

Winter 2013

Volume 6, Issue 3



THERAPEUTIC RIDING

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2013 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.

2013 Program Reviews

A Fond Farewell to the Season...

Our Heroes on Horseback program hired a new Director, Linda Wencl, who brought with her many years of experience in mental health working with 35-40 patients a day, some veterans, as well as working with individuals with physical disabilities. Linda had a horse growing up, but had a lot to learn about the outdoor environment of a therapeutic ranch. What she did do achieve however; was to build a natural rapport with the participants of the program. The therapists, riders, and volunteers absolutely love working with her.

Through referrals and her seeking out new volunteers, she was able to get a group of dedicated volunteers that came to the ranch and worked multiple sessions. She helped with some leads for presentations and assisted in bringing in funds from a couple of organizations and was able to get donations for our "Thanking our Heroes" event this fall which was a huge success.

Early October 2013 brought an end to the riding season. Due to unfortunate circumstances we had to shut down early as a long-time battle that our dedicated Board President and Founder, Kim Howard, fought so very hard to prevent, that of power lines going through Majestic Hills Ranch's property. Due to the noise factors with heavy equipment we had to prevent any horse from being startled

while a rider was on horseback. Safety is our number one concern and we apologize for the inconvenience. With that said the week of September 30th was also mixed with sad and fun items. Although predictable bad weather, the Veterans Homes of Minneapolis and Hastings, most of our outpatient riders, and the VA Medical Center made it out to the ranch for season-ending farewells. Each rider was presented their Certificate of Achievement and they were so pleased and proud of their accomplishments in 2013. We surprised the Recreational Therapists with their own Certificate for their support and for partnering with Heroes on Horseback. Linda was also surprised with a beautiful and colorful painting of horses that one of the Hastings Veterans painted and presented from all the guys along with a wonderful thank you note. It was a very special week for us all.



Minnesota State Fair:

Again this year, Majestic Hills Ranch-Heroes on Horseback, was invited to attend **Military Appreciation Day** at the Minnesota State Fair on August 27, 2013. We had a table in Education Alley and were able to distribute our Heroes on Horseback Riding and Volunteer Brochures, donation cards, along with our engraved Heroes on Horseback pencils. Thousands of people came through

the tents to visit all vendors and we had the opportunity to speak with many of our Vietnam Veterans and share information about our program. It was an honor to be a part of history where thousands of Vietnam Veterans participated in the parade and were finally "welcomed home". A special "THANK YOU" goes out to a former Board Member and special volunteer at MHR, Shanon Bjornard, who braved the heat with me to make it a very special day!

2014 Program Goals

- Our major goal for the 2014 season for Heroes on Horseback will be to continue to expand our funding in order to cover the incredible costs associated with keeping this program free to our injured armed forces personnel and to pray for nicer weather. Our session hours dropped considerably due to the rains and high temperatures. We look forward to a fantastic growing season and hope to have a day dedicated during the week to Women Veterans only that have suffered Traumatic Stress. The goal is also to have only women volunteers working with these brave and dedicated women. In 2013, Linda Wencl, Program Director, and Larry Johnson, Board VP, met with the Director of the Women Veterans of Minnesota with positive expectations for 2014.
- Another goal will be to organize and set up back-to-back sessions for the Minneapolis Veterans Day Center-Minneapolis. They had approximately a dozen of interested veterans but unfortunately due to transportation issues were not able to participate in 2013. We have been advised that a new van is being purchased for them so transportation should not be an issue.
- In 2013 Majestic Hills Ranch invited the Visually Impaired/Blind Veterans of Minnesota for a tour of the ranch and they had hoped to participate in the Heroes on Horseback Program. We gave a complete tour to 10 veterans and then the rains came but everyone still had a great time. Our goal is to present our program to that individual and have this group join our program in 2014.
- Majestic Hills Ranch has identified two professional Carriage Drivers for the 2014 riding season that would be driving with those injured military personnel unable to mount, ride, or do not wish to be on the back of a horse due to their individual challenges. We are diligently pursuing this in able to assist those that deserve the opportunity.

2013 Ride-A-Thon

The Children's Program had it's second annual fundraiser for the ranch in which we were able to exceed our goal of \$10,000.00. The money collected went towards the purchase of a 6-wheeled ATV for ranch chores (to replace the old one that died after many years of use) and hay nets to put around our round bales. The hay nets have restricted the horses from wasting hay and has increased the length of time between replacing bales—saving the ranch hundreds of dollars so far this fall. We had a record number of 71 riders, volunteers, and staff that participated, and thanks go to everyone listed below that supported them.

