

Winter 2012

Volume 5, Issue 3



Therapeutic Riding

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Inside this issue:

2012 Year Review	2-3
2013 Program Goals	3
Volunteer Thank You	4
Donation Thank You	5
Children's Program Page	6
"HoH" Page & Program Statistics	7
2013 Timeline / Board of Directors	8

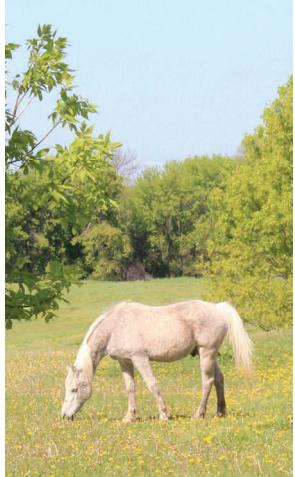
Please find us on Facebook for updates over the winter. We add photos of the horses and ranch throughout the year, so please check us out!

Majestic Hills Ranch
for Children and Veterans



RANCH RAMBLINS

2012 Year in Pictures



Trail ride (above); HOH Class (above right); Rose from Jackie's garden (far right); Corn with birdhouse (lower right); Riding Tobie (right.)

2012 Program Reviews

When we started the new year in January, each program listed out goals that it was going to strive for throughout the season. Now, with 2012 coming to a close, we look back over the last 11 months and see how we did. We get a chance to assess where we met our goals, where it was found that we needed to adapt, and where there still needs to be work done. Below is a review of what we had hoped to accomplish and how we did.

Children's Program:

Changing the schedule from weekly lessons to having (3) seven week sessions per year. This way we can schedule more participants without the fear of overbooking. The final decision to convert the schedule to sessions came later in 2011 than anticipated, so we did not get a chance to tell parents about the change until our February 2012 Newsletter and then March paperwork. Because of this change, we did have a decrease in amount of riders—99 riders in 2011, 78 riders scheduled in 2012. While we did have less riders, the attendance did rise quite dramatically—over 30% increase in riders missing less than 3 classes. (In 2011, attendance was 46% of riders had 3 or less absences, in 2012 it was 76%.) Because of this increase, we will continue to have (3) seven week sessions in 2013 and then at the end of the season, we will assess the numbers and make a decision if we will continue with sessions indefinitely or try something else instead.

To continue conditioning and training the therapy horses so that we always have a healthy herd to choose from. Moon was retired from the Children's Program after the spring session due to hoof tenderness, and then we needed to retire Annie (Children's) and Goldie (Veteran's) from the programs due to behavioral concerns. This fall Tuesday also left the Children's program to go back to her former owner (who shipped her out to North Carolina to join them.) With all of these horses leaving, in 2012 we began to work 2 privately owned horses into the program to help keep the number of hours each program horse was asked to work down. Gus was a therapy horse from another program who came out of retirement, and Cheyenne is a trail horse with many miles under saddle that has been continuing her training towards becoming a therapy horse. Both did a wonderful job, earning lots of love from our riders. We will be adding a few more horses over the winter, so we will have some new faces for riders to meet in the spring.

Adding advanced riding classes to the core curriculum, so we can expand the number of riders that have access to these classes. We will offer 2 evening classes and one morning class that will be focused entirely on advanced skills—which include riding without a leader, working on trotting, and possibly cantering on a lunge line. We were able to have 3 classes of totally independent riders this year, teaching 12 students the skills that they will need to graduate to totally independent riding. Instructors Jen and Brenda did a fantastic job of teaching steering, balance, saddling up the horses, and the trot (both sitting and posting.) We need to find a reliably smooth cantering horse before we can offer that to our riders, but we will work on that for 2013 advanced classes.

Veteran's Heroes on Horseback Program:

Continue to expand on our "Heroes on Horseback" Veterans program, working with the VA Medical Center to line up potential riders to begin in May and begin working with the Minnesota Veterans Homes, Minneapolis & Hastings, and to increase our outpatient referrals. We will be adding the hydraulic lift for mounting riders that are wheelchair dependent starting in the spring, and adding therapeutic carriage driving in the summer sessions. In 2012 we more than doubled our participants in this program, which resulted in a 146% increase of service hours that we were able to give to these brave men and women. We were able to expand our relationship with both the Minneapolis and the Hastings Veteran's Homes, creating a strong working relationship with the wonderful therapists and leaders at both establishments. They are so great to work with, we thank them for their support. We added the hydraulic lift down by the small arena, and over the winter we will get a ramp built so that people that utilize power wheelchairs and walkers can easily be mounted upon a horse. By next year, this shall be the primary way our riders mount onto the horses in the

HOH program. We will also be working slowly towards getting the carriage in use for the HOH program. This is a greater challenge, for we need to make sure that our drivers, horse, and volunteers are all trained with many hours practicing before we start utilizing this part of the program.

