



Heaven's Gait Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center

Summer 2019 Newsletter

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope your summer is off to a spectacular start! As our programs are heating up this session, we are excited to share some important updates with you, especially after all your prayers & support helped us weather the polar vortex this winter and stay strong as ever this spring. Now that summer has finally arrived, that means our lessons are in full swing at HGR, and The Hayburner Fundraiser is just around the corner!

Remember this year's Hayburner Fundraiser is Saturday, August 24th from 5-9pm at Newport Shores in Port Washington, WI, and we look forward to seeing you there! Event details can be found on page 4.

Program Additions Bring New Possibilities



Since our last update, we added a couple new faces to our team, and we are thrilled to introduce them to you! This winter, Monica Schaefer came to HGR after teaching for nine years at Free S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders, Inc., a Premier Accredited PATH Intl. Center that recently closed in Fond du Lac, WI. After the unexpected passing of their Founder & Executive Director, their Board of Directors made the difficult decision to close its doors. Because this organization had served individuals with special needs for over 30 years, Heaven's Gait Ranch was blessed to connect with their Board and staff, who were kindly willing to share their insights and resources with another nonprofit working to make a meaningful difference.

Thankfully at this time -- because of your generosity & financial support -- we were prepared to pursue the opportunity for continued growth at HGR, by filling the need to expand our staff with diversified talent and experience. When we met Monica and learned more about her educational background, we quickly recognized the potential she could bring to HGR -- considering she graduated from Rocky Mountain College in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in Equestrian Studies, earning a major in Therapeutic Riding and a minor in Psychology. As a Registered PATH Intl. Therapeutic Riding Instructor since 2010 and a Certified PATH Intl. Mentor since 2015, Monica graciously accepted our offer to instruct at HGR part time, and we are very grateful she chose to support our mission.

All in all, through this connection in Fond du Lac, we not only received in-kind gifts of office supplies and other program aids to further the immediate growth of our center, but we also gained another wonderful instructor and patient therapy horse -- both of whom have proven to be outstanding additions to HGR.

Heaven's Gait Ranch
Therapeutic Riding Center

940 S. Main St.
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

P: (920) 400-0628
www.heavensgaitranch.org



Heaven's Gait Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center

Summer 2019 Newsletter



Last, but certainly not least, our Board of Directors at HGR has continued to make responsible decisions that are developing into a sustainable business model for our future -- with or without the help of its founders engaged in daily tasks & operations.

Horses

The newest addition to our herd came at a bittersweet time this spring, as Levi, one of our original program horses, retired from HGR and returned to his owner. After battling various health concerns that compromised his comfort, we are so glad Levi is now happy at home. While serving our program for two and a half years, Levi blessed us in so many ways, and we sincerely thank him for his service!

With his loving demeanor, Levi befriended participants with speech and learning delays, various genetic disorders, Down Syndrome, autism, and dementia, just to name a few. With his furry ears & inquisitive nature, he listened to children with speech impairments read aloud to him at the end of lessons, quietly giving them the confidence they needed to speak in front of larger audiences. For these reasons and more, we wish Levi the very best in his retirement, and we will always appreciate the Vian family -- and Levi's anonymous sponsor -- for their continued understanding and support of our mission.

Just as Levi left, Rufus arrived on site, ready to rock through the generosity of the Gottsacker family. Coming from the center in Fond du Lac, Rufus nailed his interview and trial period at HGR, as he quickly proved he knew his job as a therapy horse and would be eager to please his new barn friends & family in Cedar Grove. Impeccably trained by his previous owner, Rufus continues to impress us all with his fancy "tricks" -- smiling, kissing, bowing, and even picking up objects for his riders if they drop them in the arena.

One of the new barn favorites at HGR, Rufus seamlessly jumped right in to fill a very important need, at a critical time when our ridership was about to surge this summer and our herd had just lost an integral team player. Therefore we are very thankful to the Gottsacker family for choosing HGR, and we are so appreciative of the anonymous person who has chosen to sponsor Rufus through the rest of 2019.





