



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS REVIEW



RIVER VALLEY RIDERS
THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

WINTER 2013-2014

Letter from the Director



Dear riders, drivers, volunteers, parents, donors and friends of RVR,

What does “River Valley Riders” mean?

In our minds:

The horse’s movement is rhythmical and elicits multiple planes of movement transferred to the rider’s trunk. The interaction with the horse provides a highly motivated sensory experience of touch, smell, visual, and vestibular as well as gravitational balance on a horse. It improves functional life skills including speech, language, fine and gross motor skills, which then transfer to other settings.

In our hearts:

As shared by the parent of a rider: “Over the years with RVR’s amazing dedicated volunteers, our daughter has found herself! Wednesdays from spring to fall has been the night our shy little girl has grown and found better coordination, confidence, and pride in her accomplishments along with new friends. She looks so forward to these evenings! RVR is all volunteers, serving many with passion and commitment, in turn inspiring many others to volunteer.”



My vision for the future encompasses both descriptions made possible by increased opportunities. Every volunteer, donor, and friend of RVR will make this possible. However we are a long way from reaching the actual numbers of riders and drivers seeking to benefit from the many gifts RVR gives.

Dream big, I do.

Truly,
Joan Berg

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Wish List

- Full Size Truck or SUV
- Horse Trailer
- ATV/4-Wheeler for Grading Afton Arena

2014 SAVE THESE DATES

April 12:
Volunteer Training

June 21:
**Walk-Wheel &
Ride-A-Thon**

October 11:
**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
Noreen Dillon
Melissa Hagstrum
Mike McLaughlin
Theresa Milligan
Brendan O'Meara
Jill Steeves
Jenny Sargent

Advisory Board

Aaron Keller
Dr. Bruce Oscarson

About River Valley Riders

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 12, 2014

Spring is closer than you think!

Our season-starting Training Day — for all new volunteers for all RVR sites — will be offered in April; our tentative date is April 12th. Plan to spend an all-day introduction to the fun and responsibility of volunteering with RVR. Returning volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to attend. New information will be covered.

Get ready for a full and active day, including hands-on practice with our therapy horses. We will be outside for half the day, so please dress appropriately, layers, closed toe shoes-preferably heavy duty shoes/boots, sunglasses, hat, raincoat, etc.

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. Please take this into consideration!

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!

Horse Owner/Volunteer Quote

"Horses are truly special beings. They have the capacity to heal in so many ways. This year will be my 6th year volunteering with RVR. It is my favorite thing to do! I started the first year just bringing one horse. Since then I bring 2 or 3 horses every week! RVR is a wonderful organization. Never have I encountered so many amazing people from the riders, the parents, the instructors, the board members and all the other volunteers. Over the years I have seen so many almost miraculous transformations with our riders, not only physically but emotionally. This program is truly a blessing to all who participate."

Volunteering will change you forever!



In Memory of Roo

Goodbye Old Friend

*Friends like you are hard to find
And even harder to let go
A loving spirit, one of a kind,
A teacher, a babysitter,
A gentle old soul.*

*While you were here
You were a Friend to all
Like the tiny child
You'd never let fall.*

*You gave confidence, trust
And Love,
Surely, as an angel
You were sent from above.*

*You teach us still
Even as you go
That to Live is to Love
And to Love is to let Go.*

Written by Sandy Ward



There is another Horse Angel in Heaven. River Valley Riders has lost one of our very special equine volunteers. Roo (aka Ruby, aka Queen of Dee Heart) started with RVR when she was only 5 years old. She was a gentle soul and really loved her job. On Wednesday afternoons when Sandy Ward would say "let's go see the kids" she would come right to the gate. Roo Roo was a true princess. She loved the attention from all of her riders and volunteers. She liked to participate in the activities each week. She seemed to especially enjoy the planting of flowers for Mother's Day and the games.



*Roo taking care
of her rider*



*Roo with
volunteer Christina*

She may have been a smaller horse but she had the heart of a racehorse. She was competitive and wanted her riders to win. One of her favorite hobbies at home was bossing around her brother Newman. Even though Roo was taken too soon, we feel a sense of peace knowing that God must have needed a very special horse in heaven to carry his precious children and give them the freedom they never knew here on Earth.

Sandy Ward (Roo's Owner) wrote – "Roo was truly the horse of my heart who gave me many gifts during her short life. The biggest gift she gave me was the chance to join River Valley Riders. This is a gift that will continue to fill my heart for the rest of my life. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported and held me in your hearts and prayers through this very difficult summer of 2013. May God bless you all!!"





2013 Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon Update and Preview of the 2014 Event

Our event was a success, thanks to SO MANY that helped with the event and donated to RVR!

The 14th Annual Walk-Wheel and Ride-A-Thon was held on Saturday, June 22nd 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.



