

# Centaur Stride Therapeutic Riding Center

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# Newsletter



Spring 2009

## Thank You To All

Without the efforts of the staff & volunteers, Centaur Stride would not be able to exist. Many times, their work is done behind the scene and is not appreciated as it should be. All too often, it's only recognized when they aren't there, and things we take for granted don't get done.

Horses need to be fed, watered, exercised, and brushed. Their stalls need to be cleaned and new bedding put down. Tack needs to be cleaned and cared for. Hay needs to be cut, baled, and stored in the barn. Fences & pastures need attention. Snow needs to be plowed during certain times of the year. Trails have to be mowed and maintained so that the riders can use them. Riders need side walkers. Tractors and other equipment must be repaired & maintained.

Records need to be kept, not only of the riders that used the facility that week, but also records of the horses, vet bills, farrier visits, employee records & wages, etc.

Money is also an issue – tracking money paid by riders, paying bills, applying for grants, properly spending the grant monies we receive. Setting up fundraisers and other activities takes time & people. The list goes on and on.

For those who already are participating, thank you for helping Centaur Stride to help others!!!

For those who aren't, consider this: Centaur Stride provides services to a large number of clients. Currently there is a small core of staff & volunteers. If every rider who is getting benefit from Centaur Stride had just one person (parent, guardian, relative or friend) who would be available for just one hour a week, (or 4 hrs once a month) think of how much more we'd be able to accomplish! It would work out to the equivalent of a couple of full time employees! If you have some time to donate, please contact the riding center.

*Newsletter Editor*



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# Claudia's Corner

## **Kiwanis Fund Raiser**

The Lakewood Kiwanis are holding a “**Nite at the Races**” to benefit Centaur Stride. It will be held May 9th at the Lakewood American Legion. Doors open at 6:30 and tickets are \$10. That covers admission and enough to place one bet for each race. Additional race tickets are available. Payouts are great prizes donated from the area and the grand prize will be a bottle of Louis XIII Cognac valued at \$1500!

The races are actual races (on screen)... and it will be fun! Invite your friends. Seating is limited, so reserve your tickets early. Call Claudia at 792-5000. What a great way to have a night out and benefit our riding center. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

## **Annual Theme Basket Raffle**

“**Healing with Horses**”: Lamae, Claudia, Diana and Irene are working on getting the prizes grouped and ready to sell tickets by April 11. The drawing is Monday, May 25 at Cross Roads Farm & Craft Market. The ultimate prize basket is worth \$925 with a diamond and tanzanite necklace worth \$800, donated by Marci Miller and Debbie Piotrowski. So many good prizes... if you haven't received a prize list and tickets for the presale, contact Claudia at 792-5000 or the stables at 326-4318.

## **In Memoriam:**

Ann K. Nolloth died unexpectedly on Jan 20, 2009, at the age of 56. Ann has been a part of Centaur Stride since 1996, when she donated two of her treasured horses, Tocara and Majestic. Many of you may remember the horses, both of which were great therapy horses. Tocara died several years ago, but Majestic, now 34 years old, still resides at Centaur Stride and is used to teach ground work to students and riders. Ann has been a dedicated volunteer, on call whenever we were in dire need and most recently a board member. She believed in our mission and supported us every way she could, even

including Centaur Stride as beneficiary of her memorials, adding to our endowment fund at the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation. We now have one more angel watching over us!

On a personal note, Ann's death was a “no more procrastination” call. What if I die unexpectedly tomorrow? So many people (board members, volunteers and staff) have been instrumental in keeping Centaur Stride open, but it has been a day-to-day operation for the past 16 years. It is truly a miracle that we have survived this long. I do think it is God's Will and plan for me, but what would happen if I wasn't here? Are there people who would continue to keep it going? Is everything in order so that would happen? No! We need a solid sustainability plan. Our board is working diligently on that as a major focus. It has always been hard to make that the focus when day to day operations were already all we could handle. We need everyone's help to make this happen. We need to beef up our endowment funds. The Chautauqua Bon Vivant, our **Culinary, Wine & Spirits Festival** is our chance for a really big fund raiser. Any funds above needed operating expenses will go into that fund. Hopefully, it will be an annual event.

Other than that, please let your friends and family know about our endowment funds through the **Chautauqua Region Community Foundation**. We actually have two presently:

**The Centaur Stride Therapeutic Horseback Riding for the Handicapped Fund**, initiated by Lyle and Gladys Peterson. Money generated from this fund will be dedicated to help offset daily operational expenses at the center and to help provide riding scholarship assistance for individuals.

**Animals for the Disabled Fund**, initiated by Doug and Lamae McCullor, is dedicated to assisting organizations that raise, train, or use animals to help persons with disabilities. It will provide help with veterinary and medical bills incurred by the animals. Currently, Centaur Stride is the designated organization for awards from this fund.

*Claudia*

## Newsletter Contributions

Previous editions of this newsletter have been sporadic, due to a variety of reasons. We would like to make it at least a quarterly publication, available both in print and on line at our website.

