

RANCH RAMBLINS

Volume 8, Issue 4

Winter 2015

2015 Year in Review!



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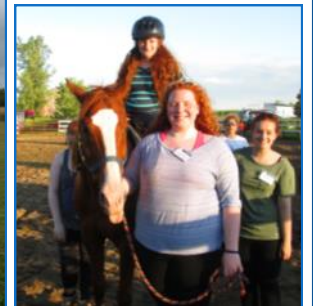
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Find us on Facebook for updates over the winter and keep up with the ranch news all year. You don't have to be a member to read over our page, so enter the link today for a visit. If you are a member, "Like" us to get up to date information!

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, rider or volunteer, due to race, religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or political beliefs. Riders need to meet program criteria and have a physician's order.

2015 Achievements

- * The Petting Zoo Retaining Wall was reinforced to withstand the elements and a new veterans' sitting arena patio was installed thanks to volunteer Jason Lake and Johnson Controls. The patio makes it much more accessible for the veterans in wheelchairs to access the hydraulic lift, it lends itself to a level ground for the gliding benches, and upcoming in spring there will be a pergola added to provide shade for the veterans as they are relaxing and waiting their turn at therapeutic activities.
- * Jen Espinoza made it through her second season as the Director of Heroes on Horseback. Her dedication and passion to help the injured armed forces personnel, active duty, and veterans in rehabilitation came through loud and clear. As the season ended, for a few sooner than later, there were teary eyes when saying so long for the winter ahead but smiles as they know they will be back in 2016, greeted by Jen, the horses, volunteers and they can't wait.
- * MHR teamed up with mental health specialist Paula Achenbach for a summer session of "Horse Sense: Equine Assisted Psychotherapy." Clients from her practice were able to come out and interact with our horses and ponies while they worked on their own troubles. Over the 8 weeks, they learned how to catch, lead, groom a horse—and even learned a bit of groundwork, leading over obstacles, and a class of riding. Everyone did wonderfully and had a great time!

2016 Program Goals

- * Once again partner with the Legally Blind Veterans of Minnesota to have them return and participate in the Heroes on Horseback Program.
- * Retain our great volunteers and recruit more valuable individuals to the team to ensure that every session is covered appropriately and expand the number of riders in the children's programs.
- * Add at least 3 to 4 horses, 2 for the Heroes on Horseback Program and 2 for the Children's Program so that we can expand the amount of participants without overworking our valiant program horses.
- * Train and have an additional dedicated instructor for the Heroes on Horseback Program with the intent to have him/her PATH Certified in order to increase the program and assist our Program Director, Jen Espinoza. This would allow us the opportunity to increase our assistance to other veteran groups and organizations.
- * PATH Certify our existing Children's Program instructors in order to increase the program and assist our Program Director, Kris Zieska. This would allow us the opportunity to increase our assistance to our special needs riders.
- * Increase the number of sponsors for all programs to help meet our increasing and necessary operational costs.
- * Seek out and find qualified board members who will play an active role in being committed to enhancing Majestic Hills Ranch's reputation through marketing and additional financial support.



2015 in Review - Heroes on Horseback

By: Larry R. Johnson, Executive Director, Heroes on Horseback

2015 was a good year but it also had its challenges, mainly the weather. Our riders were excited to get back into the saddle from the Veterans homes of Hastings and Minneapolis, the VA Medical Center, and our wonderful veteran outpatients who ride on Tuesday's later in the day. Mother Nature had her way with the rain, and of course it seemed like each week, Tuesdays or Thursdays, were her choice to ensure the grounds got watered, cancelling many sessions throughout the season. In addition, we said farewell to a long time ranch supporter, Recreational Therapist from the Minneapolis Veterans Home. She accepted a position elsewhere and moved her family to another city to pursue a position she felt was right. Unfortunately, the veterans from the Minneapolis Veterans Home, who participate in the Heroes on Horseback program, had to close their season early until a replacement is found to transport them to the ranch each week. We will miss seeing her bright smile every week and cherish the support she has given us over the years and wish her and her family the very best.