Both Programs:

Solicit the help of more volunteers to assist the riders with their therapy sessions, ranch duties, and maintenance. We had the help of over 288 volunteers (which includes groups from Blue Cross, HealthPartners, and the Lakeville Summer Stretch Youth program) in 2012 to help with lessons, events, and general clean up. The children's program had many new volunteers joining classes, and LOTS of returning volunteers (*THANK YOU!!!*) The HOH program had many wonderful returning volunteers, and with a chance meeting between Executive Director of the Veteran's Program Larry Johnson and a major in the United States Marines—we also got a great crew of Marines from the Marine Wing, Support Squadron 471 that assist with the riders. The camaraderie of veterans helping veterans is terrific as it is with all of our volunteers. We hope to continue with returning experienced volunteers assisting with the training and guidance of new friends that come out to help.



2013 Program Goals

MHR has several exciting updates to look forward to in the new year, some of which will impact our riders.

- ◆ The most important one is that in 2013 we will be starting a Capital Campaign to get the funding to build an indoor arena. We are hoping to be able to construct an arena that is well insulated, if not actually heated, so that we can expand our riding seasons. This will also allow us to have classes on days that we now have to cancel due to rain (but not thunder or lightning), wind, and higher or lower temperatures. We will keep everyone up to date on the progress of this. If you have experience with or want to assist with fundraising towards this, please contact the office.
- ◆ The second most exciting change is that MHR is becoming a PATH Intl. member and will begin the long journey towards becoming a Premier Site. PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International) is the main organization that sets safety standards for therapeutic riding. Membership will show how committed we are to the safety of our riders, horses, and volunteers.
- ◆ On a similar note, we will also be working towards becoming a Minnesota Horse Council Certified Stable. To become such a stable, you need to demonstrate to a representative of the Council that your barn meets or exceeds the level of safety they deem necessary. Because of the diligence and care that Erik Espinosa, our Ranch Manager, gives to Majestic Hills—this should be an easy visit to pass. Membership as a certified stable once again shows our commitment towards the safety of our horses, and towards the people that ride them.
- ◆ We hope to update the website in 2013. While the site we currently have has a wonderful history, having the ability to add some new features like filling out applications online and making information available real-time would be fantastic!
- ◆ We are also looking to add more instructors to both programs in the coming year. While some horse experience is a must (you need to be able to tell if a horse is ill or lame,) all that is needed to become an instructor is a willingness to learn and the passion to work with our riders. If you have an interest in becoming a therapeutic riding instructor, please contact Kris in the office.



Thank you to the 2012 volunteers!

A huge thank you goes out to the over 288 volunteers that helped out with the programs, picnics, events, horses, and ranch care this year. We specially want to thank our instructors: **Brenda Steinhauer, Jen Espinosa, and Molly Rootes**, for they are also volunteers. They taught over 200 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!)