Much like newspapers and TV stations use reporters and info gathering people to write articles, this newsletter would welcome & appreciate new and interesting topics for each edition from you. For your convenience, we have two easy ways to get the info to us.

- 1) Drop the info in the large manila envelope marked "NEWSLETTER" on the bulletin board near the riding arena. I'll check it frequently.
- 2) If you'd prefer, send it via e-mail to [centaurstrideneews@yahoo.com](mailto:centaurstrideneews@yahoo.com). We'll try to include it as space and time allows.

In future editions of the *Newsletter* we hope to feature different staff members & volunteers. If you would like to see a special staff member or a volunteer recognized, please let us know.

If you would like your son/daughter, grandchild, etc. to be included in future editions in our "rider spotlight", please write up a couple of paragraphs about him/her. Discuss whatever you're comfortable sharing with others: their disability, benefits they get from riding, what they enjoy about being part of the program, health improvements, self confidence, etc. Write it from your prospective as a parent/grandparent or through the child's eyes. Include a photo if possible. Drop it in the envelope or email to the above address.

As stated before, we also will be starting a **Rider's News** section to recognize any accomplishments - school graduation, recognitions, celebrations, or news in general about our riders, staff, board members, etc. Let us know what is happening out there so we can share it with everyone!

Thanks,  
*Doug* ☺

## Meet The Staff

Due to scheduling, not everyone gets to meet all of the people who work & volunteer at Centaur Stride. So, here's a list of some you should know!

Savannah Alday - Instructor  
Jean Lozier – Barn Manager / Instructor  
Tyler Muka – Assistant  
Barb Johnson - PRIDE Program Coordinator  
Claudia Monroe – Volunteer Physical Therapist

## Longtime Staff Member Leaving



**Savannah Alday**- started as a volunteer at Centaur Stride in June 2000. She was hired as an assistant in May 2003, and then promoted to instructor in May 2005 after completing CHA Instructor Certification. She will celebrate her 9 year anniversary at Centaur Stride this June.

Savannah goes above and beyond her paid position, volunteering at all fund raisers, being resourceful, donating needed items, and doing whatever needs to be done regardless of whether or not she will be paid for it. If we could afford to pay her more, she would certainly deserve it and I would be the first to advocate for it. We will certainly miss her but I have faith that God will send us a replacement.

*Claudia*



## Rider Spotlight



### Conner McGarry

My son Connor McGarry has been coming to Centaur Stride for about three years now. Along with the friendship he has made with the staff and horses at Centaur Stride (especially Dyeak and Rosie), he has also developed another very close bond with another four legged friend, his service dog Emma. Both these bonds have helped Connor make great strides and accomplish many things that his doctors and therapist stated that he would never be able to accomplish.

When Connor was born we thought maybe something was wrong. He had trouble with his suck reflex. He was not eating very well. When we got home we figured that it was that he was a little behind developmentally, still never realizing that he may have a serious disability. When Connor was 18 months old he had a serious grand mal seizure and he was life flighted to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh in a drug induced coma and stayed there for nine days. We were not sure if he was going to come home from that trip. Shortly after that we had genetic testing completed and found out that Connor had a deletion on his 15<sup>th</sup> chromosome from the maternal side that causes a syndrome called Angelman. This disorder is characterized by serious seizures, lack of speech, poor gate control, mental retardation and an overall happy demeanor. The kids who live with this disease

are called "Angels". The genetic testing also discovered that Connor had a 12 and 13 unbalanced trans location. The combination of these two genetic disorders is called "Connors Syndrome" because Connor's doctors are unaware of anybody else that has these two issues. From that point on we were aware of Connor's disorder, but not sure what it meant. Because he was the first and only, there was not a lot of detail on expectations. The doctors and genetic counselors that met with us to explain the disorder started the discussion with "we do not know what to expect". I started to realize that Connor would not be like the other kids, yet did not quite understand how. I never knew how blessed we were to be the parents of an Angel. Connor continued to struggle with serious seizures that were difficult to control and we tried to find a way to be able to predict his seizures. That is where Emma came into the picture. Emma is Connor's Seizure Alert Dog from New Hope Assistance Dogs. Emma has been with Connor since she was a year old and they have been together for about three years. The bond between these two has been quite enjoyable. As with Connor living with a disability, we have had our good and bad times, but overall having Emma has been a great part of our life. We have a cordless door bell in our home that Emma can hit with her nose to tell us that Connor needs help. She has signaled some of Connor's seizures and the intensity and frequency of his seizures have decreased drastically. Connor was having serious seizures every six months and has had only two major episodes in three years with Emma. In November, Emma unexpectedly came down with grand mal seizures herself. We had to take her to the emergency ER and the vet stated that "there was no medical reason for her to be having seizures". Less than forty eight hours later, Connor fell into a grand mal episode. Whether it is coincident or not, we feel that our Angel has been blessed with a true friend and a real guardian. Our four legged friends from Centaur Stride and New Hope have been a blessing and we are glad they are a part of our life and that they have helped Connor in accomplishing so much.