Jen Espinoza, Director of Heroes on Horseback, and I were fortunate to visit the Veterans Home, Mpls., and present the veterans who participated with their Certificates of Achievement. We shared a patriotic decorated cake and listened as each veteran shared his personal story about what they achieved and/or their fondest memory of 2015. We felt privileged to be a part of this special moment.

We also said goodbye to another friend of Majestic Hills Ranch, the Coordinator for the Legally Blind Veterans of Minnesota. She transferred to the VA Medical Center in Virginia to be closer to home and family. I spoke with her recently, her move was successful and she is settling into her new position. We look forward to building a new relationship with the new Coordinator, when in place, and having a group from this organization return and continue their visits.

The happiness of returning volunteers and new ones that joined the team, each wanting to share and give-back to these brave men and women for the service and sacrifices they have given. Our team stepped up to the plate, as always, hit a home run throughout the season, and words can not describe our heartfelt gratitude for the hours they have spent helping our veterans enjoy their time at Majestic Hills Ranch. In addition, we want to shout out special thanks to those dedicated volunteers that helped us with special projects, maintain and upgrade the property, and assisted at our events. Their hard work and dedication shows in the end results, an improved and nicer environment for our participants to enjoy while having fun performing their sessions.

On October 22nd we held our second to the last session of the season with the Veterans from the Hastings Veterans Home and our outpatient riders, held a pot luck get-together with them and all of our volunteers. Certificates of Achievement were presented to each rider, 2 Special Recognition awards were presented to Jason Lake and Shanon Bjornard; Jason for his above and beyond volunteer work reinforcing the petting zoo wall, building the lamb home, building a patio for the veterans to sit and relax during sessions and so much more; Shanon for her dedication in assisting at every military function spreading the word about Heroes on Horseback, helping the veterans understand our program, volunteering in the children's program and the positive outlook they both have about Majestic Hills Ranch.

Our Volunteer of the Year Certificate was presented to Ms. Jackie (Farrell) Buie. We were excited to have her return this year. Her dedication, positive and heartfelt passion, assisting all who come to the ranch is beyond reproach. Jackie goes out of her way to ask anyone if they need help, will take on any projects without hesitation, and when asked this year to work one-on-one with a very special veteran, she of course said yes, resulting in one of the most positive outcomes we were privileged to witness. She does all this coupled with working full-time and she was also planning her wedding which occurred in October. Congratulations and blessings from us all!

We were privileged to participate in several military events networking and sharing information about our Heroes on Horseback program. We attended the MAC-V Stand Down, Military Appreciation Day at the Minnesota State Fair, and the Adaptive Sports Expo at the VA Medical Center-Minneapolis to name a few. We met some of the bravest and nicest men and women of the armed forces who shared their personal stories, were researching appropriate programs that give them joy and enhance their lives and that of their families, and most touching is the sense of pride they exude in being an American and what they have contributed in keeping our country safe. Our rewards, meeting and working with these brave individuals, overwhelms our hearts and we know we receive so much more from them as they do from us. Thank each of you for allowing us to share a small place in your lives.

Thank you to the 2015 volunteers!

A huge **THANK YOU** goes out to the over 200 volunteers that helped out with the programs, events, pilot program, horses, and ranch maintenance this year. We especially want to thank our instructors, teaching assistants, and barn aide for they are also volunteering their time: **Brenda Steinhauer, Gay Uttenhove, Kaitlin Steinhauer, Laura Peterson, & Sue Anderson.** They put in many hours preparing and teaching with the Children's Program. (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

Alex Halverson
Alex Phoenix
Alicia Mady
Allison Vidmar
Amanda Robbins
Angel Boeve
Angela Morabito
Anna McWilliams
Anne Bueltel
Barb Davis
Becky Brown
Beth Joens
Blake Persell
Brenda Black
Brenda Steinhauer
Caitlin Duffy
Caitlin Graham
Carol Meagher
Carole Strelow
Cindy Carey
Curt Olejnicak
Danielle Lassonde
Dawn Hall
Delaney Cox
Elaine Buschwitz
Elaine Soderlund
Ellen Wolff
Ellie Crawford
Ellie Strand
Erin Titus
Faith Sadlowski
Fiona Duffy
Gay Uttenhove
Heather Linder

