



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

WINTER 2015-2016

Letter from the Director



I am often asked why I personally dedicate so much time to River Valley Riders. The answer is simple, because this program is my passion. Over the years River Valley Riders:

...has helped a child who is non-verbal begin to form words.

...has made it possible for a rider with autism to become more focused and attentive.

...is the reason why a rider who is usually looking up at everyone from his or her wheelchair is now instilled with

confidence while they smile and survey the world from the back of a horse.

I respect the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) of which River Valley Riders is a member center. The guidance given through their professional safety standards (256 pages) advance our professional industry and pave the way towards an exciting future for our program. Please visit their website pathintl.org to learn more.

Thank you to donors, volunteers, families, and horses. It is because of your dedication and support that River Valley Riders will move forward, serving more individuals every year.

I am blessed to be a part of River Valley Riders.

Yours Truly,
Joan Berg

Rider Profile — Nicky



Nicky has been riding with RVR for 15 years. The rewards of riding, for Nicky, have been great. She has gone from needing complete back support to minimal leg support. Her posture has improved. She's relaxed. She's happy. Nicky looks forward to and enjoys riding every week.

She loves her side walkers and they love her. All I have to do is mention the names of her horse and side walkers and Nicky smiles. That says it all. Riding, something so simple brings so much pleasure to so

many. The one thing that would make Nicky, and all of our riders, happier is being able to ride all year long. *~written by Nicky's mom*

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2016 IMPORTANT DATES

April 16:
Volunteer Training

June 18:
Walk-Wheel & Ride-A-Thon

October 8:
Round-Up Dinner & Auction



Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International

— MEMBER —



River Valley Riders

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Locations:
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Rick-A-Shay Ranch
Scandia, Minnesota

RVR Board Members

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About RVR

The mission of River Valley Riders is to enrich the lives of children and adults with special needs by providing equine assisted activities and therapies.

Lessons are conducted in accordance with the safety, training and instructional guidelines of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International.

RVR News

Afton

Therese Naber has completed the challenging examinations to become a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor! She has volunteered with RVR for many years and this past season co-instructed on Tuesdays. We are so blessed to have Therese join our instructor team!

CONGRATULATIONS THERESE!



Minnesota Horse Council

Trina Joyce thanks the many RVR volunteers who helped her with the Minnesota Horse Council's Aisle of Breeds at the State Fair! She hopes it was enough fun and a good deal that you will all volunteer again next year! Someone left behind a pair of lace-up leather boots and a brightly colored umbrella. Please call 651-439-2558 to claim them.

School Partnerships

RVR at Rick-A-Shay Ranch hosted a school group from Harmony Learning Center of School District #622 (North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale) in June 2015. Fifteen students participated in a morning of riding, equine learning stations, sensory stations, and farm activities.

Sally Reif DelGiudice instructed the students with the assistance of five dedicated RVR volunteers and several Harmony staff members. The students learned about horse care and nutrition. They also engaged in hands-on farm activities including planting corn and playing horseshoes with their classmates. A great day of fun and learning was enjoyed by all!

In 2015, students from the Next Step program of School District #622 came to the Afton site for six days of therapeutic riding lessons. Their teacher Denise Caley said, "This is the best time for all our students!"

Thank you to the awesome daytime volunteers!



Fund the Vision — What This Means

We have spoken about “Fund the Vision” and decided we should provide more detail on what that means. There are two parts to this vision, the facility and the program.

Facility

The facility part of our vision is to create a site dedicated to equine assisted activities and therapies. The additional features shown in this design plan include a large indoor arena with observation area, classrooms, therapy rooms, stables for our RVR owned horses, pastures/fences, hay storage building, offices, and living quarters for a caretaker. This facility will provide RVR the opportunity to expand our programming.

Program

RVR is well placed to continue expanding our equine assisted activities and therapies to people with special needs. The Afton location is easily accessed by the Twin Cities metropolitan and western Wisconsin areas which it serves. The equine assisted activities and therapies industry is growing. The benefits of these therapies are becoming increasingly recognized by both medical and mental health professionals.

The expanded facilities will enable RVR to accommodate more participants, increasing the offerings of therapeutic riding and carriage driving.

In addition there will be new program opportunities including hippotherapy (with physical therapists, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists), mental health services (with psychologists), veterans’ programs, and equine assisted learning. RVR will also expand our existing partnerships with local schools and create new partnerships with other organizations that provide services for individuals who could benefit from our programs.

RVR has a 15 year history of partnering with local schools. The expanded facilities with classrooms will allow RVR to increase educational support to the local school districts. RVR’s programs will help the students accomplish goals and objectives in the areas of social skills development, communication, motor strength, fitness and health.

Equine assisted activities and therapies have been shown to be beneficial for people challenged by cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, and a variety of mental health issues, such as veterans with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and youth-at-risk. It is easy to understand that many individuals will benefit from the new programs.

The outcome of this vision will allow RVR to serve more people. RVR programs will be full-time and year-round. The future of this vision is very exciting! Thank you for your support!



