



# RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS  
EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES & THERAPIES

WINTER 2017-2018

## Afton Indoor Arena Challenge Grant Approved

We are pleased to announce that a \$15,000 challenge grant from the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation has been approved. **We are asking for your help to meet this challenge!** These funds will support the expansion of equine assisted activities and therapies through the development of the Afton lesson site with construction of an indoor riding arena.

**Donations from new or previous donors who have not contributed in the past twelve months are eligible to count toward the Schulze Family Foundation challenge grant. Donations totaling \$15,000 MUST be raised by RVR for the challenge grant of \$15,000 to be paid.**

The opportunity for expansion and consistency of services that will be provided by the indoor arena will benefit our riders and drivers. Currently, therapeutic riding lessons are held in an outdoor arena and RVR cancels about 10% of the lessons due to rain, storms and temperature. The indoor arena will bring down these cancellations. With the indoor arena RVR will increase services by 25%. This expansion of services will help our riders continue their improvement in both physical and mental abilities by extending the riding season.



RJ and his team of volunteers

The parents of RJ, one of our riders share the benefits of RVR: *“This is RJ’s first year participating with RVR. RJ has difficulties moving his body on his own, especially his head. RJ has a weak core and with a weak core he has a hard time with head control. Therapeutic horseback riding has been shown to improve core strength along with building confidence and social skills. When RJ is riding, the horse’s motion moves his pelvis the same as if he was walking. And the warmth of the horse helps stretch and loosen his muscles.”*

The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation was created in 2004 by Best Buy founder, Dick Schulze, to give back to the communities where Dick and his family grew up -- in Minnesota, where he built Best Buy to become the world’s largest consumer electronics retailer and in Florida, where he now maintains a permanent residence.

The indoor arena will improve the efficiency and consistency of our program for the benefit of our riders and drivers. **Please support this opportunity to double the impact of your donation and share this challenge with your family and friends!**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Contact Information and Mission	2
Letter from Joan Berg, Executive Director	2
Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon	3
Round-Up Dinner and Auction	4
Afton Site Improvements	5
AutoLieben German Car Show	5
Mounted Patrol Dinner and Auction	6
2018 Volunteer Training	6
St. Croix Polo Match	7

### 2018 IMPORTANT DATES

April 7:  
**Mounted Patrol Dinner & Auction**

April 21:  
**Volunteer Training**

June 23:  
**Walk-Wheel & Ride-A-Thon**

October 13:  
**Round-Up Dinner & Auction**

To get updates on these & other events, visit our website & follow us on Facebook!



## River Valley Riders

8362 Tamarack Village  
Suite 119-440  
Woodbury, MN 55125  
Phone: 651-439-2558  
E-mail: [rjberg@centurytel.net](mailto:rjberg@centurytel.net)  
Web: [www.rivervalleyriders.org](http://www.rivervalleyriders.org)

### Lesson Sites

2007 Neal Avenue South  
Afton, Minnesota

Rick-A-Shay Ranch  
Scandia, Minnesota

### Executive Director

Joan Berg

### Board of Directors

Gail Olsen, President  
Melissa Bayne, Vice-President  
Cheryl Holt, Secretary  
Kathy Jo Hanson, Treasurer  
Tom Conboy  
Sally DelGiudice  
Noreen Dillon  
Yvonne Ecklund  
Jenny Elholm  
Linda Knutson  
Mike McLaughlin  
Theresa Milligan  
Kathleen Miner  
Jill Steeves

### 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.*



## Letter from the Director



This has been an amazing year meeting new and returning riders, drivers, families, volunteers and supporters. It touches my heart as I see participants enjoying what RVR offers. Parents watching while their child faces new challenges and succeeds.

Our participants have the opportunity to make friends and improve their relationships by sharing fun, laughter and true accomplishments with others. They grow stronger physically. They are able to do something so special...then it has to stop for the winter.

These reasons are why I am passionate about building a year-round facility with therapeutic riding, carriage driving and other equine assisted activities directly benefiting our current and future riders and drivers.

Thank you to donors, volunteers, families, and horses. It is because of your dedication and support of this organization that the vision of RVR to provide therapeutic riding and driving will move forward. We are on our way towards building an arena that will extend the riding season.

I read this recently and thought how well it captures my heart:  
*"People say it's just a horse. That horse is a best friend, a teacher, and one of the best things that had ever happened to me."* ~Anonymous

I am blessed to be a part of RVR,  
*Joan Dorle Berg*

## Joan Berg Awarded PATH Intl. Region 6 Certified Professional of the Year

At the 2017 PATH Intl. Conference in San Antonio, Texas, our Executive Director Joan Berg was honored as the PATH Intl Region 6 Credentialed Professional of the Year! This award is given to instructors who make significant contributions to their riders, programs, and the PATH Intl. community.