*Brad McGarry*

### **Recycle To Ride**

Through the Cartridges for Kids Company, we are collecting recyclable items and hopefully will be able to generate a few dollars for Centaur Stride in the process.

We are looking for used and no longer usable: laser & inkjet cartridges, cell phones, PDA's, iPods, digital cameras, GPS Systems, video games, DVD's, laptops & video game systems. We'll sort through them. Most are recyclable, a few aren't. If you have any of the above items, drop them in the recycling container in the therapy room at Centaur Stride. Thanks!

### ***Lamae***

#### **Annual Basket Raffle 09**

Our annual basket raffle is coming up again. The items have been donated, the list of baskets and sponsors has been created, and the tickets are ready. Now, we need **you** to help sell the tickets! As in the past, tickets are \$1 each, 6 for \$5 and a page of 15 for \$10. There are many baskets to choose from, so there's something for everybody! Drawing will be on Memorial Day, May 25<sup>th</sup>. If you can help sell tickets, or work during the final weekend, it would be greatly appreciated. If everyone participates we can make this a huge success for the benefit of our riders and Centaur Stride. Contact Claudia at Centaur Stride ASAP if you can help.

#### **Basket Raffle Sponsors**

This year the following people/businesses have contributed items for our fund raising raffle:

A-Z Treasurers, Westfield  
Antiques of Westfield  
The Basket Company, Jamestown  
T.W. Biggins  
Bob Evans, Jamestown  
Bobek's AutoTrans of Dunkirk  
Brick Village Gourmet Foods  
Brigiotta's Farmland Store & Greenhouse  
3-C's Catering, Kennedy  
Cakes To Remember  
Centaur Stride

Joanne Christ  
CJ's Pizza, Westfield  
Calarco's Restaurant, Westfield  
Comfort Inn, Jamestown  
Community Bank of Brocton  
Cora's Salon, Westfield  
J. Crolle  
CVS Westfield  
Deb's Barber Shop, Westfield  
Designer Pools, Jamestown  
Devlin Farm Supply, Westfield  
Jon Elder Photography, Jamestown  
Erie Zoological Society, Erie  
Hair By Lucia, Westfield  
Hills Science Diet  
HSBC Westfield  
Jimmy's Pizza, Westfield  
Arlene Kurtz  
Joy Kurtz  
A. Kuehn  
Lakeview Gardens, Jamestown  
Liberty Winery, Sheridan  
McDonalds  
Marci Miller  
Willowe Neckers  
Neckers Co. General Store, Clymer  
Noble Winery, Westfield  
Panache of Jamestown  
Pepsi Company of Jamestown  
J. Pfeiffer  
Debbie Piotrowski  
Quality Markets, Westfield  
Quick Fill  
Sugar Hill Golf Course, Westfield  
Tallulah's Hair Design, Westfield  
Tim Horton's, Jamestown  
Time Warner Cable, Jamestown  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, Erie  
Tops Markets, Fredonia  
Verizon, Westfield  
Wegmans of Lakewood  
Welch's  
Westfield Nursery  
Wing City, Fredonia  
Connie Wojcinski  
Anne Zervos

**Thank You To All Who Donated!!**  
**We Couldn't Do It Without You!!**



## From The Horse's Mouth



**Majestik**

Hello there. My name is Mr. Majestique, but my friends know me as Majestik. The recently deceased Ann Nollath and family donated me to Centaur Stride. I was born on Jan. 1, 1975 and I am half Arabian and Quarter horse. Since I am 34 years old I currently hold the record for being the oldest equine at Centaur Stride. Now, don't let my age fool you. I can go out to pasture and run right along with all my other friends. I might not be as fast as I once was but what I lack in speed I make up for in spunk.

A couple years ago I was retired from the riding program but I still earn my keep. My new job in life is to be a ground lesson horse. Sounds important right? Well it is. I let riders and volunteers lead me around to learn how to properly handle my friends and me. In a way you could say I am the ambassador around here. The other thing that I am really good at, and enjoy, is being brushed. There's nothing I love more than to have somebody give me a good grooming. I

don't mind getting brushed by a lot of people at once either because that just means all my itchy spots get attention, and let me tell you I have a lot of those.

I also enjoy just chilling and hanging my head out my stall door and possibly getting a good pet from people passing by. Sometimes I'll even get a treat. Candy canes, apples, and carrots are my favorites but I'm always up for trying new things. So make sure you come by and say hi sometime.

*(Editors note: Our horse spotlight was written by Savannah Alday. Thank you Savannah)*

## In Memoriam



### **Coco**

Over this past winter, Cocoa passed away after a long career helping the riders at Centaur Stride to gain confidence and improve their riding skills. Coco started "working" at the Center in 1993 when he was donated by Olive Becker. He was 27 years old.