagon for parades.