Heaven's Gait Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center

Summer 2019 Newsletter

Generous Gifts of Time & Talent -- Much Appreciated All. Year. Long.



Despite the current heat wave, we'll never forget the hardships we faced this winter when wind chills reached a dangerous -51 degrees -- truly a temperature that even shocked us in Wisconsin. Seriously wondering why we live here, we found ourselves very grateful for the people who went above and beyond to show us that they care. Time & time again, we concluded we stay in Wisconsin because of its good people. We want to give a special thanks to the following people: Jim McLaughlin, Kyle McLaughlin, and Brian McClaren who dropped the ceiling and insulated the volunteer work area before winter really hit, Maggie Robertson, Mike Schicker, and Jessica Smith who showed up to help on the coldest days when our water and septic lines froze, D&D Electric who saved the day when we had an underground power failure, and Scott Mohs & Jeremy Ebert who plowed and salted the driveway nonstop this winter. Your monumental efforts did not go unnoticed.

By April as Maggie Robertson dedicated more time to recruit more local volunteers, she not only managed to staff our growing number of group lessons this spring, but she also recruited more talent willing to address other facility needs. Since you just never know what kind of talent will greet you with a smile, we are very thankful for the many volunteers who have seen a need on site and offered a helping hand when their expertise and schedules allowed.

Thanks to Bob DeGroff & his family, all the potholes in our driveway & parking lot were leveled, and thanks to Gilbert Roland, our indoor arena was tilled so that it could be treated for dust control before heading into our busiest session. Not to mention, just last week, Ken Severn generously began dropping our dead ash trees on site, while Jeremy Ebert, Alex Kellner, & Mark Zirngibl worked hard to remove all the debris in time for lessons. All of these busy bees have worked tirelessly behind the scenes, around lesson times and on weekends, to ensure we don't skip a beat when it's time for our riders to shine.



Heaven's Gait Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center

Summer 2019 Newsletter

How You Can Help

1. Advocate for Those Who Cannot Advocate for Themselves.

Over the last two and a half years, through demonstrated, documented, and verified success, PATH Intl. Instructor Micah Keshemberg has helped HGR cultivate meaningful relationships with our surrounding communities, as one-third of our participants have been referred to us from the Department of Health & Human Services and its Division of Long Term Support. Referrals continue to rise, but through no fault of our own, county funding sources have been cut 15% for each child -- effective July 1. Please help us by remembering our mission and advocating for services to support individuals with special needs & disabilities.

2. Attend Our Next Fundraiser

You are Invited to The Hayburner Fundraiser on Saturday, August 24, 2019 from 5-9 pm at Newport Shores Restaurant in Port Washington, WI! Join us for live music, heavy hors d'oeuvres, and a silent auction, where proceeds benefit our programs for individuals with special needs and veterans with disabilities. Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance by sending a check to 940 S. Main St., Cedar Grove, WI 53013. Adults: \$50 and Children 12 & Under: \$20.



3. Support Our Silent Auction

Consider helping HGR in any of the following ways: Donate an item to be included in our silent auction. Sponsor a participant for \$35 & support the Andy Mueller Memorial Scholarship Fund. Buy a Round Bale for \$50. Purchase a tree for HGR, and we'll plant it in your name; contact 920-400-0628 to learn more. We hope to plant more trees on site that will provide the horses with shade & protection from inclement weather.

4. Donate Directly to Heaven's Gait Ranch

As our horses & programs all have growing needs, no gift is too small to make a difference. A little bit goes a long way in WI, and your support will go where it's needed most. Please remember Heaven's Gait Ranch in your estate planning, and as a small nonprofit working to make a big difference, we will remember you!

For more information about our programs, or how you can help, please contact 920-400-0628, visit www.heavensgaitranch.org, or follow us on Facebook. Looking forward to seeing you at The Hayburner!

Margaret Mary McClaren

Margaret Mary McClaren
Founder, Executive Director

Heaven's Gait Ranch
Therapeutic Riding Center

940 S. Main St.
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

P: (920) 400-0628
www.heavensgaitranch.org