As shared by Jill Steeves, RVR carriage driver David's mom and RVR Board Member:  
*"Joan's most important quality is her ability to inspire! She inspires the riders, the instructors, the volunteers, and the families we serve by supporting and challenging them to their potential. She demonstrates the values of compassion, integrity, and service with RVR and in her life."*



## Congratulations Joan!



## Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon

The 2017 RVR Walk-Wheel Ride-A-Thon event on June 24th took place on a beautiful mid-summer day at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve.

We gathered and enjoyed fresh coffee donated by Caribou, and bagels and pastries. The temperature was perfect for the walk, wheel or horseback ride. Fifty-five participants took advantage of the great weather to renew friendships and make new connections. Those who brought horses rode on an eight-mile loop. The walkers and wheelers followed a three-mile path.



Everyone came back to camp hungry and ready for lunch. We had a wonderful picnic spot under a tent that provided shade during the sunny afternoon. Delicious burgers from Hagberg's Country Market were cooked by Dave Durand, and fruit, chips and treats contributed by volunteers completed the meal.



All participants received a t-shirt to remember the event. The Minnesota Horse Council generously contributed to the event through their Direct Funding Program. RVR thanks everyone who has supported the Minnesota Horse Council and the Minnesota Horse Expo!

Thanks to the many generous donors, there were door prizes for all participants including the horses!



In addition to the Lake Elmo Park Reserve event on June 24th, RVR's clients participated in a trail ride during their lesson the following week in Afton and Scandia.

In total the event raised over \$22,000 in support of the clients and horses of RVR. We would like to extend a huge thank you to the many generous donors and volunteers who helped make this event a great success!



We are already looking forward to next year's event! Please join us for the 2018 RVR Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon on June 23rd at Lake Elmo Park Reserve! There will again be a light breakfast and delicious lunch provided, along with great door prizes. Watch for more information as we get closer to summer and please share the invitation with your family, friends and saddle clubs. It is sure to be a fun-filled day of riding, walking, and wheeling! To volunteer, participate or donate, please visit [www.rivervalleyriders.org](http://www.rivervalleyriders.org) or call 651-439-2558.



## Round-Up Dinner and Auction

The 14th Annual Round-Up Dinner and Auction was held at the Envision Event Center on October 7, 2017 with magical results. One-hundred eighty-five guests shopped the silent auction to the music of Tommy Burnevik while enjoying delicious appetizers. Bidding was competitive for hand-crafted items, gift cards, artwork and more, donated by generous individuals and businesses. Stagetime Productions and ClickBid helped with the electronic bidding of the silent auction.

Beautiful table decorations by Lisa Flynn and her team of volunteers set the mood for elegance as guests were seated for dinner. Following dinner, Fund the Vision and the live auction lead by auctioneer Katie Imholte raised funds for RVR's programs and the Afton indoor arena. Many thanks to everyone who attended and donated to this event!

Mark your calendars now to join us for the 2018 event on Saturday, October 13th!

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

Envision Event Center	Fladeboe Auctions	Stagetime Productions
Tommy Burnevik	Jan Anderson	Peggy Anderson
Borchert's Meat Market	Brine's Resturant	BreakAway Arts, Café & Wine Bar
Cheryl Bogie	Cafe Latte	Candyland
Cashel Company	Chuck & Don's	Como Zoo
Coolibar	Costco	Cowgirl Tuff Foundation
Crabtree's Garden Gate	Mark Code	Shelley Carr
Dancing Dragonfly Winery	Danny's Bar & Grill	Dock Cafe
Dover Saddlery	Sally Reif DelGiudice	Epic Realty and C.E. Murphy Properties
Espana Silk	Susan Ebeling	Yvonne Ecklund
Flat Earth Brewing Co.	Friends of RVR	Fresh Thyme Farmers Market
Frontier Ag & Turf	Mary Feist	Ryan Foss
Betty Grogan	Beverly Gerth	Goodthings
Mimi Hasselbalch	The Hilltop	The Hitching Company
Joe Jasicki	Julie Jacky	Trina Joyce
Ann Kasperson	Lisa Kasperson	Kowalski's - Oak Park Heights
Sandy Kasma	Schneiderman's Furniture	Science Museum of MN
Lake Elmo Inn	Lancome	Law Office of Richard F. Carlson Jr.
Lily Spa Nails	Lion's Tavern	LoLo American Kitchen and Craft Bar
Lucy's Burgers	Luv Ice Cream Inc.	Joe & Maddie Mauer
Jon and Arlene Malinski	Mad Jacks Sports Café	Mallard's on the St. Croix
Mama Maria's	Mancini's	Marquette Vineyard
Metro Dental	Mike McLaughlin	Minnesota Twins
My Pillow	Mystic Lake Casino	The Milligan Family
Linda Nordstrom	North St. Paul Pizza Factory	Our Handcrafted Meats
Carol & Robert Pribnow	John Petroski	Peter Polga
Phil's Tara Hideaway	Piattelli Vineyards	The Phipps Center for the Arts
Jan and Bonnie Reyers	Red Lobster - Maplewood	Resource Logistics
Jay Schrankler	Anne Steeves	Jill Steeves
Judie & Rick Steenberg	Nick Salay	Slipper's Sewing Quilt & Fabric Art
Sam's Club	Smack Shack	Sol Luna Salon
St Croix Chocolate Co	St. Croix Casino	The Saint Paul Saints
Bill Tischer	Jae Taylor	Jill Tauscher
Target	Tavern on Grand	The Tavern Grill
Tom Reid's Hockey City Pub	UPS Store of Woodbury	Urban's Greenhouse
Wanderlust Studio	Tera Wells	White Bear Jewelers
	Woodbury Family Chiropractic	