Mother Nature was a bit nasty on that Friday before, so we had a smaller than normal turn out due to the bad storms. Many people and horses who were planning to come were not able to attend. Thanks to everyone's generosity, the event raised over \$19,000. Our riding students helped in this total with our lesson sites' Mini Ride-A-Thon donations. We are very grateful to all who donated!



Weather was good on that Saturday, cloudy, which helped to keep the heat down in the morning for the activities. No rain fell on those participating. With 10 horseback riders, 15 walkers/rollers, and many campsite volunteers, there were in total about 35 people in attendance.

We had good food for both breakfast and lunch! Lots of door prizes! Thank you to these organizations that donated to RVR for this event: Bruegger's Bagels - Stillwater; Caribou Coffee - Maplewood; Cub Foods - Stillwater; Donatelli's - White Bear Lake; Focus Financial - Minneapolis; Gulden's 61 Restaurant - Maplewood; Hagberg's Country Market - Lake Elmo; Houle's Farm Garden and Pet - Stillwater; Key's Café - White Bear Lake; Kowalski's Market - White Bear Lake; Patriots Tavern - Stillwater; Sam's Club - White Bear Lake!



The horse trails offered some extreme riding, with many, many trees down on trails. If we were not navigating over, through or around trees, then we were wading through the flooded trail and through fast flowing streams. The horses all did very well. Our ride lasted nearly 2 hours.

We are looking forward to another great event in 2014. The date is planned for June 21st at Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Please save the date and join us for a fun day enjoying the lovely park. **We need your support - tell your family, friends, and saddle clubs!**

*Written by
Cheryl Holt*





Congratulations Cheryl Holt – PATH Intl. Region 6 Volunteer of the Year



River Valley Riders is very proud to announce Cheryl Holt as the PATH Intl. Region 6 Volunteer of the Year! Anyone who knows Cheryl knows that she is beyond dedicated to RVR. Despite a very challenging work schedule and being very active in her Church, Cheryl manages to be part of the heart and soul of our program.

Cheryl is a founding board officer for RVR. She chairs three very important committees: Facilities, Ride-A-Thon, and Horse Evaluation.

As a PATH Intl. registered instructor, Cheryl teaches lessons six hours per week. She trailers her two very special horses, Stormy and Miss Pickles, to lessons each week. Many of you may remember that her horse Stormy was the Region 6 Horse of the Year just a few short years ago.



Cheryl has been instrumental in the purchase of our new site in Afton. She is an integral part of the development of our new facility. Cheryl has given many hours meeting with City officials, inspectors and contractors to make sure RVR has the best new home possible.

As if all this wasn't enough, Cheryl is an amazing fundraiser. Our program has greatly benefited over the years from the tens of thousands of dollars she has raised.

As you can see, Cheryl does a great many things for RVR and she does them very well. However, the most important thing she does is just being herself. Cheryl's knowledge and compassion make her an excellent mentor for both riders and volunteers. She is a caring listener and an encouraging motivator. The RVR volunteers and riders are all very blessed that we have Cheryl in our lives.



Congratulations Cheryl! You are truly an inspiration to all of us and we are proud to call you our friend!

Written by Sandy Ward



Cheryl and her husband Todd at PATH Intl. award ceremony in Orlando, Florida, with Kathy Jo, Gail, Orphy, and Joan

Shop.com Opportunity for River Valley Riders

Hello River Valley Riders supporters! Have you ever considered owning an online business? What if you could own a business where 100% of your efforts went towards creating income for RVR, as well as for your business? Building a Win + Win income situation is a very unique opportunity! My vision with this is to build a long term income stream that helps RVR to accomplish many of our long term capital goals.

RVR currently has a "business center" in place with Shop.com. To drive income through this "business center", I need a few entrepreneurial people to help me. If you have ever considered owning a high tech online business, possess competent computer skills, and want to help RVR, please contact me for more details.

Bob Schmidt Cell: 612.760.8733
Email: Bob@ShopTeamAlpine.com



2013 Round-Up Dinner and Auction Update

Crisp beautiful fall weather brought volunteers and friends of RVR out to Prestwick Golf Club for our 10th Annual Round-Up Dinner and Auction. The evening raised over \$55,000 to help children and adults with special needs by supporting and expanding RVR's programs.

The ballroom at Prestwick was beautifully decorated by Ann Delmont and a team of volunteers to set the mood for a magical evening. Tommy Burnevik - the One Man Band - made his sixth appearance at the event, playing the blues on his saxophone and keyboard. Dave Cowley provided each guest with a ceramic mug to take home. Everyone also was able to enjoy a piece of fine chocolate from the St Croix Chocolate Company.

A great selection of items were included in the silent auction because of the generosity of the community. Many unique items sparked "bidding wars"... engaging in fun competition.

Our auctioneer Kim Fladeboe-Anderson encouraged the enthusiastic crowd of supporters toward reaching our goal of \$33,000 for Fund-the-Vision! This generosity will allow improvements to be completed at the Afton arena in 2014 including the design of a site plan, the installation of a well, a storage building, additional lighting, and a pavilion for the riders, parents, and volunteers.