Jackie (Farrell) Buie
Jackie Welke
Jeanine Haws
Jeanne Arp
Jeff Johnson
Jen Espinoza
Jessica Vidmar
Jessica Dille
Jewel Weiss
Jossette Velazquez
Julie Bonham
Kaitlin Steinhauer
Karen Meyer
Katie Allen
Kelsey Rother
Kiley Hatzenbuehler
Kris Ryan
Krista Petersen
Kristen Bartsch
Kristi Kaschmitter
Laura Peterson
Leah Kelm
Linda Sprague
Lindsey Zocher
Lisa Berglund
Lisa Grove
Lisa Weber
Liz Flannery
Londa Tushie
Madi Olejnicak
Maggie Graham
Mary Ellen Schmid
Matthew Schroer
Maura Zindler
Michael Jilk
Morgan Athey
Morgan Metcalfe

Nancy Sorenson
Nathan O'Connor
Nick Hall
Nora Straquadine
Peggy Olson
Penny Bechel
Rachel Larson
Rhonda Palm
Rick Zieska
Rob Rodriguez
Robin Svendsen
Sadie Mueller
Sami Zielinski
Sarah Karan
Sarah Lehman
Sarah Ring
Shanon Bjornard
Sharon Cornell
Shea Ferrell
Sheri Angen
Sheri Hoistad
Stacey Jacobson
Stephanie O'Connor
Steve Weiland
Sue Anderson
Susan Brunen
Sydney Mohr
Sydney Seuffer
Terasita Bailey
Vanessa Robbins
Wendy Mathews

**Thanks also to
Parents, PCAs, &
Therapists that were
willing to step in and
help when needed!**

Heroes on Horseback

Amy Greenslade
Bill Engeman
Bruce Legan
Claire Niessen-Berry
Cody L
Colton Rutledge
Dave Lambrecht
Edwin Sanz
Forrest Green
Gary Dusterhoff
Jeffrey (Quentin) Cowart
Jason Lake
Jackie (Farrell) Buie
Jen Espinoza
Joey Sandmeier
Josh Loftus
Joseph Genich
Maggie Graham
Maren Sather
Melissa Sather
Noreen Huntington
Richard Rogozinski
Sammi Korinek
Shannon Mack
Sue Anderson
Tyler Minke
Wendy Goetz



**Thanks also to
Sgt. Church and the
ladies from the MCF/
SHK Challenge
Incarceration
Program. They
worked incredibly
hard every Thursday**

Callie
Heather
Susan
Ashley
Erika
Jocelyn
Sarah
Katherline
Shauntell
Elaina
Rita
Megan
Stacie
Angeline
Julie
Marie
Lucindy
Lasheka
Amber
Deanna
Georgette
Nicole
Mandy
Courtney
Julie
Jessica
Ila
Leah
Faith
Connie
Ashley
Jennifer
Amberly
Crystal

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

- Lakeville Area Public Schools Community Education Department
- The Boy Scouts
- Eagle Scouts
- Jason Lake & Johnson Controls
- MCF/SHK Challenge Incarceration Program





Spring Fundraiser at Canterbury Park!

On June 27th, Majestic Hills Ranch had its first Day at the Races event at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, MN. Our goal was to raise funds to support the programs while having a fantastic time doing so. We had our own section inside for dining, sitting and socializing, and for our silent auction, with a deck attached so that people could enjoy watching the horse racing. The weather was perfect for the day, with sun and a slight breeze—and everyone had a wonderful time.

Our sponsors filled tables with guests, and we had several people donate tickets so that our riders and their families could come to enjoy the day. We had many of our military veterans come out, and some of our riders from the Children's program. One rider was more enthused with the tractors used to drag the track more than the actual race, but he loved seeing the beautiful horses parading by.

The silent auction was full of magnificent and sometimes practical items, and we also had HealthSource of Lakeville & Prior Lake providing massages for any and all that donated money to the program. That was a relaxing way to help raise funds!