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



## Afton Site Improvements

Thank you to the Stillwater Rotary Club for the generous support to improve our saddle and equipment storage! The tack shed now offers greater storage space with better lighting and has a ramp instead of two steps up.



Also our equipment is now more secure and safe from damage. The Stillwater Rotary Club hosted the Stillwater Sampler event on January 27, 2017 with proceeds benefiting this project.

The shed was constructed by Backyard Building Systems with excavating and site prep done by Johnson Skidster Service. A team of volunteers lead by Jon Cheney finished the inside with saddle racks, drying racks, shelves, cupboard, and hooks.

The other volunteers were: KC and John Swanlund, Mary Feist, Todd Holt, Larry Headrick, Dick Brennan, Roger Berg, and Adam Johnson. The beautiful two-tone painting was donated by Dave Bindert's painting company.

RVR is now focused on our next goal of improving and extending our program with the construction of an indoor riding arena. This will enable RVR to continue services during most inclement weather, increasing the efficiency and consistency of our program. Also this will extend the riding season for the benefit of our riders and drivers.

RVR is consulting with the architects from the design firm Populous to develop the best plans for our indoor arena and for the expansion of office space and stables that will take place in the future. We are also working with the City of Afton for the required permits. This is a very exciting time for RVR!

Thank you to the many families, businesses and foundations who have donated! To join this generous group of supporters, please give now for the construction of the indoor arena for the benefit of our riders and drivers!

## AutoLieben German Car Show

What do cars like Mercedes Benz and BMW have in common with Arvid, the Norwegian Fjord and Miss Pickles, the Quarter Horse? Why, they all supply HORSE POWER, of course!



Hannah Burton riding Miss Pickles

On July 30, 2017 RVR was pleased to be the beneficiary at the AutoLieben car show on the beautiful grounds of Afton Alps ski area. RVR volunteers answered questions and helped with the silent auction that included a set of four Michelin tires, wine, spice kits, and more. Arvid and Miss Pickles greeted guests and were our best ambassadors.

Four RVR riders participated in two demonstrations of our lessons. While instructor Joan Berg oversaw the riders, instructor Cheryl Holt spoke with Auto Lieben organizer, Jackson Richter. She informed the spectators about RVR, our mission and the benefits of therapeutic riding. RVR riders Nathan Rominski, Hannah Kane, Andrew Burton and Hannah Burton did a superb job of demonstrating their horseback riding skills.

We thank Jackson Richter and his team of volunteers for supporting RVR and helping to spread the word about our organization!



## Washington County Sheriff's Mounted Patrol Supports RVR

We are happy to announce that RVR has been selected by the Minnesota Sheriff's Mounted Posse Association as the beneficiary of their annual fundraiser. This partnership will result in a considerable donation that will go towards the construction of RVR's new indoor riding arena in Afton.

This event hosted by Washington County Sheriff's Mounted Patrol will be held on Saturday, April 7, 2018 at the Historic John P. Furber Farm in Cottage Grove, Minnesota. It will feature a dinner, silent auction and live auction. For more information and to order tickets, please call 651-439-2558 or visit [www.rivervalleyriders.com/events](http://www.rivervalleyriders.com/events). Tickets must be purchased in advance.

If you would like to make a donation for the live or silent auction, please contact Bonnie Reyers at [reyersfive@msn.com](mailto:reyersfive@msn.com) or 651-283-2605.

We are looking for volunteers to help us with the event on Saturday, April 7th. Please contact Kathy Jo Hanson at [kathyjo@rivervalleyriders.org](mailto:kathyjo@rivervalleyriders.org) or 651-439-2558 to volunteer to serve. RVR is responsible for check-in, raffles, silent auction and check-out.