The Future Facility of RVR



Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon Update

The Ride-A-Thon was very successful, thanks to SO MANY who helped with the event and donated to RVR!

The 16th Annual Walk-Wheel & Ride-A-Thon was held on Saturday, June 20, 2015 at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. This is one of RVR's main fundraising events for the year with proceeds going to the RVR program to provide greater therapeutic riding and driving opportunities for people with special needs. The 2015 event raised over \$21,000!

Although the day started with rain, by 9am the sun began to shine and 40 supporters of RVR rode, walked, or wheeled the beautiful park trails.

We are looking forward to another great event in 2016. Please plan to join us on Saturday, June 18th to enjoy the day at Lake Elmo Park Reserve supporting RVR. Please invite your family, friends and saddle clubs! Let's make this a team effort!



River Valley Riders thanks the following individuals and businesses for supporting the 2015 Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon by donating breakfast, lunch and door prizes:

Melissa Bayne
The DelGiudice Family
Focus Financial
Cheryl & Todd Holt
The Milligan Family

Joan Berg
Donatelli's
Gulden's 61 Restaurant
Houle's Farm Garden & Pet
Gail & Geary Olsen

Corine Corbitt
Yvonne & Kent Ecklund
Hagberg's Country Market
The McLaughlin Family
Anonymous Donors

Save the Date!
2016 Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon
Saturday, June 18th



Round-Up Dinner and Auction Update

On October 10, 2015 an evening of Denim and Diamonds began with wonderful fall temperatures welcoming the largest numbers of attendees for this gala event. Decorations set the mood for a magical night raising over \$80,000 from the silent and live auctions, Ears and Tails, and Fund the Vision (see page 3).

Friends, riders, drivers, families, and volunteers filled the room with laughter. First-time and returning Round-Up attendees shared stories of their RVR experiences. It was wonderful to bid on some of the best and most generously donated auction items ever. A huge thank you to those who attended, volunteered, and donated!

In 2016 the Round-Up will be held on October 8th at a new venue - the Prom Center in Oakdale. This easy-to-find location is a half mile north of the Radio Drive/Inwood Avenue exit off I-94.

The larger and more accessible area for the dining room and silent auction will enhance our gala event. We are excited for the return of live music by Tom Burnevik during the cocktail hour. The Prom Center has an excellent reputation with 70 years of catering experience.

To complete the evening, make your reservation to stay at the Hilton Garden Inn 651-735-4100, located next door to the Prom Center.

River Valley Riders thanks the following individuals and businesses for supporting the Round-Up:

Prestwick Golf Club	Kimberly Fladeboe-Anderson	Dorothy Ann's Bakery
Acqua of Forest Lake	Adevia SpaSalon	Advanced Dermatology Care
Afton House Inn	Sheila Anderson	Alfrieda Baldwin
Apron Elegance	Carron & Ed Birkholz	Brookside Bar Grill
Cafe Latte	Candyland - St. Paul	Canterbury Park
Shelley & Peter Carr	Chris Charlsen	Wendy Cleary
Mark & Judith Code	Cookie Lee Jewelry	Cooks Together
Cotroneo's Wine & Spirits	Cowgirl Tuff	Crabtree's Garden Gate
Dakota Mae Design	Mikaela DelGiudice	Sally Reif DelGiudice
Noreen Dillon	Yvonne & Kent Ecklund	Mary Lou Fiala
Flat Earth Brewing Co.	Ryan & Lisa Foss	Patricia Galles
Beverly Gerth	Sharon Gerth	Grand Casino
Terry Guindon	Mimi Hasselbalch	Larry & Anne Headrick
Holiday Stationstore 310	ISD 622 Transition Program	Brenda & Dale Jackson
Jax Café	Wayne R. Johnson Agency	Dale & Susan Joy
Joy from the Heart	Jim & Lynn Jutz	Shane Kargel
Key's Café - Roseville	Kowalski's - Oak Park Heights	Erin Maher
The McLaughlin Family	Ed & Missy Millhouse	Millhouse Veterinary Service
The Milligan Family	Mills Fleet Farm	Minneapolis Police Department
Minnesota Vikings	Mystic Lake Casino Hotel	Roger Newman
Christina Nordstrom	PaintedStuf	Osceola & St Croix Valley Railway
Pat's Tap	Poolside - Little Canada	Carol & Robert Pribnow
Pateen Rasmussen	Resource Logistics	Jan & Bonnie Reyers
River Valley Athletic Club	Rudy's Red Eye Grill	Sam's Club
Erin Sellie	Smack Shack	Neil & Peggy Spofford
Squire House Gardens	St. Croix Casino - Turtle Lake	St. Croix Chocolate Co.
The St. Paul Hotel	Judie & Rick Steenberg	Jill Steeves
Jae Taylor	This Old Horse	Bill Tischer
Total Wine & More	Universal Pictures	Anonymous Donors

A special thank you to the team of Round-Up volunteers!



