



Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc.

Summer 2023

Dear Family and Friends,

We hope you're enjoying summer as much as we are at Heaven's Gait Ranch! Although Wisconsin remains in a moderate drought, along with air quality alerts, we've taken advantage of an unusual stretch of sunshine. With dry footing, we have zero complaints when mud season is cut short, and the horses can keep the flies at bay. Since our last update, much has evolved on the ranch, and we look forward to sharing some exciting news with you!



Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International

**PREMIER ACCREDITED
CENTER**

Program Update:

After nine years of properly preparing our facility and programs, Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. officially earned Premier Accreditation from the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International! In April, two site evaluators from PATH Intl. audited a day at the ranch, observing written policies and operating procedures while verifying compliance with nearly 200 PATH Intl. standards for the equine assisted service (EAS) industry. Center evaluations covered a wide range of topics such as horse management, participant safety, equipment, quality of instruction, facilities operations, volunteerism, and best business administrative practices, all with mandatory standards that must be met. These standards were developed and adopted by PATH Intl. to ensure that centers follow procedures essential to safe, quality EAS programming. PATH Intl. requires Premier Accredited Centers to be re-accredited every five years to maintain this designation.

PATH Intl. Premier Accreditation is a designation indicating to the public that a center has met the rigorous set of quality and safety standards. Out of more than 800 PATH Intl. Member Centers, about only 250 hold this prestigious distinction. In the state of Wisconsin, there are 23 other PATH Member Centers, and Heaven's Gait Ranch is now one of only four that are Premier Accredited!



"By attaining its PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center status, Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. has demonstrated a commitment to the highest standards when introducing individuals with special needs to a variety of equine-assisted services," said PATH Intl. Chief Executive Officer Kathy Alm. "PATH Intl. Accreditation is a respected benchmark in the EAS industry. It demonstrates leadership and a commitment to safety and to the highest professional standards."

Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc.
Therapeutic Riding Center

940 S. Main St.
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

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



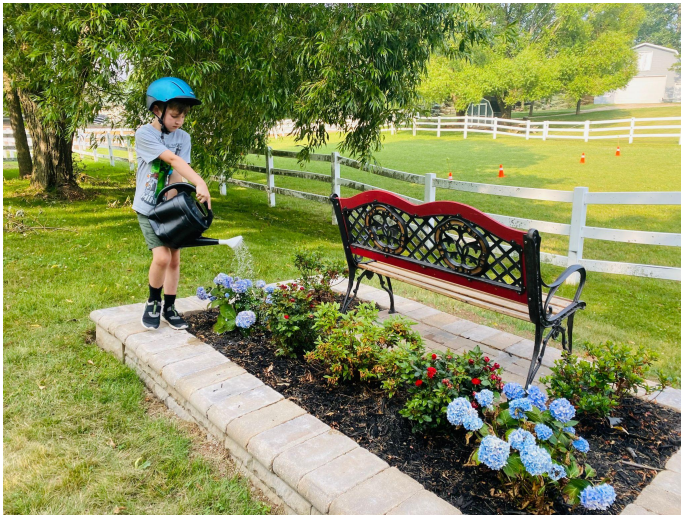
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Although HGR is only in its seventh year of operations, finally achieving Premier Accreditation validates the vision that many of you had from the beginning. After walking through our site with the evaluators, we are humbled and reminded of how many people have quietly contributed to the ranch, working tirelessly behind the scenes to make a permanent mark on the first-class facility that it is becoming today. Thank you for making this possible! A special thanks to Monica Schaefer for taking the lead on our application and for tackling the 800 page standards manual for HGR!

Facility Update:

This spring Kevin Kellner repaired our gravel driveway while Shannon Vanderkin and Jeremy Ebert replaced the concrete flooring in the pony barn to make another accessible area for our equine assisted learning program. Thanks to this improvement, we can now use the pony barn for additional activities, maximizing more space on site for participants in need.



In addition to these improvements, Unique Supply out of West Bend generously donated materials for Maggie Robertson, Mike Schicker, and a number of volunteers to create a memorial garden this spring, overlooking the outdoor riding arena. Now, HGR's former program horses finally have a proper resting place, next to their herd and the participants they loved. While other centers send their work horses to sanctuaries or rehome them once they become unable to ride, your understanding has made it possible for HGR to find a place for the seniors in unmounted programs even when they slow down. And when they really tell us their time is near, your generosity enables us to remain committed through the end by also bringing them back home. Thank you for honoring their legacy in such a bright and meaningful way.