RVR would like you to mark your calendars now for next year's event on Saturday, October 11, 2014.



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	St Croix Chocolate Company	Tommy Burnevik
Dave Cowley Incentives, Inc.	A Little TLC	Advanced Dermatology Care	Anonymous
Ann & Elmer Kasperson	Baker Court Interiors	Bar La Grassa	Beverly Gerth
Bibelot	Bill Tischer	Brave New Workshop	Cafe Latte
CAbi & Myra Kerschbaum	Candyland	Charlsen Trucking Service	Canterbury Park
Chicago Dogs	Chris Boethke	Christina & Linda Nordstrom	The Crumb Family
Crabtree's Garden Gate	Crystal Ball Farms	Dale & Barb Danner	Dan Wolfe
Dale & Brenda Jackson	Dawn McLaughlin	DeMori's Italian Food	Dick & Char Trende
Dwight & Theresa Milligan	Dick Ostrom	Flat Earth Brewing Co.	Festive Designs
Houle's Farm Garden & Pet	Gloria Nelson	Jan & Bonnie Reyers	Grand Casino
Jean Anderson	Jim & Lynn Jutz	Joyful Expressions	Kay Lyons
Lake Country Booksellers	Larry & Anne Headrick	Linda & Ted Johnson	Kris King
Lisa Flynn	Mall of America	Mark Code	MarketAmerica
Millhouse Veterinary Service	Mills Fleet Farm	Mystic Lake Casino Hotel	Minnesota Vikings
Nancy Gregson	Noreen Dillon	Osceola Veterinary Service	Old Log Theater
Pamela Larson	Park Square Theater	Peter Caley Photography	Pat Galles
Pat's Tap	Phyllis Pepper	Plymouth Playhouse	Resource Logistics
Richard Carlson, Jr.	Rick & Judie Steenberg	Rivertown Inn	Ryan Foss
Sally DelGiudice	Sharon Gerth	Science Museum of Minnesota	Sheila-Marie Untiedt
St. Paul Hotel	St. Croix Casino	Stillwater Equine Clinic	St. Croix Saddlery
Sunshine K9 Training	Sue Klein	Thirty-One Gifts	Trina Joyce



In Appreciation

Toro

River Valley Riders would like to extend a HUGE thank you to Toro for awarding us the amazing Z Master Professional 5000 Zero-Turn Mower. The new mower will enable us to maintain our Afton site, including our horseback riding and carriage driving trails. Our riders and drivers will be able to experience nature more closely when they go on trail rides.



Toro, founded in 1914 with world headquarters in Bloomington, Minnesota, is committed to helping enhance the health and well-being of their communities and industry. They have proven their commitment with this very generous donation!

Parelli Education Institute

Thanks to the generosity of Parelli Natural Horsemanship, the Parelli Education Institute, a nonprofit dedicated to natural horsemanship education, gave away \$1,000,000 in educational materials. This grant opportunity was an expression of their deeply held commitment to supporting this mission and ensuring that natural horsemanship can be available to the people who are working to make a difference for young horsemen, horse welfare, and therapeutic horsemanship.

River Valley Riders is honored to have received Parelli educational materials including CDs, DVDs and printed materials. We look forward to improving our natural horsemanship skills and aptitude for the benefit our special therapy horses.

Minnesota Horse Council

River Valley Riders has been chosen as the equine non-profit organization to benefit from the Minnesota Horse Council's next fundraiser. The Council's annual meeting, dinner and silent auction will be held on January 18, 2014 from 5-9 pm at the Marriott West in St. Louis Park. RVR is appreciative of this opportunity to meet supporters of the horse industry, share the RVR story, and be the beneficiary of this fundraising event.

Their web site states that the "Minnesota Horse Council, a non-profit corporation, encourages and supports equine-related activities, concerns and education." Perhaps the most well known activity of the Council is the Minnesota Horse Expo held annually in April. They also offer scholarships, provide grants for equine activities, support horse trails and advocate for the horse industry with local and state governments. Minnesota Horse Council grants to RVR have supported the arena panels and lighting for the Afton site, as well as the adapted carriage and harness for our driving program.

Minnesota Horse April 25-27, 2014
Expo Minnesota State Fairgrounds

3Mgives Volunteer Match

In 2013, 3Mgives has donated \$750.00 to River Valley Riders, in recognition of 3M employees and RVR volunteers, Ginger Cantor, Brenda Jackson, and Geary Olsen's volunteer service.

"3M employees and retirees generously give their time and skills to help improve lives," said Kimberly Price, vice-president, 3Mgives. "We are pleased to recognize their commitment to their communities." Since 2000, Volunteer Matches totaling over \$4.6 million have gone to over 3,000 schools or non-profit organizations in 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

For more information on this program, please contact 3Mgives at 651-733-0144 or visit www.3Mgives.com.

River Valley Riders

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Happy Memories for our Riders and Drivers

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