

Centaur Stride Therapeutic Riding Center

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Newsletter

Winter 2004-05

VOLUNTEERS



Therapeutic Riding Center
Westfield NY.

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Becoming a volunteer at Centaur Stride is a very gratifying experience. There is much to do and even more to learn. This position gives the opportunity to acquire horse knowledge and sharpen people skills. For those who want to know all they can about horses, this is the place. Without the help of our volunteers, Centaur Stride would have a difficult time operating. They provide us with extra help leading horses or being side walkers. This is the most crucial part of being a volunteer. They provide us with invaluable help.

On the other hand, our volunteers get people skills. This is for their benefit and ours. When the consumers come to ride, it's not just the horses they want to see. Our volunteers help to put that extra something into the whole riding experience.

So, in all, our volunteers help better the quality of the riding time for our consumers. They also get to learn all that we can offer to them about horses. For an added bonus, they get riding time of their own and the chance to help us work and train our horses.

VOLUNTEERS! What would we do without them?

*Editor's note: The previous article was written by
instructor/asst.barn manager Savannah Alday*

Yard Sale

Sue Stull has volunteered to have a yard sale fund raiser at her house in Fredonia this Spring. If you have any items to donate, please let her know.

Field Trip to Centaur Stride

Special education classes taught by Kelly Bowen & Mike Zona, at Jamestown's Jefferson Middle School scheduled a field trip to Centaur Stride. Lamae & I used this opportunity to take a day off work and volunteered a few hours to help out. As those who have volunteered in the past can relate to, I'm not sure who benefited the most, the kids or us.

The group of 25 arrived on a school bus in the morning. While waiting their turn to ride, groups toured several stations in the barn with activities at each stop including learning parts of the horse, grooming and making special treats for the horses. For many, it was not only their first time in a barn, it was the first time they had ever seen an animal larger than a Labrador Retriever up close. As might be imagined, it was an extremely anxious experience for some. Slow and easy was the theme. Thanks to the patience of staff, volunteers, & the wonderful horses, all the students eventually managed to climb aboard and ride around the arena. It's hard to imagine bigger smiles (kids & ours alike)! Needless to say, it was one of those memorable days that make volunteering such a worthwhile endeavor.

Doug & Lamae McCullor

Editor's Note: Even now, more than 6 months later, some of the students still talk fondly of the day they spent with the horses. The following are letters written by the students recently, about last year's field trip

I liked riding the horses at Centaur Stride. My horse's name is Mary Sue. When we got there it was fun because we helped them clean the stalls and groom the horses. We helped them feed the horse's carrots & treats. We ate lunch there too. I was warm because we were riding in an indoor stable when it was raining outside. I learned a lot about horses and how they listen to humans. I enjoyed playing the games while I was riding the horses. The whole day was a lot of fun!

Victor Karas III

I like the games I played on the horses at Centaur Stride. I had a blast when I rode the horses. It felt like I was flying in the sky. It was very foggy & rainy outside but nice inside the arena. There were two cats and I got to pet one of the cats. We made snacks for the horses & fed them. Matt rode a little horse. I saw a whole bunch of birds outside. Horses are very smart and are fun to ride.

Joshua Delgado

I went to Centaur Stride and rode a horse. I rode on Whiskey. I cleaned out the stall and I played with horse poop. It stunk. I made carrots with oats and I ate them. I loved the cats.

Mark William Stevenson

Claudia's
Corner

Volunteer Recognition Banquet will be held Monday, February 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion, South Erie St., in Mayville. All volunteers are invited but R.S.V.P.s are required: 326-4318 – you can leave a message. Guests are welcome (guest fee of \$7 per person). The menu is vegetable or traditional lasagna and an all you can eat salad bar.

CHA Instructor Certification Clinic will be held at Centaur Stride from May 20-24. This is a nationally recognized clinic valued at \$500 per person. Participants must be at least 18 years old and able to ride quite well. There are still some openings available. Partial scholarships will be awarded based on volunteer service to Centaur Stride. (We will be advertising for a "head instructor" some time in April.) Paul was instrumental in getting the grant to host this clinic at Centaur Stride.

School Field Trips- Last year we were able to host two field trips as a "trial run". The two schools were very pleased, thanks to all the

(Claudia's Corner Cont.)

volunteers who made it possible. The purpose of the "trial run" was to see what it takes to safely execute the program and what it cost us, as well as advertising what we can do! We are hoping to offer a limited number of field trips again this May and June. We received a grant from the Lenna Foundation (grant submitted by Sarah Becker) to help offset the costs. We need to know who is available during the day to volunteer. We can dictate the day and time available to the school and then fill the limited number of spots on a first response basis. Field trip programs usually last about 3 hours. Please let me know as soon as possible so I can get letters out to the schools (by March 1).

