



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

SPRING 2011

Letter from the Director



Serving as River Valley Rider's Executive Director is one of the greatest honors of my life. It is something I embrace with passion and confidence. I am awestruck by our riders and drivers' steps towards greater independence. These moments make me incredibly proud.

Like many young girls, I grew up with a love for horses watching Roy & Dale Rogers, Gene Autry, and Disney's Spin & Marty. I spent many hours running up and down my neighborhood hills pretending to ride a horse.

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would be lucky enough to have my own horses and then share those exquisite animals with so many children and adults. I began working with EAAT (Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies) in 1988. Over the years I continue to be impressed by the power of the horse. Through RVR I witness the very special and critical role they have in partnering with us to provide those life-changing moments. It is because of our very special horses that our riders and drivers' muscles are strengthened, balance is attained, and ear-to-ear smiles are seen.

This year our Board is engaged in strategic planning by incorporating survey feedback from our many supporters to create a concise vision of RVR's future, including program expansion. Thank you to everyone who responded. I am excited for the future when many more children and adults will benefit from EAAT with the development of the Afton site. We applaud the continued success of our Rick-A-Shay Ranch and our Wisconsin sites.

Congratulations to Heather Johnson, a longtime volunteer, now a Registered NARHA Instructor. Her ready smile, capable horsemanship, dedication, and fantastic memory for detail will assist RVR in providing quality instruction. If you would like to explore the opportunities involved in directly assisting RVR as a NARHA instructor-in-training at any site, please talk to me or an instructor. I hope this offer will lead someone to become the next RVR Registered Instructor.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,
Joan Berg

Spring Session Lesson Dates

- ◆ Rick-A-Shay Ranch
Tuesday: April 26;
May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31;
June 7, 14
- ◆ Washington County
Fairgrounds
Wednesday: April 27;
May 4, 11, 18, 25;
June 1, 8, 15
- ◆ Wisconsin
Thursday: April 28;
May 5, 12, 19, 26;
June 2, 9, 16

RVR Wish List

- ◆ 17 inch Western saddle
- ◆ ADA-compliant portable toilet for Afton
- ◆ 80% (or greater) wool sweaters for mitten making fundraising project
- ◆ Volunteer horses for Afton

Please call
651-439-2558
or email
rjberg@centurytel.net
if you can help
with these items.



Volunteer Training—Let's Get Started!



Our season-starting Training Day—for all new volunteers from all our RVR sites—will be offered April 16th and 17th at the Washington

County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo. Set aside one of these two days for an all-day introduction to the fun (and responsibility) of RVR volunteering. Returning volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to attend.



adults we serve, and the horses who help us. Get ready for a full, active day, including hands-on practice with our therapy horses.



To reserve your spot for either April 16th or 17th, you may:

Leave a message: 651-439-2558

E-mail: rjberg@centurytel.net

Returning volunteers who will not attend training should call or email their availability. Please see front page for lesson dates.



Join us at Hooley Hall at 8:30a.m. for breakfast. Training will begin at 9:00a.m. and end by 5:00p.m. with lunch provided. You'll learn about therapeutic riding, the children and

Our riders and drivers depend on our volunteers! They are anxiously waiting for the smell, the touch and the sounds that mean River Valley Riders has started again.



Afton Update

With the help of all our great supporters, RVR has met the financial goal to start our Driveway, Parking Lot and Outdoor Arena Construction Project at 2007 Neal Avenue South in Afton!

Status:

- Panels for the outdoor arena are in hand.
- RVR has hired a Construction Manager to oversee the excavation project.
- All required permits are ready to submit or have already been approved.
- Excavation will start once the road restrictions are lifted for Neal Avenue – probably about mid-May.
- RVR plans to start our riding sessions on the Afton property by the end of June.



RVR will continue our programs at Rick-A-Shay Ranch, the Berg Farm, and the Beattie Farm for Summer and Fall. The Washington County Fairgrounds riding sessions will be the only ones to transfer to Afton.



Together we are building a great tomorrow for our riders and drivers! Our next goal is to install electricity for arena lighting. It's easy to donate online at www.rivervalleyriders.org or mail your gift to River Valley Riders, 260 Fourth Street South, Bayport, MN 55003. **Thank you for your support!**



FAQ's about RVR

What do we do at RVR?