During Ride-A-Thon week we had a scavenger hunt in our arena with riders (and volunteers!) practicing their observational skills to help them find the answers to the 2 dozen questions given to them. We had many debates over the tallest tree (the cottonwood by the hay barn), the amount of willows seen from the arena (3 near and 5 near the hours),



and the number of horses in the arena (typically 5 with riders, 8 pictures, 2 silhouettes were questioned because they were on the outside of the arena fence. Every rider also received a Beanie Baby if they chose that were donated to the program.

The grand prize winners of Brayden P and Alex P as riders and Laura P as volunteer were not able to enjoy a picnic this fall due to the construction, but instead received gift certificates for riding in the 2014 season.

Thanks go out to everyone that participated in this fundraiser—you really helped with the care of our program horses!

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Trevor Langton
Virginia Shimota
Wayne Diercks
Win & Mary Johnson
Zach Beier
Zach Brazler

“Thanking our Heroes” - a Heroes on Horseback Event

On September 7th, 2013 Majestic Hills Ranch – Heroes on Horseback held its 2nd Annual Fundraiser at the Everett McClay VFW Post 1296 in Bloomington, MN. With over 100 in attendance to take part in the festivities of “Thanking Our Heroes” it was a great success. We honored our Heroes on Horseback participants, veterans from the MN Veterans Home of Hastings, and all other active duty and veterans in the audience for their dedication, bravery, and service to our Country and for all they have sacrificed. A huge standing ovation was received and well deserved!

Our first guest speaker, Ms. Donna Hogg, a veteran participating in our program and volunteering as well, spoke to everyone about her disabilities/challenges, what she has gone through and how Majestic Hills Ranch has assisted her in achieving some healthy results since joining our program. Donna shared how she felt that our Heroes on Horseback Program helped save her life. Her story was so heartfelt and difficult but she persisted and the entire room was silent, so intent on hearing every word she shared with us all. She went on to give everyone such a positive feeling on what she gets out of volunteering and helping fellow veterans who are riding to achieve an improvement in their health, physical or psychological. It was clear to everyone she loves the ranch and we can't thank Donna enough for her service, for sharing her personal story, and her passion to care for others.

Our second guest speaker was Ms. Renae Hill, Recreational Therapist of the MN Veterans Home-Hastings. Renae brought as many of the

veteran program participants as she could to the event and talked about the positive results she has seen in them & has witnessed during the last two seasons. She shared the camaraderie she has watched grow with the veterans, particularly in the van on the ride to and from the ranch, how they get back to the Veterans Home and share with others and the excitement with which they talk about their progress. Renae covered the physical and mental health improvements of the riders and the relationships her group has formed with the horses, the volunteers and the staff at Majestic Hills Ranch. They all look forward to returning next season and we are excited to have them back.

A special thanks to the Club Manager of the VFW, Mr. Pat McCauley, and the Board of VFW Post 1296 for their donation of the hall and Scott, owner of Fat Lorenzo's for his donation of reduced costs for the great food that everyone complained about because they were so full!

The entire evening was a fun and relaxing time for all, complete with silent auction, live auction, speakers, fabulous food, a great band, dancing, drawings, and of course the most caring people, our wonderful volunteers, Board Members in attendance, and guests. We raised over \$10,000.00 for our Heroes on Horseback Program.

A special thanks also goes out to Kim Howard, our Board President, for her assistance in getting many great attendees to join us, particularly during an extremely busy time of year for her business.

Happy News Just Keeps Building

Majestic Hills Ranch – was selected by The Home Depot Foundation as a grant awardee approved for projects with Team Home Depot-Store 2809, Burnsville, led by Home Depot Store Manager, Ryan Flanagan. We were chosen because of our work with our injured military personnel, active duty and veterans through our Heroes on Horseback Program.

October 8th was chosen as the work day of preparation for the projects that were to be done by Team Home Depot. Projects consisting of a new and expanded Petting Zoo were approved and the land was measured and prepped for the drainage tile, the fencing, and the Diamond Grey retaining wall surrounding it all. Land was also marked for the landscaping of a sitting area by the Veterans' Arena, and new floating benches and flowers were ordered. Work also included a refurbished ramp to the larger arena as well as the painting of all the storage sheds for consistency.

October 11th, the full workday for the project began. Many Team Home Depot volunteers arrived starting at 7:00am. 10 volunteers from Majestic Hills Ranch came to assist wherever needed and the work began. From that point it was all work that continued for 11 ½ hours with a break for lunch, provided by MHR. The retaining wall, mulch and ground work for the sitting area by the veterans' arena, and the large

arena ramp were almost completed. Erik, our Ranch Manager, ran the skid loader and did a fantastic job of getting the landfill close to the workers to level the ground of the petting zoo. The large arena posts were painted and the Tack Sheds are all painted the same colors and we give a special thank you, “shout out” to our Boarders who agreed to let us paint them and they look terrific.

