

Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Therapeutic Riding Center
Newsletter February 2016
From Mukwonago, WI

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WCR Lessons

The 2016 Willow Creek Ranch therapeutic riding program will begin in April, based on the cooperating weather, and continue through November, and possibly into December! We are located at 7404 Northwest Hwy 83, Mukwonago, Wisconsin. We provide lessons in private (1:1) sessions, group lessons, and EAGALA sessions. Applications for the spring session can be found on-line at <http://willowcreekranch.org/calendar/lesson-calendar.html>.

Last 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, with the help of five program horses

Indoor Riding Arena

Plans progressing on our goal to build an Indoor Riding Arena! Since the launch of our building campaign in August 2015, we have raised nearly \$43,000 of our \$110,000 Phase One goal; total \$250,000 goal for complete building project. The plan is to work with a builder in phases. Phase One: the indoor riding arena with viewing room; Phase Two: adding a therapy room, conference room, vocational training, restrooms, and kitchenette; and Phase Three: adding horse stalls, tack room, laundry room, wash stall, grain room, and a grooming station.

How you can 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. Also, talk to your friends, family and neighbors about the impact WCR has made for you and offer them the opportunity to also contribute.

AmazonSmile Foundation:

AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) is a website operated by Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products, low prices, and convenient shopping features as on Amazon.com. The difference is that when customers shop at smile.amazon.com, the Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible items to the charitable organizations. To date WCR has raised \$19.95, every

little bit helps WCR, which covers a bag of grain for our “therapy” horses or buys feed for the chickens. Thank you everyone who shops on-line. This will link you directly to smile.amazon.com in support of WCR. Support WCR by shopping <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/26-0607719>, choose Willow Creek Ranch, Inc.

Benevity Community Impact Fund: WCR has received a donation through the Benevity Community Impact Fund from people using the Benevity Giving Platform to power their charitable giving, as well as matching funds from one of our many corporate clients. Benevity (benevity.com) is the online giving engine. WCR has a Causes Portal that makes it easy for potential donors to find out about WCR and its mission, and give online donations. This allows employees to make recurring donations from their paychecks (or credit cards) and qualify for corporate matches, Dollars for Doers rewards, etc.

An Opportunity for you - Continuing Education:

Several volunteers along with Jennifer and Marty will be attending the 2016 Bi-State Equine Workshop. This is a full-day equine educational program, organized and sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension Service, will be offered on Saturday, March 5, 2016 at the Kenosha County Center. Topics presented will include: 1.) How to better understand horse behaviors, such as aggression, phobias, and vices; 2.) Horse industry concerns related to the welfare of horses, common practices, and activities; and 3.) A panel of experts will discuss how to find the right horse for your needs.

If you are interested in attending the deadline to register is February 27. Children and adults are welcome, contact Jennifer for more details or visit their website. Registration and payment by credit card is available online at <http://goo.gl/forms/uUpQMC4umm>. If you have any additional questions, please contact Leigh Presley, Agriculture Educator for Kenosha and Racine Counties UW-Extension, at 262-857-1948 or leigh.presley@ces.uwex.edu.

Introduction to the newest PATH Intl. Instructor: Congratulations to Marty Hren! Marty completed her training and teaching hours to take the PATH certification last September to become a Therapeutic Riding Instructor. Her hard work and dedication paid off, along with her hours of teaching and riding. Marty will be taking new clients and returning clients for the 2016 season. Please congratulate and welcome Marty as a PATH Intl instructor!

Ranch Chickens and Pheasants

Our eleven happy hens are laying eggs! The Ranch is selling fresh eggs for \$3.50/dozen. The money made from selling the eggs pays for their grain. The clients are learning 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! The pheasants are growing and are more beautiful than ever, come check out their elegant feather colors. If you have egg cartons you want to donate, please drop off at the Ranch.

Raffle Ticket Sales

Thank you to all the volunteers and families who sold raffle tickets. We sold nearly 1,000 raffle tickets for some awesome prizes, and raised close to \$2,400.00!

Ashley's Corner

By Ashley Mathy, Article 1, February 2016

Hi, my name is Ashley, I am 20 years old and have been riding at Willow Creek Ranch for nearly 6 years. I was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified, (PDD-NOS), which is a form of autism. Behavioral symptoms of PDD-NOS can include emotional outbursts and tantrums often as a result of fear, anxiety or misunderstanding a situation. Often language can be taken literally and I don't understand when someone is joking or being sarcastic, happy, sad or angry. I have difficulty understanding body language, facial expressions and tone of voice. I have social anxiety, spacial awareness issues, and "perseveration" -- dwelling on a certain subject.

(<http://www.nationalautismresources.com/autismsymptoms.html>)

I am going to educate my WCR family through a series of articles based on my own personal experiences so they can start to understand what it's like to have special needs.

My topic for this article is:

"Words or phrases are taken literally."

Parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers, and those working with children and adults with special needs must chose TV programs, reality TV, and Disney and Pixar movies, viewed by us, wisely. Whether a movie is rated G, PG, or PG-13, movies can be taken literally. The message of the movie needs to be considered, because there are times when we cannot determine if the movie is "real" or "fake." We can also learn good AND bad behaviors from movie characters because it sets an example of behaviors we may not be able to know the difference between. Not only could the content of the movie send us the wrong message, but also the music or theme song.

Another thing is words and phrases are taken literally. People must be aware of their words like "get with the program," "get over it," "snap out of it," and "don't have too much anxiety." These phrases are often used out of frustration by the caregivers and teachers. It is important to know that they really hurt people like me with special needs. How can I "get over it"? Are you asking me to "get over" my disability? To "get over" or "snap out of" something I have little control over? I can't just "snap out of it." Do you know what I am going through? Do you know what increased my fear and anxiety? My brain works differently, I need processing time, I don't understand, my thoughts are repeating in my head (OCD), my fear and anxiety doesn't always relate to reality of people without special needs.

My next topic will be sensory overload! What things in my environment affect my emotions and behavior? If you have any questions for comments for Ashley, email

wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com and put "Ashley's Corner" in the subject line.

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!

262-806-4080

wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com