With great food, a fun atmosphere, lots of entertainment, a superb silent auction, and so many volunteers that helped make it possible—we thoroughly enjoyed this day at the races!

Our Sponsors:



Alan Kupka, Board member

Thank you to the businesses and individuals that donated items to our silent auction. Your donations were greatly appreciated!

Abdallah Candies & Gifts

Bachman's, St. Paul

Bloomington Theatre & Art Center

Bobby & Steve's Auto World

Brave New Workshop

Cabela's - Owatonna

Café Latte, St. Paul

Cannon River Winery

Canterbury Park Holding Corporation

Cargill Animal Nutrition - Nutrena

Chanhassen Dinner Theatres

City of Burnsville (Birnamwood Golf Course)

Commonweal Theatre Company

CostCo (Burnsville)

D 'Brian's All Natural Deli & Catering

Doolittle's Woodfire Grill

Edina Plastic Surgery

El Loro Mexican Grill

Elko Speedway

Fishing for Life/Tom Goodrich

Fleet Farm

Grand Casino Mille Lacs/Hinckley

Harry's Café

HealthSource of Lakeville & Prior Lake

Hiawatha Golf Club, Minneapolis

Holly Zimmerman, Rabbit Hollow Creations

Ichiban's Japanese Steak House

Jungle Theater, Minneapolis

Kim Howard

Kim Purdon Estate

Kris Zieska

Larry Johnson

Lolamax Salon

Mall or America

Mary Smith

Mike Uttenhove

Mixed Blood Theater

MN High School Equestrian Association - New Prague

MN Pro Paintball / Matt Ames

Marketing Plus International

Park Square Theater

Rick Bronson's Hours of Comedy

Rocco Altobelli Spas

Rod's Western Palace

Schatzlein Saddle Shop

Schuler Shoes

St. Paul Saints

Stephanie O'Connor

Subway - Lakeville

Teresa's Mexican Restaurant

Tervis

The Mustard Seed

The Outing Lodge at Pine Point Park

The St. Paul Hotel

Total Wine & More (Bloomington)

Totally Kids

Virginia Latocki

Wayne Mertz

Thanks go to the planning committee and to the volunteers that helped with the event. You made the event go smoothly!

Committee Members:

- Gay Uttenhove
- Kris Zieska
- Georgi Bell
- Laura Peterson
- Jen Espinoza
- Sue Anderson

Consultant:

- Larry Johnson



Thank You For What You Do!

By: Larry R. Johnson-Board President

If you don't already know these people it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to three of our dedicated & important staff members at Majestic Hills Ranch Foundation.

Kristin Zieska, Children's Program Director



Kris earned her B.S. Degree in Equine Science from the University of Colorado, has 15 years' experience at another therapeutic riding center, the last five as lead instructor and barn manager. She has held her Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH, Intl.) Instructor Certification since 2001 and was formerly Office Manager with Valley Rehab Services – St. Francis Capable Kids. Kris also owns her own horses, boards them at Majestic Hills, so her experience is always current. The children & young adults with special needs and their parents look forward to seeing her every week. Kris' positive partnerships with other organizations, recruiting capabilities, and training sessions, along with her many other skill-sets make her an invaluable member of the Majestic Hills Ranch team.

Jennifer Espinoza, Heroes on Horseback Director



Jen is an Assistant Project Manager/Mechanical Drafter at Legacy Companies Incorporated, a Veteran Owned HVAC company. Jen graduated from Herzing University with a degree in Applied Science in Graphic Design. She began volunteering for Majestic Hills Ranch in 2004 assisting with the Children/Young Adult's Program as a side walker/leader and went on to earn her Certification as a (PATH) Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International riding instructor. In 2010 she continued her volunteer activities but performing that role as an instructor. Jen has been a crucial part of Majestic Hills Ranch helping in many different areas such as daily operations, fundraising, horse and volunteer training/recruiting, and definitely uses her graphic design skills for our horse stocks, hay wagons, gardens, hen house and many more needed projects. She willingly shares her passion and knowledge of horses with the brave men and women of the armed forces we serve and is grateful for the opportunity to give back to them for all they have given and sacrificed.