We extend our sincere and heartfelt thanks to The Home Depot Foundation, The Home Depot Store 2809, Burnsville, and Team Home Depot. Every single employee of Team Home Depot was terrific and worked so hard to ensure the projects were completed with care. It was clear each person took great pride in helping and where they worked. The camaraderie was amazing! These projects were so needed and we commend them on the work they did for Majestic Hills Ranch. The work they do, focusing on helping those non-profits, organizations, and many more, who focus on the helping the brave men and women of the armed forces and their families who sacrifice so much of us all, our freedom, and for The United States of America, is absolutely remarkable!



The Toro Company Donates...

September, 2013 was also very special to us. A delivery truck arrived at Majestic Hills Ranch with a huge donation. It was a brand new Toro 72" (183 cm) 27 HP 725cc Riding Lawn Mower with a value of \$10,849.00. The Toro Company donated it to Majestic Hills Ranch to help us make the chore of cutting our lawn much easier and to keep it in perfect condition for the Injured Veterans and Children & Young Adults with Special Needs. It will help save tons of time for our Ranch Manager, Erik Espinoza, as he is so busy with many of his other duties and chores. We can't express our gratitude to The Toro Company for their wonderful gift!



Community Partnership

Kim Howard, Board President & Larry Johnson, Board VP were invited to the Minnesota School of Business – Community Partner Recognition Luncheon on September 11th at the Southview Country Club. We were invited due to the continued partnership of MHR and Globe University, Minnesota School of Business-Lakeville Campus.

The MSB-Lakeville Campus identified MHR as their number one community partner and recognized the numerous ways they have been able to partner with MHR over the years. We gave an overview to the audience of our professional relationship and extended our gratitude for the dedication of their faculty, staff, and students to MHR. We look forward to our continued partnership for the years ahead.

Thank you to the 2013 volunteers!

A huge thank you goes out to the over 394 volunteers that helped out with the programs, picnics, events, horses, and ranch care this year. We especially want to thank our Instructors and Teaching Assistants: **Brenda Steinhauer, Jen Espinosa, Gay Uttenhove, Maia Horsager, & Sue Anderson** for they are also volunteers. They taught over 300 hours of children's classes this year, and we would not have been able to live 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!)

Abigail Campbell	Elise Backer	Kerri Norton (V)	Rene Hanrahan
Allan Lambert	Elizabeth Gatti	Kristin Heslep	Richard (Rogo) Rogozinski (V)
Allison Christenson	Emily Gerkin	Laura Emory	Rick Stulz (V)
Alyse Ketcham	Emily Otremba	Laura Peterson	Rick Zieska
Amanda Robbins	Emily Wick	Leslie Condon (V)	Sadie Hosley
Amy Greenslade (V)	Emma Mellgren	Linda Flicek	Sally Considine
Andrea Nash	Erik Espinoza	Lindsay Dinan	Sally Gatti
Angela Kesler (V)	Fae Zimmer	Lindsey Zocher	Sandy Rabalais (V)
Anna McWilliams	Gary Dusterhoft (V)	Lisa Berglund	Sara Richards
Anne Buettel	Gay Uttenhove	Lisa Grove	Sarah Talcott
April Sawle	Gayle Cowan	Londa Tushie	Sean Burk
Audrey Klimmek	Greta Motzko	Lowell (Lola) Gatten	Selena Hansen
Barb Webb	Gretchen Draper	Maddy Brunos	Shanon Bjornard
Becky Brown	Hannah Christian	Madi Sogge	Shelby Angen
Becky Schmidt (V)	Heidi Simon	Mady Bunnell	Shelby Hamblin
Ben (w/ Sarah)	Holly Jorgensen	Maia Horsager	Shelly Hulse
Bill Nelson	Hugh Lenz	Mara Woetzel	Sheri Angen
Blake Kreissler	Iona Lambert	Marcia Turner	Sheri Hoistad
Brenda Steinhauer	Jacob Thoresen	Mark Wirts	Sheri Reiser
Caitlin Duffy	Jen Espinoza	Mary Ellen Schmid	Sina Carey
Caleb Erickson	Jenna Norby	Mary Grace Nelson	Stacey Jacobson
Carl VanDeSteeg	John Hamre (V)	Mary Howell	Stephani Scheuermann
Carol Meagher	John VanBogart	Mary Lewis	Steve Hecker
Carolyn Hynes	Joyce Butler	Mary Smith	Sue Anderson
Carrie Leiner	Judy Machutt (V)	Matthew Schroer	Sue Ann Woo (V)
Chad Reis (V)	Judy Nelson	Megan Snell	Susan Brunos
Chelsey Foss	Judy VanDeSteeg	Michael Buchwald	Susanne Leidner (V)
Christine Hynes	Julia Wolter	Mikaela Beier	Sydney Mohr
Christopher (Max) Hammitt (V)	Julie Bonham	Nick Hall	Taylor Erickson
Cindy Carey	Julie Christian	Nicole Oliver	Terri Cooper
Claudia Sanchez	Julie Lynch (V)	Patricia Hobot	Timothy (TJ) Newcomer
Courtney Kretzmann	Julie Miller	Patti Wallin	Tracy Nelson
Crystal Feyan (V)	Julie Stulz (V)	Patty Stroth	Trish Gray
Crystal Mickelson	Kacie Deavers	Paul Smith	Tyler Thoresen
Daryl Hampton	Kaitlin Steinhauer	Paulette	Vanessa Robbins
Dawn Hall	Kaitlin Trefethen	Peggy Nelson	
Deb Flood	Kathy Weller (V)	Peggy Olson	
Delaney Cox	Katie Sirek	Rachel Blesi (V)	
Donna Hogg (V)	Kayla Pharmer	Rachel Winker	
Dylan Hulse	Kelly Cofield	Raimee Haber	