The Minnesota Sheriff's Mounted Posse Association (MSMPA) is dedicated to protect and serve. The MSMPA is a non-profit organization comprised of County Sheriff's Mounted Posse Units throughout the state. These Units include volunteers or reserves who have been authorized to assist the County Sheriff in whatever duties deemed appropriate. This may include patrol duties at local events, search and rescue assistance, public relations, appearances at parades, and other projects where the presence of mounted officers is beneficial. The MSMPA promotes a high level of civic responsibility by offering scholarships to youth. These mounted officers are true leaders in community involvement.



The RVR Board of Directors would like to thank Mounted Patrol Officers and RVR supporters Cheryl Whitmore, Bonnie Reyers, Dale Jackson, Tammy Cameron, Wendy Cleary and Laura (Domagala) Conard for setting up this fundraising opportunity. We appreciate the Washington County Sheriff's Mounted Patrol for their dedication to our community and for this partnership.

## 2018 Volunteer Training

### **Saturday, April 21, 2018 Start thinking about Spring!**

Our season-starting training day for all new volunteers will be offered on April 21st. 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.

We will have therapeutic riding on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and carriage driving on Tuesdays and Thursdays – lots of opportunities to volunteer! So please talk to your friends, family, and co-workers about RVR and hopefully they will want to come out to enjoy this great experience.

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

## “What It Takes” Video Recognized

RVR's “What It Takes” video was one of the three best videos shown at the 2017 PATH Intl. Conference in San Antonio, Texas! The winning videos were chosen on their ability to inspire. Thank you to BANAC / RILEY Productions for creating this video and telling our story!

This behind the scenes look at RVR shows many dedicated volunteers, from horse owners to instructors, pulling together to make our lessons happen.

To watch “What It Takes - A Day in the Life of RVR”, visit [www.rivervalleyriders.org/community/photos](http://www.rivervalleyriders.org/community/photos).



## St. Croix Cup Polo Match

The St. Croix Polo Club and Ameritina Polo Farm hosted the St. Croix Cup benefiting RVR on August 26, 2017 in Baldwin, Wisconsin.



Even though the weather did not cooperate and the event was moved indoors, it was an exciting day of polo. The kids enjoyed going out into the indoor arena to hunt for coins tossed in the sand during half time. There were some very creative hats for the fancy hat contest. One of RVR's volunteers, Haley Konsela, won the hat contest.

A special game of polocrosse was added thanks to the Minnesota Polocrosse Club, a non-profit organization based in Afton providing education and participation in the sport of polocrosse.

Crossroads Catering from Baldwin, Wisconsin served their delicious BBQ and other tasty treats. In addition to the great food and service, they supported the event with a kind-hearted donation.

Tailgating guests had an elevated view of the polo matches from a private viewing room.

There were many wonderful items donated for the silent auction from generous businesses and individuals.



Many thanks to the polo and polocrosse teams for making this such a fun event. A special heartfelt thank you to Ameritina Polo Farm for hosting the St. Croix Cup and all the people who helped!

## Calling All 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.

*"Sharing my horses with RVR is one of the most satisfying things I do. It's so fun to see my horse connect with the riders,"* states one RVR horse owner volunteer. If you bring a horse now, we THANK YOU for your service!



Horses and ponies of a variety of sizes and breeds are required to serve our participants who range in age from 4 to 85.

You and your horse could give more riders the opportunity to participate and receive the benefits of therapeutic riding! Please call and leave a message at 651-439-2558 or email [info@rivervalleyriders.org](mailto:info@rivervalleyriders.org) for more information or to arrange to have a horse evaluated to serve. Please spread the word among your horse owning friends that RVR is seeking volunteers to bring their horses.





# RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS  
EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES & THERAPIES

## RVR Therapy Horse Arvid



©Barbara O'Brien Photography

Arvid is a 16-year-old Norwegian Fjord Horse who is owned by RVR. He was purchased in 2013 for RVR's carriage driving program at Afton. With two afternoons of carriage driving and three evenings of riding lessons, he keeps busy! Arvid enjoys spending time in the pastures at Afton in between lessons. In the summer, he lives with Larry and Anne Headrick at Marquette Vineyard with his two horse friends Salix and River. In the winter, he vacations at Joan and Roger Berg's farm in Osceola, Wisconsin.

Arvid loves the attention he receives from all his riders, drivers, and volunteers!



*The Norwegian Fjord Horse is one of the world's oldest and purest breeds having been domesticated over 4,000 years ago. One of their unique characteristics is their mane - usually black and white and cut short. The body has well developed muscles with powerful legs and excellent feet. Their size ranges from 13.2 to 14.2 hands, weighing between 900 and 1200 pounds. For more information: [www.nfhr.com](http://www.nfhr.com)*

**Special thanks to the Thomson Reuters Corporation for the in-kind donation of the color printing for this edition of the River Valley Riders Review!**