Erik Espinoza, Ranch Manager



Looking for a deal?...talk to our Ranch Manager, Erik Espinoza. Since 2009 Erik has been keeping Majestic Hills Ranch in tip-top shape and is probably the most cost effective member of the ranch. When we need equipment, sand, gravel, hay, or whatever it takes to run the ranch, let Erik do the negotiating...he never pays the asking price and we definitely appreciate it. Let's be clear; however, Erik's duties and responsibilities encompass much, much, more. From morning to nightfall and at times in the middle of the night, Erik is busy feeding the animals (petting zoo included), getting the horses to and from pasture, cleaning the barn and stalls, mowing the lawn, fixing broken equipment, and don't forget collecting the eggs from our chickens which he sells to bring in extra funds for the ranch. OK, in his spare time, he plants the fields to raise some of our own hay to keep expenses down, cultivates and bales the hay, and is also our part-time farrier. He assists with special events and parades and goes above and beyond to ensure Majestic Hills Ranch runs smoothly, effectively, efficiently, and we might add, Erik is liked & respected by all. We couldn't do it without him!

On behalf of the board of directors, instructors, volunteers, participants in our programs and their families, let us extend a great big THANK YOU for your hard work, dedication, patience, and diligence in keeping our programs and environment a safe, respectful, and learning/growing experience acknowledged by all as one of the best therapeutic riding facilities around. Our outstanding reputation is because of you and the positive results of our participants and property show it year-after-year.



Thank You to Our Supporters!

Foundation Grants

Bobby & Steve's Auto World Youth Foundation
 Canterbury Foundation
 Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation
 Casey Albert T O'Neil Foundation
 Elroy & Terry Krumholz Foundation, The
 Golden Rule Family Foundation

Granite Foundation

J. Elmer & Esther Hansman Charitable Trust
 Margaret H. & James E. Kelley Foundation
 Mike & Linda Fiterman Family Foundation
 Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Foundation
 PGN Foundation
 Poehler-Stremel Charitable Trust
 TCF Foundation

Corporation Donations

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 Flexible Staffing, MO—Carol A. Gregg
 Grand Casino—Mille Lacs/Hinckley
 MN Valley Electric Cooperative Trust
 Orbital ATK, Inc. [Tee It Up for the Troops]
 Sahara Sands, Inc.—Steve Gilbraith
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 Walmart / Sam's Club—Shakopee
 Western National Insurance Group

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 Lakeville Lions Donations-Organizations

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 Tee It Up for the Troops
 VFW Post #1296 Everett R McClay
 VFW Post #230 Columbia Heights
 VFW Post #246 James Ballentine
 VFW Post #5727 Stary-Yerka
 VFW Post #6208
 VFW Post #6316 Sgt. John Rice
 VFW Post #9433 Rosemount
 Windy Ridge Riders Horse Club

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Ameriprise Financial, Inc.	Jennifer Paumen
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Medtronic	Al Kupka
Prime Therapeutics	Gay Uttenhove
Thomson Reuters	Alison Bakken Gregory Bannister
Thrive	Monica Leave
United Health Group	Susan Brunnes

Individual Donors

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 Aleftina Bader
 Alison Bakken
 AmazonSmile
 Anne Bueltel
 Beth Bailey
 Cynthia MacDonald Helmberger
 Daniel V. Hulse
 David A. Swanstrom
 Donald Stiepan
 Erik Heule
 Ferdinand & June Volkert
 Gay Uttenhove
 Gregory Bannister
 Heather Harden
 Jackie (Farrell) Buie
 James Sauber
 Jason Lake
 Jeff Meyers
 Joanne Emerson
 Karen Cierzan
 Katie Allen

Kris Zieska
 Laura Peterson
 Lindsay Healey
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 Robin Adkins
 Sarah Karan
 Shanon & Erik Bjornard
 Sherry Kay Rasmussen
 Stephanie Paige Johnson
 Steve & Karen Sanger
 Sue Cordahl
 Susan Brunnes
 Terri Joki-Martin

In Memory of...