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

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

Applewood Pointe—Bloomington (assembly of newsletter)
 Blue Cross/Blue Shield (HopeKids & Cornerstone Picnics)
 Burnsville Summer Stretch Program (Ranch Clean Up)
 Home Depot—Burnsville (Petting Zoo / Fall Projects)

MN School of Business (Spring Clean Up)
 Rebuild Together—Honeywell & Cooper Sr. High School
 (Ramp, patio, arena, manure bunker repairs, misc.)
 Synod of the Heartland PC Work Camp - IA (Ranch Clean Up)

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

Foundation Grants

Bobby & Steve's Auto World Youth Foundation
 Canterbury Park Minnesota Fund
 Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation

Casey Albert T. O'Neil Foundation
 Hansen Family Foundation
 Helen Brach Foundation
 Krumholz Foundation
 PGN Foundation

Roles Family Foundation
 TCF Foundation
 ULLR/Ski For Light Foundation
 Vets4Vets Trust Fund

Organizations

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 American Legion Post #47, Hastings
 American Legion Post #98, St. Paul Park
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 VFW Post #9433

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Gay Uttenhove
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 Alison Bakken
 Jane Anderson

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Statistics for 2013

- Total number of riders served by the **Children's Program: 82**
 - 13% Under 5 years old
 - 33% Between ages 6 and 10 years old
 - 35% Between ages 11 and 15 years old
 - 19% Over 16 years
- 56% of our riders were male; 44% were female
- While over 29 different diagnosis were present, below are the top 4 that affected 70% of total riders that participated with the programs.
 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 2. Cerebral palsy (CP)
 3. Attention deficit disorder / Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD)
 4. Developmental Delay (DD)
- 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 (30%)
 2. Burnsville (12%)
 3. Eagan & Apple Valley (10%)

Our Volunteers

- We had over 394 volunteers helping out with our riding programs, picnics and special events.
Children's Programs = 3348 hours Veteran's Program = 415 hours
Picnics / Events = 1837 hours

Total Volunteer Hours = 5600 Hours

- Total amount of visits and hours for those that participated in the **MHR Heroes on Horseback Program: 162 visits / 307 hours.**
 - 53% Army
 - 26% Navy
 - 7% Air Force
 - 7% Marine
 - 7% Army Reserve
- 90% of our veterans were male; 10% were female
- While over dozens of different diagnosis were present, below are the top 4 that affected many of the riders that participated with the programs.
 1. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 2. Anxiety Disorder
 3. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 4. Major Depression
- While we worked closely with several military organizations, most riders were referred by the following groups:
 - 50% Veterans' Home—Hastings Branch
 - 20% Outpatient Referrals
 - 17% VA Medical Center
 - 13% Veterans' Home—Minneapolis Branch

Our Horses

MHR owns 16 horses, of which 13 are able to be used in our riding programs and 2 privately owned horses are used for select classes. In 2013 these 15 horses had a total of 1250 rider hours throughout the season plus being used in 2 Picnics (over 200 riders) and pulling our hay wagon for parades (8 hours.) *[The 2013 riding season was cut short due to power lines being installed on the north side of the property. Over 325 hours of riding classes were lost because of this cancelation of the fall session.]*