Our Theme Basket Raffle will be held this year on Memorial Day, May 30 at Cross Roads. The Parent & Volunteer Committee is busy soliciting prizes so we can make up baskets and get tickets printed.

Our Parent & Volunteer Organization plans fund-raising activities and coordinates social and special events. Chairpersons are Lamae McCullor, 665-5357, and Connie Wojcinski at 366-5386. Please call them if you'd like to join and help out.

We're hoping to initiate some beginner competitive teams this Spring (Grant submitted by Michele Boutwell and results still pending). This program will consist of group lessons two days per week for 8 weeks. It will conclude with a horse show at Centaur Stride and an Awards Banquet. Participants must be in grades 6-12, and able to ride independently by the end of 8 weeks, willing to commit to practices (have transportation), and not be involved in any other team sport. If the grant is awarded, there will be no fee for this program. There will be only three teams of 5 riders per team. Data will be collected and if the program is successful, may lead to future scholarships and grant money with more teams and off-site competitions. We will

need volunteers for this after-school 3-hour program two days per week. (We will pick the days based on volunteer availability).

JCC Occupational Therapy Assistant Students recently raised \$800 for Centaur Stride from a "Wheel-a-thon". Students had to maneuver around campus in wheelchairs to gain a better understanding of mobility in a wheelchair. They solicited donations while promoting awareness of disabilities.

We're gearing up for a great season this year. We now have 18 horses to work and hope to have enough demand for programs to keep staff and horses in good shape!

Together, we make it possible and then, make it happen!

Thank you!

Claudia

*****Donations & Support Needed*****

If you work for a business or belong to a club or other organization that would be interested in "adopting" a horse, conducting a fund raiser, or supporting Centaur Stride in other ways, please contact any of the board members.

Meet Our Staff

Jean Lozier- Volunteered from 7/02 to 7/03 before joining the staff in July 2003. Jean is the barn manager. She takes care of all the horses and coordinates scheduling the horses' work-time!

Savannah Alday- Volunteered from 6/00 to 9/03 before joining the staff in September 2003. Savannah is an instructor and assistant barn manager.

She takes Summers off to help run the horse camp at Camp Findley.

Kaleena (Lee) Rodriguez - Volunteered from 2/98 to 9/98. Took time off to get married and have three children (all in less than 5 years). She joined our staff in June 2004. Lee has extensive experience in horse shows and training horses.

Sheila Weber- Volunteered from 3/04 to 4/04 while she brought consumers from the Resource Center, her primary employer. Sheila joined our staff as an "as-needed" instructor in April 2004.

(Meet Our Staff cont.)

Ben Lozier- Volunteered from 12/03 to 6/04. He joined the staff in June 2004 to help Harry with Building and Grounds Maintenance.

Harry Monroe- Building & Grounds Supervisor. Volunteered from 1993 - 2002.

Rider Spotlight



Mallory Wojcinski

Mallory is a 9 year old who attends the Wheelock School in Fredonia. She started riding in October 2002. When Mallory began riding at Centaur Stride, she had two side-walkers and a leader. Today, she does most of the riding independently with instruction from the staff. She likes to help brush, saddle, and prep the horse she is riding. Mallory has ridden many different horses in the last two years, but she likes Kasie best.

Mallory is involved in many activities. She is in Junior Bowling on Saturdays. Every other Friday you will find her at Lucky Lanes with the Special Olympics. Her bowling average is 55! She is also a Junior Girl Scout with Troop 104

and dances at Danza Performing Arts Academy in Fredonia.

She resides in Dunkirk with her parents, Connie & Bob and an older sister Allison, who also volunteers at Centaur Stride in the summer.

Horse Spotlight



Molly

Molly is a 9 year old chestnut Haflinger mare that was purchased in the summer of 2003 with the help of donated funds. She has become a great addition to the program. She also gave us another addition with the birth of her colt, Kimosabi, on Sept. 29, 2003. Molly is a very unique pony. She is just the right height for side-walkers. (All of you who have ever been a side-walker can appreciate this.) In the winter, when the snow starts to collect on the arena her qualities come in handy. Many of the other horses sometimes get anxious when the snow starts to fall. Molly, on the other hand, will just stand there steady as a rock and we can always rely on her to stand quietly when there is a lot of commotion. She is very sturdy and solidly built to carry any type of rider whether they be loud and bouncy, or calm, as they lay down on her back and go along for the ride. Molly is a wonderful pony that will go wherever, whenever, and gratefully accepts an apple or candy cane from an excited rider.

Thank You!

A big thank you goes out to all who donated to our Christmas Giving Tree for the horses & barn. Every item helps!

Also thanks to Doug McCullor for helping to create the Christmas donation cards.