- RVR provides therapeutic riding and carriage driving, with all lessons delivered by an NARHA certified instructor.
- Activities include lessons in riding and driving skills, as well as horseback games and activities that help develop hand-eye coordination, large and small motor skills, and concentration.

Why a horse?

1. Physical Therapy

- The gait of the horse and the warmth of the horse's body help strengthen and stretch muscles.
- The three dimensional stride of the horse helps muscles, nerves and cells remember the movement of the human gait, thus helping those with physical or cognitive challenges.

2. Cognitive Therapy

- Developing riding skills and partaking in the organized horseback games and activities requires mental focus and concentration.

3. Emotional Support

- Horses don't judge; they are present and willing. They are good listeners who do not talk back.
- On a horse our riders sit above the eye level of those around them, creating a perspective they would not otherwise experience, especially from a wheelchair.
- Principles of inclusion and non-discrimination are emphasized at RVR.

RVR is a member of NARHA.
For more information about
equine assisted activities:
www.narha.org



12th Annual Walk & Ride-A-Thon

The 12th Annual Walk and Ride-A-Thon will be held on Saturday, June 25th at Lake Elmo Park Reserve with trails for walking, riding or wheeling.



Join us for a fun day of enjoying the park, friendship and food! More event information will be mailed in May or visit www.rivervalleyriders.org for details. Any questions, please contact Cheryl Holt (cholt@ergotron.com) or call 651-439-2558 and leave a message.

Horse'n Around the Valley



The 2010 Horse'n Around the Valley public art project was a success! Plans are underway for 2011 including table top size (23-inches tall) and full size (five-feet tall) prancing carousel horses. Artists will transform these bare statues into works of art.

Opportunities to get involved include:

Sponsorship: Three levels of sponsorship are available to promote businesses, honor a loved one in a memorial tribute, or celebrate families.

Volunteer: Saddle up and bring your ideas! Guys and gals are welcomed to join the committee.

For Artists: Submit application to be one of our featured artists.

Get Involved: Email Jae (jaetaylor@comcast.net) or Peggy (mdoyle11@yahoo.com) or call 651-439-2558 and leave a message. Visit www.rivervalleyriders.org for more details.



River Valley Riders

260 Fourth Street South
Bayport, Minnesota 55003
Phone: 651-439-2558
E-mail: rjberg@centurytel.net
Web: www.rivervalleyriders.org

Locations:
Rick-A-Shay Ranch
Scandia, Minnesota
Tuesday Evenings

Orphy and John Beattie's Farm
Scandia, Minnesota
Carriage Driving

Washington County Fairgrounds
Lake Elmo, Minnesota
Wednesday Evenings

Joan and Roger Berg's Farm
East Farmington, Wisconsin
Thursday Evenings

New Location!
2007 Neal Avenue South
Afton, Minnesota

About River Valley Riders

River Valley Riders provides horse related activities including therapeutic riding and driving to children and adults by addressing needs in the areas of physical, sensory, neurological, and/or mental health.

River Valley Riders is registered in Minnesota as a nonprofit organization and is a tax exempt, volunteer run therapy program welcoming riders from the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area and Western Wisconsin.

SAVE THESE DATES

April 16 & 17: Volunteer Training
June 25: Walk and Ride-A-Thon
November 5: Round-Up Dinner

Rider Spotlight

Lindsey at Rick-A-Shay Ranch

River Valley Riders is a wonderful program for Special Needs families. Parenting a Special Needs child has a lot of challenges. Instead of softball games, dance recitals, or gymnastics meets, our lives are filled with endless doctor appointments and therapy visits. We will never have a chance to see our daughter be part of a triple play in softball, a floor routine in gymnastics, or a pirouette in dance.



When we found River Valley Riders, we had a great change in our lives. To watch our daughter, terrified to climb onto a 1,000 pound animal, but did it, then looked me in the eyes and said, "Me do it Daddy, me do it", was one of the best feelings a parent can ever get. I looked around and saw volunteers and other parents wiping their eyes. One volunteer said to me, "Welcome to River Valley Riders". Our daughter hit a Grand Slam that day and we have been there ever since. This is our softball, gymnastics, and dance all rolled into one.



Photos and story
by Ron Tyrrell



RVR Board Members

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Kathy Jo Hanson, Treasurer

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