

Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Therapeutic Riding Center

Fall/Winter 2016 Newsletter

From Mukwonago, WI

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The 2016 Willow Creek Ranch therapeutic riding program began in April and continues into December! We are currently providing EAGALA sessions when weather and temperatures permit.

Happy Holidays

At the holiday season, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our progress possible. We remember our WCR families and friends like you and wish you all the happiness of season. ***Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!***

Indoor Riding Arena

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 happy to report that plans are on track to build our Arena! Since the launch of our building campaign just a year ago, we have raised nearly \$51,000 of our \$115,000 goal of Phase 1. ***Thank you to our loyal supporters.***

It's been a dream for a long time and we are excited about being so close to providing a better experience for our special needs riders. We are asking for your help to reach our goal so construction can begin in spring. Please consider a holiday gift to Willow Creek Ranch Therapeutic Riding Center by check (send to 7404 Northwest Hwy 83, Mukwonago WI 53149) or online at www.willowcreekranch.org – Donate Now button.

The Mukwonago Lions Club is a group of men who identify needs within the community and work together to fulfill those needs. This summer the Lions Club made a visit to WCR to learn more about therapeutic riding, our mission and program, and see first-hand two of our rider's show them what we are all about! With the help of a few volunteers, Addie and Calibur, and Jenna and Slapshot, we could showcase what it is our riders can do during a typical lesson. The riders demonstrated warm-up exercises, showed off their riding skills and lead the Lions on a trail ride. The Club was so impressed they returned in December to present WCR with a \$500.00 to check to put towards the indoor riding arena. Thank you volunteer Callie for enthusiastically telling her Lions Club grandfather, Rich, about our WCR program!

Birthday Donation

WCR is one of Sami Lee's favorite places, so this year for her birthday the seven-year old decided instead of gifts she would welcome her friends to donate \$10-\$15.00 to be used to purchase a gift certificate to horse.com so WCR could purchase needed items for the horse and ranch. The collective generosity of all the girls resulted in a \$200.00 gift certificate! Sami and Jen did some on-line shopping together to purchase lots of goodies and Buck got his very own personalized halter and matching lead rope! Thank you so much Sami and friends for your kind hearts and generosity.

2016 in Review - Volunteer Appreciation and Family Picnic

Thank you to everyone who came to the 2016 WCR volunteer appreciation and family picnic on Saturday, October 15th. I have received a lot of "thank you" comments 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 for donating pumpkins, and to those parents who donated food, beverages, desserts and snacks. Everyone enjoyed spending time with their favorite horse and volunteer, and participating in Halloween arts, crafts, coloring, and pumpkin decorating.

2016 in Review - Olympic Rodeo Event

On Saturday, October 1, 2016, WCR had its fundraising Olympic 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 being cloudy, overcast and having a continuous light mist, the WCR riders competed in several Olympic games including beach volleyball, swimming, gymnastics, basketball, jousting, mounted shooting, and water polo. Everyone was a winner, receiving a gold medal for their competitive skills. We are looking forward to next year's event to mark WCR's 10- year anniversary!

2016 in Review - Lessons Offered

This year more than 55 children and adult riders were served from April through December. Lessons were held Monday through Friday, with Saturday and Sunday lessons offered in October and November. Nearly 25 dedicated volunteers gave their time and expertise in program classes and fundraising events, with the help of five hard-working program horses.

EAGALA and CCS of Milwaukee County contract

Mary Harvey, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) at Honey Creek Counseling and Recovery Services, LLC., and Willow Creek Ranch offer Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) and Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL). This summer Mary received a contract with Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) in Milwaukee County and has several referrals. EAGALA sessions are held privately, contact Jennifer for details.

Welcome New Program Horse and Donkeys

Welcome to the program, the one and only gray horse, Harley! WCR volunteer Tara Borger adopted the 11-year-old registered quarter horse in September, but he couldn't leave his long-eared friends behind. Two small donkeys were his companions for the past 4 years at their previous home before they all came to live at the ranch. Harley was a little overweight and sore from struggling to get over a mild case of laminitis since May of this year. After months of lameness and one nasty abscess that left him nearly unable to walk for a few days, he is almost fully recovered and adjusting well to life at the ranch. He still needs a bit of desensitizing work, but will ultimately be transitioning into a dual role at the ranch – as Tara's personal horse and joining the therapy horse team to accommodate some of our more independent riders, as his height makes him a bit too tall for the little ones. Because of his laminitis diagnosis, Harley is on a strict no-sugar diet – so no treats please!

Name the Donkey! Thank you everyone who offered ideas and suggestions for naming the donkeys this Fall. WCR is taking your vote ... The taller miniature donkey came with the name Hank, and Jennifer has been calling him Hank Williams! We would like to name the smaller donkey from the Hank Williams genre. Here are some country theme choices: George (Jones), Johnny (Cash), Willie (Nelson), Merle (Haggard), Moe (Bandy) or Eddy (Arnold). Please send your vote to wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com, we will announce the winning name in mid-January.

Welcome Dr. Jennifer Lorenz for WCR Program Horses

Dr. Jennifer Lorenz, of Capital Performance Veterinary Services, is helping to improve the performance of the WCR program horses through acupuncture and veterinary spinal manipulation therapy (VSMT). For Calibur, Dell and Slapshot, Dr. Lorenz is using acupuncture to help pain management of arthritis and other joints, muscular conditions, soreness, and back pain. There are many benefits to VSMT: restricted movement of joints affects the nerve signals to not only that joint but areas along that nerve pathway. When the nervous system can function

properly, the rest of the body can function properly. Benefits of VSMT included improved gate, decreased pain, and normal muscle tone to those horses. Thank you, Dr. Lorenz!

Farm Fresh Eggs for Sale!

WCR has expanded to thirty-five laying hens! By August they were laying a nearly three dozen eggs per day! WCR is selling farm fresh eggs for \$3.50/dozen. The money made from selling the eggs offsets the costs of grain, and gives our participants a chance to learn vocational skills such as gathering eggs, cleaning the chicken coop, filling the grain containers, and watering the hens. Thank you for supporting this vocational program; it has been a success! If you have egg cartons you want to save for us, please drop off at the Ranch.

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, sensory trails!

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