Alexa Burinda	Emily Gerkin	Kirsten Olsen	Samantha Brama Warhol
Alexandra Phoenix	Emily Otremba	Krista Petersen	Samantha Lenz
Allison Christenson	Emily Sanders	Kristin Heslep	Sara Kaczmarek
Alyssa Bicking	Emily Wick	Lani Hedberg	Sara Richards
Amanda Robbins	Emma Mellgren	Larry Johnson	Sarah Anderson
Amanda Soderlund	Erik Espinosa	Laura Peterson	Sarah Barnes
Angie Volkert	Erin Olson	Linda Flicek	Sarah Oines
Anne Bueltel	Fae Zimmer	Lindsay Dinan	Sarah Weis
Anthony Mazza	Fiona Duffy	Lindsey Zocher	Sasha Carroll
April Morris	Gary Dusterhoff	Lisa "Palomino" Clark	Sean Burk
Ashley Berg	Gay Uttenhove	Lisa Lesher	Shahna Monge
Becky Brown	Gwen (<i>Jessica's</i> <i>Grandmother</i>)	Liz Brick	Shanon Bjornard
Becky Schmeck	Heather Digolo	Lizzy Bendel	Sharon Marshall
Ben Anderson	Heidi Burinda	Londa Tushie	Shauna Siech
Beth Fredrickson	Holly Zimmerman	Madi Sogge	Shelby Angen
Bonnie Christenson	Hugh Lenz	Madison Humfer	Shelby Stewart
Brenda Spencer	Jackie Dauheuang	Mady Bunnell	Shelly Hulse
Brenna Zimmer	Jacob Muhan	Maggie Jackson	Sheri Angen
Brittany Strombeck	Jacob Thoresen	Mark Wirts	Sheri Reiser
Bryan Axelrod	James Macnevin	Mary Carter	Stacey Jacobson
Caitlin Duffy	Jane Gray	Mary Ehrenberger	Stacy Meehan
Carl VanDeSteeg	Jeannie Harp	Mary Ellen Schmid	Steve Cornwell
Carol Meagher	Jen Espinosa	Mary Grace Nelson	Steve Hecker
Caroline Jackson	Jessica	Mary Smith	Steven Plaszaz
Carrie Leiner	Jina Weis	McKennen Doyamo	SuAnne Woo
Chad Reis	Joe Becker	Michelle Johnsrud	Sue Anderson
Chad Shaw	Joe Burinda	Mikayla Raines	Sue Campbell
Chelsey Foss	Joelyn Nielsen	Molly Rootes	Sulese Diaz
Cheryl Giroulo	John Christopher Hamre	Nancy Pinke	Susanne Leidner
Chris Schmidt	John Dolan	Nicole Almsted	Sydney Mohr
Christopher A. Heihn	Johnny Green	Nicole Oliver	Tasha Burinda
Cindy Siech	Joseph P Buhain	Pamela Karahalius	Taylor Yach
Corrine Gillis	Joyce Butler	Patricia Hobot	Terry Dresher
Courtney Kretzmann	Juanita Carlson	Patrick Welch	Terry Jackson
Craig Swanson	Judy Jungwirth	Patti Wallin	Thomas Rymer
Crystal Feyen	Judy Nelson	Patty Stroth	Tim, Brenna, & Ciera Keough
Danika Burinda	Judy VanDeSteeg	Paul Smith	Tim Anderson
Daryl Hampton	Julia Kane	Paulette Okerstrom	Tim Keough
Dave Pinke	Julia Wolter	Peggy Nelson	Tom Haavisto
David Ingebritson	Julie Bonham	Rachel Pocker	Tommy Burinda
David Lambrecht	Julie Miller	Rachel Winker	Troy A. Rudiger
Deb Graves	Kaitlin Steinhauer	Ray Gilbertson	Vanessa Robbins
Debra Wilkowske	Katherine (Kate) Gadek	Richard Rogozinski	Victoria Celano
Delaney Cox	Katie Kuefler	Rick Zieska	Wendy Bindeman
Dorothy Brama	Katie Thomas	Robin Adkins	Wendy Forsman
Dorothy Calviri	Kay Mitzner	Robin Wagner	Wendy Mathews
Elaine Soderlund	Kelly Svoboda	Ronn Botko	Wendy Forsman's Niece
Elizabeth Deysach	Kendra Plaschko	Ryan Salerno	Wendy Forsman's Nephew
Elizabeth Gatti	Kim Howard	Sally Gatti	
Ellorie Liljequist		Sally Witherall	

Thanks also go to the group at Applewood Pointe; Bloomington who assemble our newsletters.

They do a wonderful job preparing these for mailing! **Thank You!!**

Thank you to our supporters!

