



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

WINTER 2014-2015

Letter from the Director



What will RVR look like in two years? Five years? Ten years? When you think about how far we have come since our beginning, measuring the growth of RVR is amazing. From the first lessons in 2000, the number of riders and drivers has increased from 18 to 60...an increase of 233%!

To have an effect on the proven need for the services that RVR provides, growth must continue.

We are good at what we do; doing more of it is only natural.

Families of children and the adults who reach out to RVR discover the profound effect the horse creates in their daily lives. The weeks pass by with consistent lessons, encouraging volunteers, and that great horse giving them a one of a kind experience.

We do this because it works; we see success, improvements for our riders and drivers, both physically and emotionally.

RVR prepared to sustain continued growth by purchasing land in Afton, Minnesota. 2014 was a busy year for improvements. New projects have been completed or are under construction including better lighting, a picnic shelter, a storage building, and a well.

Building a year-round facility for RVR participants seems an immense dream. One we are taking steps to achieve. We continue to move forward because of so many dedicated volunteers and generous donors. Together we can do this!

This is the time to fulfill the dream, the time for action, the time to build.

Yours Truly,
Joan Berg



Congratulations to Terry Bailey

RVR's newest PATH Intl. Certified Instructor!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2015 Volunteer Training	2
Contact Information and Mission	2
Background Checks	2
Program Updates	3
Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon Update	4
Round-Up Dinner and Auction Update	5
Welcome Utah	6
In Memory of Dixie	6
Wish List	7
Volunteer Opportunities	7
Leave a Legacy	7

2015 SAVE THESE DATES

April 18:
Volunteer Training

June 20:
**Walk-Wheel &
Ride-A-Thon**

October 10:
**Round-Up Dinner
& Auction**



River Valley Riders

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Locations:

2007 Neal Avenue South
Afton, Minnesota

Rick-A-Shay Ranch
Scandia, Minnesota

Joan and Roger Berg's Farm
East Farmington, Wisconsin

RVR Board Members

Officers

Joan Berg, Executive Director
Gail Olsen, Vice President
Cheryl Holt, Secretary
Kathy Jo Hanson, Treasurer

Directors

Sally DelGiudice
Yvonne Ecklund
Melissa Hagstrum
Mike McLaughlin
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Brendan O'Meara
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Advisory Board

Aaron Keller
Dr. Bruce Oscarson

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.

Volunteer Training — April 18, 2015

Our season-starting training day — for all new volunteers for all RVR sites — will be offered on April 18th. 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. Get ready for a full and active day, including hands-on practice with our therapy horses.

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

Please note we are always in need of volunteers at all our locations — Afton, Scandia, and Wisconsin — so talk to your friends, relatives, co-workers about RVR and hopefully they will want to come out and enjoy this great experience.

RVR will be working with the school system, too, and will have need for daytime volunteers for Tuesdays in May at the Afton site.

RVR is also looking for additional volunteer horses for the Afton site, both Tuesday and Wednesday nights. We need people who are willing to share their horse(s) with RVR, which 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 and you will receive a call back. We will set up an evaluation of your horse before the volunteer training — when you will both receive hands-on practice before the program starts!

Volunteer Background Checks

Thank you to all volunteers who completed criminal background checks this season. If you are a volunteer and you have not completed a criminal background check yet, please watch for information next spring about online and paper options to provide the necessary information.

River Valley Riders is committed to creating a safe environment for children and adults with special needs to participate in equine assisted activities and therapies. We have a heightened awareness of the risks associated with individuals working with children and adults with special needs. We are committed to protecting participants from individuals who may abuse their authority to commit sexual, physical, mental, or emotional abuse. Criminal background checks are one strategy we use to ensure safety for our participants.

Last spring, River Valley Riders adopted a policy to conduct criminal background checks on all volunteers every three years. We appreciate your support and cooperation to ensure a safe environment for our program.



Program Updates

Afton

Therapeutic riding lessons were held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings for a total of 36 students. Each rider was matched with one of 17 therapy horses. Riders were evaluated in the spring and goals for the year were established. Goals for students new to riding included proper use of reins and voice commands. The most experienced students worked on the goal of independently controlling their horses with minimal assistance from the volunteers.

The pleasant weather allowed for many enjoyable trail rides in the hay field in addition to the lessons in the arena. The students participated in new activities that helped to build self-confidence.

At the end of the season, horsemanship skill evaluations were repeated and the students demonstrated progress towards their individual goals!

School Partnerships



In the spring and fall of 2014, students from ISD 622 (North St. Paul, Maplewood, Oakdale) traveled by bus to the Afton and Wisconsin lesson sites for therapeutic riding lessons. This is a unique opportunity we will be expanding to other school programs serving children with special needs.