Herd Update:

For the first time in two years, we welcomed a new horse on site this spring – Ali! Ali is an 18 year old American Saddlebred who comes to us while HGR's trainer, Abigail Bartlett, generously leases her to our program. Abi got Ali when the mare was just five years old, from Royal Crest Farms in Fond du Lac, WI, after winning an essay contest through the 4-H horse and pony project. Abi showed Ali in 4-H until she graduated, and while showing, Ali did hunt seat, dressage, trail, gymkhana, and even some western showmanship. Although Ali enjoys trail riding, she is still excelling and working in dressage. Ali showed in the champions trail challenge at the WI state fair, and she also traveled to Colorado to reside with Abi there for five years. Upon returning to WI, Ali became a personal pleasure horse, but seeing that this was not enough for her, Abi was happy to lease her mare to HGR so that Ali could do more of what she loves: "teach and love on kids."

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Ali passed her trial period with flying colors, so she stepped right into HGR's therapeutic riding lessons, which made Ellie and Windy grateful for new blood to pick up the pace of programming. At 28 and 20 respectively, our matriarchs are slowing down, and they've settled into our unmounted, equine assisted learning programs.

Staff Update:

After the herd adjusted to a new family dynamic in the paddock this spring, participants, volunteers, and seasoned staff are still adjusting to staff turnover in the barn this summer. Unfortunately, HGR is not immune to the continued challenges that small businesses and nonprofits face, competing for talent after 50 million workers left their jobs last year in America. To put our daily dilemma in perspective, remaining staff are absorbing workloads and responsibilities of facilities management, equine management, and certified therapeutic riding instruction.

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, the start to summer session has not yet skipped a beat, with 40 weekly participants enrolled for equine assisted services through the end of August. To help with lesson flow, we welcomed Anika Gooding as a Program Assistant in June, and as we interview to fill additional positions, we remain positive, patient, and committed to elevating all areas of programming so that new hires reflect the long-term mission of our premier-accredited center and non-profit organization.



In line with that vision, we are thrilled to announce PATH Intl. Advanced Instructor, Kim Berggren, has joined us as HGR's Interim Director of Operations. For the next 6-18 months, we have contracted with Kim and ETC Development to take our staff and programs to the next level. Although she, herself, will not be on site weekly to instruct, Kim will be leading the teachers and instructors-in-training, offering insight & professional development plans to match best industry practices at every organizational level.



Kim has been a lifelong horse person, starting in the backyards of Wisconsin. She has been involved in the Equine Assisted Service industry for over 25 years as a PATH Intl. Advanced Instructor, Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning, as well as a PATH Intl. Mentor and lead site visitor. Kim has held many seats on the PATH Intl. Region 4 Leadership team, Membership Outreach Committee, and other PATH Intl. committees including two terms on PATH's Board of Trustees. She has been awarded the PATH Intl. President's Award and Volunteer Leadership Award. She has also spoken multiple times regionally, nationally, and internationally.

In 2013, Kim went to South Korea to work with the Korea Racing Authority in Seoul, educating instructors and consulting with programs around the country. She has returned more than five times for continuing education, teaching clinics, and equine care. Needless to say, HGR's staff, volunteers, herd, and participants are eager to learn from her experience and expertise, and we thank you for making it possible to recruit top talent in our industry.



How You Can Help

Please continue to keep Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. in your prayers, and know that your support still directly impacts the quality and quantity of the equine assisted services we provide. As a small nonprofit, every little bit helps, and any financial support is much appreciated. While 2023 is presenting its own challenges, your generosity has allowed us to provide over 500 lessons to our participants & veterans this winter and spring! Please help us hit our goal of providing 500 more before the end of the year!



You're Invited to the 7th Annual Hayburner Fundraiser & Silent Auction!

For the first time, we are hosting the Hayburner at HGR on Saturday, September 16th from 4-7pm! If it's been a while since you've visited the ranch and seen the horses, this is your chance to see the impact you've created! Join us for live music, heavy hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and raffles, with proceeds benefiting our equine assisted programs for individuals with special needs and veterans with disabilities. Adult tickets are \$50 each; Children 12 & Under: \$20. With much to celebrate in year seven – and more to plan before year ten – we hope to see you in September! Please RSVP to 920-400-0628 to help us prepare for food & drinks.

Can't make the fundraiser but still want to support?

1. Text-to-Give: 920-315-7551 keyword: horses
2. Invite a friend & spread the word about our mission to co-workers, employers, or neighbors.
3. Donate a Silent Auction Item.
4. Donate directly to Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc., and we will allocate funds to where it's needed most.
5. Remember Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. in your will or trust. EIN: 81-1274623.

As a small nonprofit, we will remember you!