Foundation Grants

Canterbury Park Minnesota Fund
Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation

Hansen Family Foundation
Margaret H. & James E. Kelley Foundation
Mike & Linda Fiterman Family Foundation
PGN Foundation

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community
TCF Foundation
The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians
ULLR/Ski For Light

Civic Organizations

Am Legion Post 491 Bayport
AM Legion Post 98 St Paul Park
American Legion Nelson Lucking Post #47
American Legion Dan Patch Post 643
American Legion Post #39, North St. Paul

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon
Blue Star Mothers of America
Charles Borak American Legion Post
Disabled American Vet's Chapter # 13
Grand Rapids MN
Earl C Hill Bloomington Post 550
Forrest G James Marine Corps League

James Ballentine VFW Post 246
Military Order of the Purple Heart
Pine Island Lions Club
Rosemount VFW 9433
Stary Yerka Post 5727
The Question Club
VFW Post #217 Laurence La Belle

Business Donations

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Scoreboard Sports

Thomson Reuters Employee Match
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MaryLee Enfield
Nadine Walker
Paulette Niver
Richard Champe
Sandy Jarrett
Shanon Bjornard
Sharon Wienandt
Shelly Hulse
Stephan Sanger
Wendy Krause

Give to the Max Day donors

Anonymous (x2)
Camille McArdle
Daniel Ellingson

Deborah Scott
Emma M. Mellgren
Heather Harden
Hugh A Lenz
Katherine L Gadek
Laura S Peterson
Linda Moser

Londa Tushie
Mary B. Lucas
Patricia Stroth
Sharon Angen
Susan R Gjerset
Teri Dormady

In Kind donations

Caroline Jackson	Misc. make-up for gift basket
Chuck & Jill Schwantes	Paver stone for patio
Clint Anderson	Banner made for stands, etc.
Erik Bjornard	Rights to the song "Majestic Hills Ranch" & Video
Gay Carpenter	Western saddle
Jacob Thoresen	Riding helmet
Kim Howard	(2) Lawn mowers

Kris Zieska	Misc items used in class / on the ranch
Linda Flicek	Juicer & Christmas tree
Northern Tool & Equipment	Gift card
Pam & Lydia Famer	Tack
Dorothea Bauman	Handmade queen size quilt
Patti Wallin & Kevin Herrboldt	400 Square bales of hay
Paul Smith	Repairing the hydraulic lift
Sue Anderson	Riding helmet

In Honor of...

James L. Wells
Lila Mamun
Brenda, Jen, & Molly (Instructors extraordinaire!)
Riders Amar & Anthony (Tuesday night classes)
Carlynn & Sam
Jen Espinosa (For all you do every day at the ranch)

Nadine Walker
Lori Noel
Kris Zieska
Anonymous
Susan Gore
Anonymous

In Memory of...

Jackie Howard Kim Howard



Children's Program Corner

In 2012, we had many riders that made such progress in classes, that it was impossible to chose a "Rider of the Year." So instead, I am dedicating this page to a few stories that parent's have shared with me about our riders. I am also trying to gather stories, photos, and original artwork done by MHR riders and the volunteers that work with them. Once gathered, I am going to put them together into a collection for 2013. Please let me know if you have any stories about "the Ranch" that you would like to share.

Fast Friends

Hi Kris,

I wanted to take a moment to thank you and Majestic Hills Ranch for your awesome program! It took me over a year to talk Logan into trying it and I was quite nervous not only how he would react to the horses, but what would happen if he had one of his autistic anger outbursts. I am absolutely amazed that not once has he had an outburst. In fact, after just the summer session Logan is absolutely calm when on the horse, has improved self-esteem and is even talking socially! To think I had him go to social skills training for so many years ... and all he needed was to be on your horse! We have also noted that he has better balance now in his kung-fu lessons. Logan loves going to Majestic Hill Ranch, is always ready ahead of time and is actually telling me when it is time to go there. This is a nice, welcome relief as the transition process of getting him somewhere can be trying on one's nerves.



Logan and Gus

I would also like to mention how wonderful Brenda is with Logan! She gives guidance and support in the most beautiful, caring way. You have a gem in her!

Thank you again for a truly special program!
- Logan's Mom



Brenda teaching Logan the posting trot.

Donation from the Purple Posse

Written by Rick Zieska

Many visitors to Majestic Hills Ranch know the large grey Percheron cross, Tobie. He has been eating well this fall in part due to a donation to MHR from children's program rider, Stephanie. She took the profit from selling produce produced by her non-profit project, the Purple Patch and donated it to our program. For two years, she has been the inspiration behind the Purple Patch, a small agricultural project dedicated to growing purple produce.

Begun as the Purple Patio at Stephanie's home, the project migrated in 2011 to a full-on vegetable patch with 2 raised beds at Faith Community Gardens, where there are several other families that have children with special needs utilizing plots as well.