Quotes from the students:

- *I rode Tanner, I felt free!*
- *Trotting makes me laugh!*
- *I gave Seth a hug to say good-bye.*

Driving Program



Therapeutic driving lessons were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for eight students at the Afton site. All driving students demonstrated improved balance. For example, some students progressed from needing assistance with head support to being able to control their head movement even out on the trails. Other goals that were achieved in 2014 were driving a cones course, improving hand strength and reining.

Wisconsin

Therapeutic riding lessons at Achin' Back Acres in East Farmington were held on Thursday evenings for eight students. The herd of therapy horses including Tanner, Seth, Tina, Troy, and April will be joined by Prince in 2015.

Rick-A-Shay Ranch

Therapeutic riding lessons at Rick-A-Shay near Scandia were held on Tuesday evenings for eight students. Returning riders and volunteers have welcomed the new, forming a strong community.

We hope everyone has the opportunity to visit our lessons to see the smiles and the connections that are monumental stepping-stones for every rider and driver.



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 15th Annual Walk-Wheel & Ride-A-Thon was held on Saturday, June 21st, 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 2014 event raised over \$23,000!



We had a beautiful day! About 60 people attended the event - 16 horses and 17 riders, 30 walkers/wheelers, plus our volunteer helpers!

We had great food for both breakfast and lunch! Lots of door prizes! Thank you to these businesses and individuals who donated door prizes, food, and beverages for this event: Hagberg's Market in Lake Elmo; Houle's in Stillwater; Cub Foods in Stillwater; Keys Cafe in Roseville; Caribou Coffee in Maplewood; Federated Co-ops in Osceola; Eat @ Banning and 5th in White Bear Lake; Patrick McGovern's Pub in St. Paul; Focus Financial in Minneapolis; Mall of America; Jill Steeves; Theresa and Dwight Milligan; Joan and Roger Berg; Sandy and Tim Ward; Gail and Geary Olsen; Bonnie Linquist; Yvonne and Kent Ecklund; Trina Joyce; Sally and Glenn DelGiudice; Cheryl and Todd Holt; Melissa Hagstrum; and Karen Murray.



The horse trail ride was very pleasant, though we had to forge across several large water holes and an especially long water crossing at the end of the lake, due to our very wet spring.



We are looking forward to another great event in 2015. Please plan to join us on Saturday, June 20th to enjoy the day at Lake Elmo Park Reserve supporting RVR. Please invite your family, friends and saddle clubs!



Round-Up Dinner and Auction Update

On October 11th, beautiful fall weather brought 170 friends of RVR out to Prestwick Golf Club for our 11th Annual Round-Up Dinner and Auction.

The atmosphere at Prestwick was magical with the amazing decorations designed by Ann Delmont and a team of volunteers.

Tommy Burnevik performed his saxophone and keyboard, entertaining those socializing with friends while others were bidding on silent auction items. Many unique items sparked bidder "wars" engaging in fun competition.

The event was also the release party of the new RVR video produced by Tim Domke and Shannon Hunter of CTV North Suburbs. Visit RVR's website or Facebook page to see the smiles, connection, and dedication captured in this wonderful video.

Our auctioneer Kimberly Fladeboe-Anderson helped the enthusiastic crowd of generous supporters toward reaching our Fund the Vision goal of \$34,000. We now have the funds to build the storage building at the Afton site. It will be our site's first enclosed building, one of several more to come. We expect to have it built during the summer of 2015.

Thank you to everyone who supported the mission of RVR by attending, volunteering, or donating to this event. Special thanks also to the staff of Prestwick.

We would like you to mark your calendars for the 2015 Round-Up Dinner and Auction at Prestwick Golf Club on Saturday, October 10th. If you would like to volunteer on the planning committee, please contact us!

River Valley Riders thanks the following individuals and businesses for supporting the Round-Up Dinner and donating items for the silent and live auctions:

Prestwick Golf Club	Kimberly Fladeboe-Anderson	Tommy Burnevik
A Little TLC	Jean Anderson	Animal Inn Pet Resort & Spa
Autumn Harvest	Joan & Roger Berg	Bibelot
Don & Kelly Cadmus	Cafe Latte	Candyland
Canterbury Park	Peter & Shelley Carr	Richard Carlson
Chris Charlsen	Clear Lake Golf Club	Crabtree's Garden Gate
Como Friends	Kathy Doucette	Glenn & Sally DelGiudice
Flat Earth Brewing Co.	Family Hair Care	Lisa & Patrick Flynn
Ryan Foss	Pat Galles	Beverly Gerth
Sharon Gerth	Cathy Gillman	Anne & Larry Headrick
Grand Casino	Doug Hicks	Houle's Farm Garden & Pet
Cheryl and Todd Holt	Jerry Jasicki	Joe Jasicki
Brenda & Dale Jackson	Linda & Ted Johnson	Susan Joy
Trina Joyce	Linda & Richard Knutson	Larry & Pamela Larson
Kris King	Kathleen MacCarthy	Dawn & Mike McLaughlin
Dan & Jan Meier	Mills Fleet Farm	Ed & Missy Millhouse
Millhouse Veterinary Service	Dwight & Theresa Milligan	Minnesota Vikings
Mode Salon	Mystic Lake Casino Hotel	Darrell Monson & Kathy Raymond
Christina Nordstrom	Linda Nordstrom	Oasis Café
Carol & Robert Pribnow	Pat's Tap	Shelley Racine
Resource Logistics	Bonnie & Jan Reyers	Sam's Club
Alan & Kim Salmela	Bob & Ginger Smeed	Sol Luna Salon
St Paul Hotel	St Paul Police Department	St. Croix Casino
St. Croix Saddlery	Jill & Anne Steeves	Judie & Rick Steenberg
This Old Horse	Bill Tischer	Sandy & Tim Ward
Erin Westman	Earl & Sandy Williams	Anonymous



Welcome Utah!

We have a new member to the RVR horse herd – meet Utah!



Utah is a 16 year old Quarter Horse / Mustang cross gelding. He has been a therapeutic riding horse with RVR for the past four years and is much loved by his riders. Utah is a very expressive horse.

His previous owners generously decided to donate Utah. Thanks to volunteers Dale and Brenda Jackson who have agreed to foster Utah for RVR. Utah will help with lessons on both Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Afton!



Utah is an excellent addition to the RVR horse family! Our other RVR owned horses are Rahji at Rick-A-Shay Ranch; Seth at the East Farmington site; and Arvid, our carriage driving horse.

In Memory of Dixie

Dixie was a wonderful little Halflinger mare who shared her calm and warm personality with many riders in East Farmington, Wisconsin and with school groups in Minnesota.



Although we don't know much about her earlier years working on an Amish farm, she had a great life at Joan and Roger Berg's ranch.



Rest in peace Dixie.



Ways to Support River Valley Riders

Wish List

- Wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper cups
- Riding helmets
sizes medium & large
(Troxel Legacy or Liberty;
Ovation Schooler)
- Nylon color-coded reins
(www.freedomrider.com)
- El Companero bareback pads
with Western cinch
(www.elcompanero.com)
- 17-inch Western saddle

Afton Volunteer Opportunities

- Paint flower boxes & benches
- Clean saddles & tack
- Tree trimming & trail clearing

Other Ways to Help

- Volunteer (see page 2)
- Photography at all lesson sites
- Donate to the Operating Fund
or the Afton Improvement Fund
- 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.

Leave a Legacy

Please consider including a gift to River Valley Riders in your will or trust. Your generous gift will enable our all-volunteer organization to grow and serve more children and adults with special needs who will benefit from equine-assisted activities and therapies.

A gift made in your will or trust allows you to retain your assets during your lifetime, provide for your loved ones, and leave a legacy that makes a difference after your lifetime. In addition, if your estate is subject to estate tax, every dollar donated to River Valley Riders after your lifetime can be deducted from your estate tax owed.

A gift in a will or trust may consist of:

- A specific amount of money;
- A percentage of your estate;
- Specific items;
- Vehicles;
- Securities; or
- Real estate.

You may designate your gift as an “unrestricted” or “restricted” gift. Giving an unrestricted gift allows River Valley Riders the flexibility to use your gift in the most beneficial way. Giving a restricted gift allows you to specify how you would like River Valley Riders to use your gift.

Ask your estate planning attorney to help you include a few sentences in your will or trust to make your gift. Sample language appears below:

I give to River Valley Riders, a nonprofit corporation located in Minnesota, the sum of \$_____ [or _____% of my estate, specific item(s), securities, vehicle(s), or real estate] to be used for its general purposes as it deems appropriate [or, include a specific purpose for which you would like RVR to use your gift].

Please contact River Valley Riders to share your plans to make a gift through your will or trust. We would love to thank you for your generosity. Please contact us even if you wish to remain anonymous. We are committed to honoring your wishes.

River Valley Riders

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This comprehensive site plan for Atton includes the picnic shelter and small storage building that will be completed in 2015, as well as future buildings. Our next goal will be to raise enough money to build the indoor arena!

River Valley Rider's Future Looks Bright!

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