In remembrance of Toby; such a gentle giant. *Beth Palo*

I am making this donation in memory of Gracie, the yellow lab, who crossed the Rainbow Bridge at the age of 14 for Caitlin Duffy, who volunteers at MHR *Nancy Claussen*

2015 Ride—A—Thon

Thanks to those who participated in this event!

Logan Bradley (Winner)	Kris Zieska
Alejandro Swiggam	Lisa Weber
Alex Pauman	Mary Ellen Schmid
Amar Fossum-Alonzi	Melissa Kunitz
Carol Meagher	Rachel Racine
Emma Lang	Robin Svendsen
Hugh Lenz	Sam Gore
Jacob Coffman	Shanon Bjornson
James Newendorp	Sharon Cornell
Jeanine Haws	Sheri Hoistad
Jeff Johnson	Sherry Kay Rasmussen
Joe Coffman	Soren Rodlund
Keegan Mooney	Sue Anderson
Kristen Bartsch	Zach Bachmeier

In Honor of...

Ryan	Luann Kane
All the Program Horses that work so hard (and the few that don't...)	Kris Zieska
Zach	Patricia Bachmeier Tom and Sharon Holeman
Emma	Glen Schellinger
Lisa Weber	Richard Weber



Give to the Max Day

Thursday, November 12th was the 6th annual Minnesota Give to the Max Day. Non-profits across the state bonded together with the GiveMN website. Our modest goal was \$2,500 and the following fantastic folks helped us raise almost that much. Thank you all so much for your generosity!

Elizabeth Jensen
 Elizabeth Palo
 Hugh Lenz
 Jackie Buie
 Jane Greenwood
 Judith Enfield
 Julie Korts
 Karen Cierzan
 Katie Allen
 Kevin Lang
 Kim Bachmeier
 Kris Zieska
 Laura Peterson
 Luann Kane
 Sarah Karan
 Sheri Angen
 Susan Popovich



MAJESTIC HILLS RANCH FOUNDATION

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LAKEVILLE, MN 55044

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Statistics for 2015

- Total number of riders served by the **Children's Program**: 67
 - 12% 6 years old or under
 - 30% Between ages 7 and 10 years old
 - 46% Between ages 11 and 18 years old
 - 12% Over 19 years
- 63% of our riders were male; 37% were female
- While over 42 different diagnoses were present in our riders, below are the 4 that affected over 75% of those that participated.
 1. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 2. Developmental Delay (DD)
 3. Attention deficit disorder / Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD)
 4. Cerebral palsy (CP)
- We offered classes to riders throughout the 7 county metro area, but 96% lived in the cities south of the Minnesota River. Of those cities, the top 4 are:
 - Lakeville (30%)
 - Apple Valley & Burnsville (15%)
 - Eagan (10%)

Our Volunteers

- We had over 260 volunteers helping out with our riding programs and special events, and ranch projects:
 - Children's Program = 3350 hours Projects/Events = 860 hours
 - Veteran's Program = 1002 hours
- Total Volunteer Hours = 5212 Hours**

- Total amount of visits and hours for those that participated in the **Heroes on Horseback Program**: 221.75 visits & 441.75 hours.
 - 46% Army
 - 16% Navy
 - 13% Air Force
 - 13% Marine
 - 8% Army Reserve
 - 4% Army National Guard
- 83% of our veterans were male; 17% were female
- While multiple different diagnoses were present, below are a few that affected many of the riders participating in the programs.
 - Anxiety Disorder / Major Depression
 - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Chemical/Alcohol Dependency
- We worked closely with several military organizations and most riders were referred by the following groups:
 - 29% Outpatient Referrals
 - 29% Veterans' Home—Hastings Branch
 - 21% Veterans' Home—Minneapolis Branch
 - 21% VA Medical Center—Minneapolis
 - 21% VA Medical Center

Our Horses

MHR owns 2 draft horses, 3 ponies, and 8 horses which are used in our riding programs plus 4 privately owned horses that are used for select classes. In 2015, these horses had a total of 1323 rider hours throughout the season. We also used the horses for 110 hours of Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy during the summer session.