This year, the Purple Patch contained 20 varieties of produce, although it's still in the pilot project stage. In High School, Stephanie first conceived of the project and using an electronic communications system, interviewed vendors at the Northfield Farmer's Market to ascertain the viability of selling produce there. She also interviewed local area vegetable farmers.

The mission statement for the project is to "Teach people about good food and that people in wheelchairs are good people too." The patch is supported in part by a Healthy Community grant and a cadre of volunteers motivated by Stephanie who brings lots of love and laughter to the patch regularly. The goal of the project is to eventually have enough raised beds to produce a sufficient volume of produce to support a stall in the farmer's market. It's also hoped that the raised beds can be planted at Stephanie's home to save the three mile drive to the current location.

So, why purple? "It's my favorite color", she says. Purple lettuce and spotted lettuce are her favorite plants in the patch. Stephanie is the heart and soul of the project and plans the layout as well as what varieties of produce to plant.

In a show of support for the project, Tobie has offered to supply plenty of fertilizer. ☺

This article was brought to you by the letter "P".



MHR “Heroes on Horseback”

A Very Special Thank You!

By Larry Johnson, Executive Director of the HOH Program

A special thanks goes out to Wayne Koski, who is one of our riders in our “Heroes on Horseback” program. You may remember that Wayne was recently interviewed by the Star Tribune and was gracious enough to change his regular riding class to accommodate the ranch. He has shown flexibility in his scheduling whenever we have asked him to participate in an event and was kind enough to do the same re-scheduling to attend our Veterans Picnic in August where he demonstrated the hydraulic lift and went one step further and allowed all in attendance to observe his actual riding session. He shared why he came to Majestic Hills Ranch and about his disabilities and what he has gained since attending his sessions. On behalf of the Board of Directors, volunteers, and other veterans, we thank you for your service and for assisting us whenever we have asked you to help.



Statistics for both programs in 2012...

Our Riders

Total number of riders served by the **Children's Program**: 78

- 14% Under 5 years old
- 33% Between ages 6 and 10 years old
- 35% Between ages 11 and 15 years old
- 18% Over 16 years

58% of our riders were male; 42% 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. Developmental Delay (DD)
4. Attention deficit disorder / Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD)

We offered classes to riders throughout the 7 county metro area, but 90% fell to the cities south of the Minnesota River. Of those cities, listed below are the top 4:

1. Lakeville (26%)
2. Burnsville (15%)
3. Eagan (10%)
4. Apple Valley (9%)

Total amount of visits and hours for those that participated in the **MHR Heroes on Horseback Program**: 380 visits / 756 hours.

- 67% Army
- 21% Navy
- 4% Air Force
- 4% Marine
- 4% Army Reserve

83% of our veterans were male; 17% were female

While over dozens of different diagnosis were present, below are the top 3 that affected many of the riders that participated with the programs.

1. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
2. Chemical Dependency
3. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

While we worked closely with several military organizations, most riders were referred by the following groups:

- 29% VA Medical Center
- 29% M Veterans Home—Minneapolis Branch
- 21% M Veterans Home—Hastings Branch
- 17% Self referred (with a medical order from their physician.)
- 4% Veteran's Service Center

Our Volunteers

We had over 288 volunteers helping out with our riding programs, picnics and special events.

Children's Programs = 4914 hours Picnics / Events = 1782 hours

Veteran's Program = 625 hours

Total Volunteer Hours = 7321 hours

Our Horses

MHR has 18 horses in both programs that are used for a total of 2210 hours throughout the season plus being used in 4 Picnics (over 250 riders) and pulling our wagon for parades (14 hours.)



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Tentative Dates for 2013

February	Newsletter sent out	(Feb 25)
March	Paperwork sent out to current riders	(March 11)
	Volunteers get contacted via e-mail or letter	(March 11)
	Paperwork sent out to new riders	(March 25)
April	Paperwork is due back for riders	(April 5)
	Classes scheduled & confirmed with parents	(April 12)
	Volunteer trainings are scheduled	(April 13, 20, & 27)
	Spring Classes Begin (Session 1)	(April 29)
May	Volunteer trainings are scheduled	(May 4, 11)

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*See a colored version of this newsletter on our website. It will be listed as
"Winter 2012" in the Newsletter section.*



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