RVR Volunteer and Therapy Horse Receive Top Honors

Khou Rahjah, better known as Rahji, a 19 year old Polish Arabian, competed in the Canadian Arabian Nationals in August 2015. He is owned by River Valley Riders, ridden by Mikaela DelGiudice, a long time RVR volunteer, and is a therapy horse for the Rick-A-Shay Ranch site.



Rahji and Mikaela competed in the Western and English Trail Classes in Canada. This class consists of a variety of random obstacles that the rider brings the horse through with the goal being having the horse maintain a calm disposition and smooth ride while encountering each and every obstacle. Horse and rider pairs from all over the United States and Canada competed in these events.

Mikaela has been hard at work with Rahji helping to train him on a variety of obstacles. This has been a valuable activity with regard to developing Rahji's very calm and tolerant demeanor when it comes to the therapeutic riding program. Rahji has been a long time RVR horse who is very dependable and extraordinarily tolerant in tough situations. His practice with these trail class obstacles only enhances his therapeutic background and his ability to handle unexpected challenges.

Mikaela and Rahji brought home a Reserve Grand Champion in Western Trail Class and a Top Five Honors in English Trail. They are two RVR volunteers blazin' an impressive trail!

Afton Site Improvements

Several improvement projects were completed at the Afton site in 2015. There is now fresh drinking water from the well, a 20' x 30' picnic shelter, and a 20' x 56' storage building. The storage building houses vehicles, driving harness, saddles, and the new refrigerator donated by Warners' Stellan.

Planned projects for 2016 include a riding/driving trail around the perimeter of the hay field, a sensory trail, and landscaping.

Thank you to all the donors who contributed to these projects for the benefit of our riders, drivers, families, volunteers and horses!





Ways to Support River Valley Riders

Wish List

2 AEDs

New riding helmets
All sizes
Troxel Legacy/Liberty
or Ovation Schooler

ATV/4-wheeler
for grading the Afton arena

Afton Volunteer Opportunities

Staining and painting

Construction of
sensory trail with stations

Clean saddles & tack

Brush removal (buckthorn)

Patio blocks for viewing area near arena
(donated and/or installed)

Construction of
wooden message board/kiosk

Other Ways to Help

Photography
during lessons & at events

Donate to the Operating Fund
or the Afton Improvement Fund

Writing article & stories
for newsletter & Facebook

Promote RVR to the community

Donate stocks or bonds

**If you are interested in helping with any of
these opportunities, please call 651-439-2558.**

2016 Volunteer Training

**SATURDAY, APRIL 16TH
START THINKING ABOUT SPRING!**

Our season-starting training day for all new volunteers will be offered on April 16th. Plan to spend an all-day introduction to the fun and responsibility of volunteering with RVR. Returning volunteers are encouraged to attend this continuing education opportunity. Mark your calendars for a full and active day of learning, including hands-on practice with our therapy horses.

Please note we will be adding Thursday evening lessons at our Afton site creating opportunities for many new volunteers. We will also have additional carriage driving lessons. So please talk to your friends, relatives, and co-workers about RVR and hopefully they will want to come out to enjoy this great experience. Lead by example — help from experienced volunteers will be key to everyone's success!

RVR will be partnering with schools again. If you are available there will be daytime volunteer opportunities in May at our Afton site.

More information will be available in March. Please check our website for the latest updates as we get closer to spring!

Attention Horse Owners

RVR is looking for additional volunteer horses for the Afton site on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. We need people who are willing to share their calm and quiet horse(s) with RVR. This includes trailering them to and from the site on the evening they choose to volunteer.

If you have a horse that you think could work for the program (or know of a horse), please leave a message on the RVR phone line 651-439-2558. This call could give more riders the opportunity to participate and receive the benefits of therapeutic riding!



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Rider Profile — Delaney



Anyone who knows Delaney is also familiar with Miss Pickles and how important she is in Delaney's life. Delaney was almost four years old when she was diagnosed with autism. Although the diagnosis was heartbreaking to hear as parents, it was also a blessing. We finally understood why she was delayed in her speech, motor skills, social skills, and why she was experiencing anxiety and sensory issues. We were on a mission to find things to help our little girl. We heard about RVR and thought we'd give it a try. We didn't think she would put on a helmet and it was a struggle to get her to wear shoes, but as soon as Delaney met Miss Pickles she seemed to forget about everything else. She looked so tiny on that big horse but they bonded immediately. We sat with tears of joy streaming down our faces as she proudly rode that first night.

She has been with Miss Pickles for three years now and the growth we have seen in her is tremendous. Her core strength has improved, her confidence has grown, and her social skills have gotten better. Most importantly, Delaney has found something that is special to her. One night as we drove away from her lesson she said "Miss Pickles makes me calm". We think that sweet horse has been able to connect with her and can sense her needs. Delaney's favorite thing about Miss Pickles is when she gets to trot. The giggles and smiles coming from her are enough to melt our hearts. We are so amazed by the volunteers, families and horses we have met through RVR. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! *~written by Delaney's mom*

Return Service Requested

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River Valley Riders