

Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Therapeutic Riding Center

Fall/Winter 2015 Newsletter

From Mukwonago, WI

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The 2015 Willow Creek Ranch therapeutic riding program began in April and continued through November, and possibly into December! We are located at 7404 Northwest Hwy 83, Mukwonago, Wisconsin. We will provide lessons in a private (1:1) lesson, group lessons, and EAGALA sessions.

Indoor Riding Arena

Plans are being made to build an Indoor Riding Arena! Since the launch of our building campaign just a few months ago, we have raised nearly \$41,000 of our \$250,000 goal. It's been a long time coming ... and much needed for our clients to continue to make progress without the interruption of winter. We will need help with fundraising plans and ideas for this expensive undertaking. Services, materials and volunteer time will also be appreciated.

We are reaching out to "old friends" of Willow Creek Ranch to help us with a major project for the special needs riders of our therapeutic riding program. If you were a volunteer, you saw first-hand what the program can do for participants. If you were a family member or caregiver, you saw the impact that riding made for your child.

To contend with the uncertainty of our Wisconsin weather and provide a safe and consistent program, we have an ambitious goal of building an indoor arena. We are asking for your help to reach our goal and put smiles on the faces of our special needs riders. **How can you help?** Thankfully, there are several ways to support our building dream...donations can be made by check and sent to Willow Creek Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center (7404 Northwest Hwy 83, Mukwonago, Wisconsin 53149) or made online at our www.willowcreekranch.org website 'Donate Now' button.

Raffle Tickets, Prizes

Thank you to all those volunteers and families who have turned in your raffle ticket stubs and money. Keep up the great work in helping us sell 1,000 raffle tickets for some awesome prizes! Reminders to those who still have raffle tickets, please **turn in any unsold tickets this weekend (November 14-15). Deadline for stubs and cash/checks for sold tickets is Sunday, November 22, 11:00 am** before the drawing.

Prizes include: Milwaukee Bucks game tickets, Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club outing, Wines for Humanity, Country Springs Hotel & Waterpark, DeWalt tools, and many other gift baskets, entertainment events and more!

Volunteer Appreciation and Family Picnic

Thank you to everyone who came to the WCR volunteer appreciation and family picnic on Saturday, October 24th. And thank you to those who helped out in the arena to give the parents a chance to ride a program horse! I have received a lot of "thank you" s" from the parents and clients for all the help volunteers give during lessons, fund raising, and horse care! WCR would not have a safe and effective lesson without YOU!

A special thank you to the Elegant Farmer and Stadel's Farm Market for donating pumpkins, and to those parents who donated food, beverages, desserts and snacks, everyone enjoyed Halloween arts, crafts, coloring, pumpkin decorating, hayride, and horse rides.

Ranch Rodeo Event

On Saturday, August 15, 2015, WCR had its fundraising rodeo; our riders had a chance to show off their skills to family and friends. This event was a great opportunity for our family of supporters to help us raise funds for the indoor riding arena. Despite a rain delay, the WCR riders competed in several arena games including the ribbon race, pole bending, barrel race, and ring race. Everyone was a winner, receiving ribbons and trophies for their outstanding riding skills. We are looking forward to next year's event!

Lessons Offered

This year more than 30 children and adult riders were served from April through November. Lessons were held Monday through Friday, with Saturday and Sunday lessons offered in November. Nearly 25 dedicated volunteers gave their time and expertise in program classes and fundraising events, with the help of five program horses.

Program Horses

We had a healthy 2015 with Calibur, Dell Rio, Slapshot, Gator, and our newest member of the team, Mr. Red Ruck, aka Buck!

Mr. Red Ruck, known as Buck, has been part of our personal family since 2012, he is registered with the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), and is ten years old. He came to us from Marx Performance Horses, Oconomowoc, when Kirsten started taking roping lessons from AQHA World champion trainer, Cody Marx. Buck has outstanding bloodlines, and was a 2008 Palomino Horse Breeders of America (PHBA) world champion junior tie-down roper. He was an AQHA, world qualifier in heading, heeling, and breakaway competitions across the mid-west. In 2014, Kirsten and Buck were awarded third place Youth All-Around in Lincoln, Nebraska, and finished 23rd in heeling at the AQHA Youth World Finals in Oklahoma City, OK. In 2013 and 2014, Kirsten and Buck traveled over 10,000 miles together during his AQHA and High School Rodeo career.

Buck was introduced into the therapeutic riding program in the spring of 2015, offering lessons to individuals with special needs. I am proud to have the young and talented horse part of the WCR program horse team. He will be a great asset to those wanting to excel in their riding skills. He will finish out his days as a therapeutic riding horse until his "official" retirement. Thank you to my daughter, Kirsten Pape, for sharing her beautiful, fun-loving horse with children and adults with special needs. He will have a forever home at WCR!

Ranch Chickens!

WCR has expanded the Ranch to add twelve laying hens! In March we brought home 3-day old baby chicks and by August they were laying a dozen eggs per day! What a great way to add vocational skills to our program as the clients enjoy going to the hen house and gathering eggs, and helping with cleaning, feeding and watering them.

Girl Scout Donation

The Elkhorn Girl Scout Troop 3305 visited WCR in May. The troop consisted of 15 young girls, 12-13 years old. WCR gave a presentation about therapeutic riding and horse safety. The girls were able to experience firsthand brushing and grooming of the program horses to earn their badge hours. In July, I received a phone call that the troop was disassembling and wanted to donate \$200.00, with their donation WCR was able to purchase new safety straps, safety rubber bands, comfort pad for the horses, and 2 new saddle pads! The troop also volunteered their time at the Ranch Rodeo in August, handing out trophies and ribbons and helping in the concession stand. A huge "thank you" to the young ladies and their troop leaders from Elkhorn.

WCR Website

We are working to update the WCR website (www.willowcreekranch.org). If you would like to submit a testimonial as a client, parent, or volunteer please email your comments to Jennifer for posting on our website. If you have any program pictures or picnic pictures that you would like to share on the website, we encourage you to email those as well. Dan, our website manager, is a valuable friend as he manages our website, posts our information and keeps the information updated.

Thank you Dan!

Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA)

In partnership with Mary Harvey, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) at Honey Creek Counseling and Recovery Services, LLC., Willow Creek Ranch offers Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) to address any of the following: trauma, anger management, communication skills, substance abuse, ADD/ADHD, attachment issues, relationship problems, coping skills, grief, anxiety, co-dependency, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), bullying.

EAGALA sessions are held privately with the licensed counselor and equine specialist. New clients are being accepted, contact Jennifer for details.

Advisory Committee

Would you like to get more involved with WCR? Contact Jennifer and/or Marty to find out how you can help with upcoming events, fundraising, arena building plans, and sensory trails!

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