

Willow Creek Ranch, Inc. Therapeutic Riding Center

Newsletter – July 2016

From Mukwonago, WI

- Save the date ... Ranch Rodeo – Oct. 1
- Harvest Horse Festival – Sept. 24
- Welcome New Volunteers, Intern, Instructor in Training, and others
- Aurora Health Care Support
- EAGALA
- Ashley's Corner, Article 3, 2016
- Bloom360 update, attachment (Special Needs Resource)

Contact Information

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wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com

Ranch Rodeo Event, Save the Date!

Save Saturday, October 1, 2016, on your calendar so you can join in the fun at the Willow Creek Ranch Rodeo! This has become an annual get-together that is exciting for our riders as they compete in real Rodeo events and share their accomplishments with family and friends. This is also the WCR major fundraising event offering a great opportunity for our family of supporters to help us raise funds for the indoor riding arena. You'll hear more about chances for sponsorships and donations in support of our riders and the WCR Therapeutic Riding programs.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? This is a major event and we need help planning for the concession stand, event program, children's activities, fundraising, and all the activities that go on that day. Please contact Jennifer and let her know how you can help make it a successful day. We are looking forward to this year's event!

Harvest Horse Festival, Concession Stand, and Yoga for Equestrians

Dover Stables, in Waterford, will host its 3rd Annual Harvest Horse Festival Saturday, September 24, from 9AM until 5PM. The event serves to educate and inspire horse enthusiasts of all disciplines from western pleasure and hunter/jumper to dressage and beyond. WCR will be offering concession stand items to help us raise money for our therapeutic riding program. We are looking for donations of water, soda, Gatorade, paper products, brats, hot dogs and buns, single-serving potato chips, and baked goods. **HOW CAN YOU HELP?** Help us find donated products for the concession stand, set up/staff/clean-up the stand, staff the WCR information table.

Willow Creek Ranch will be presenting an education session and is looking for two clients to demonstrate "Yoga for Equestrians." Yoga encourages riders to become a conscious rider-to realize that sensitivity and understanding of your body-mind connection are essential in riding, and to understand that using your body to communicate with the horse is the essence of riding and your most challenging task. **HOW CAN YOU HELP?** If you are interested in being a rider for the demonstration, contact Jennifer by August 8^h to begin a four-week yoga-riding session and you must be available for the September 24 presentation. You must be a 2016 rider currently in the riding program.

Welcome 2016 Volunteer Staff, Instructor-in-Training, Intern, Goats & Fergie

Please welcome new volunteer staff to the WCR family: Andrea, Emma, Beth, Callie, Emily, Joanne, Marissa, Mary, Noah, Dakota, Shannon, and Malisa! And thank you to those returning volunteers: Angela, Barb, Brian, Brittany, Carine, Tara, Karren, Kelly, Keisha, Lee, Marty, Molly, Natalie, Rosemary, Stephanie, and Terry. If you or someone you know may be interested in volunteering to help with lessons, property maintenance, equine management, sensory trail projects, and fund raising, please email wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com.

You may have noticed veteran volunteer Tara Borger hanging around at the Ranch. Tara moved to the Ranch this summer to assist Jennifer with lessons, equine management, fund raising, and office assistance. Tara will be earning her license in K-12 art education with a certificate in adaptive art (adapting lessons to work with students with special needs.) She is gaining knowledge of the clients and their diagnosis by working with Jennifer and the clients during lessons.

Also this summer, Jennifer is mentoring Margaret Mary Zirngibl, a PATH International Instructor-in-Training, who is working to complete her 25 hours of required instructing to clients teaching basic riding skills. Margaret Mary will be taking her PATH certification testing sometime this fall and plans to open a therapeutic riding center near Cedar Grove, WI. Good luck to her and thank you to all the parents, clients, and volunteers for making her feel welcome.

If you haven't been at the Ranch for a few months, there are a few additions: an adorable filly, Fergie, born in May to one of our boarded horses. She is inquisitive and just adorable. Also joining the WCR family are two little goats donated by the Brand Family, a dwarf pygmy, Ruby, and a Nubian, Roxy, who are also VERY inquisitive, adorable, and enjoy chewing and climbing on EVERYTHING. Caring for Roxy and Ruby has been a whole new learning experience for all of the volunteers, riders, and animals at WCR!

Aurora Health Care Supports WCR

At Aurora Health Care, an important aspect of their commitment to people and communities they serve is developing and supporting partnerships that help people live well. That community commitment is reflected in their annual Aurora Partnership Campaign. Each year, Aurora caregivers who contribute to the campaign have the option of designating agencies and organizations that they like to personally support. **Willow Creek Ranch is now part of the Aurora Health Care's Partnership Campaign.** If you or someone you know is an employee of Aurora Health Care and would like to make Willow Creek Ranch your contribution designation, please contact Marilyn Parise-Kohn at 414-299-1779 or email her at marilyn.parise-kohn@aurora.org.

Thank you Vicki V. for your generous donation!

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), and bullying.

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

Ashley's Corner

By Ashley Mathy, Article 3, 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. 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: **Sensitivity to Clothing**

Being sensitive to clothing has been an issue I have had to deal with for as long as I can remember. Many times my family would get frustrated or even upset when I would refuse to wear, or lash out about wearing, certain clothing items. Over the years we have learned about sensitivity to clothing and how many people with special needs, particularly those on the autism spectrum, have these same sensitivities. I have also learned recently of many people who are not on the spectrum and have no diagnosed disability, that also have their own sensitivities when it comes to clothing. Some of these

sensitivities may be brought on by bras, underwear, socks, sweaters, and many more. It is very hard to focus when wearing these items because it can feel like a piece of sandpaper on our back and sometimes the clothing is so itchy that if the person keeps scratching, they may cause bleeding. However, sometimes we are left with no option but to wear these items of clothing, and we need to learn how to cope with the sensitivities.

Strategies for coping with clothing sensitivity

- Bring along a stress ball or something to fidget with to help distract the brain.
- Avoid forcing those with sensitivities to wear the clothing items when they are home or in “safe” environments like long car rides, in bed, etc.
- Avoid buying clothing with scratchy or itchy material. I find that clothing with silky material and soft cotton helps me the most.
- Look for places that offer comfortable and non-sensitive clothing. Smart Knit Kids is an online company that has created seamless sensitivity products like socks, bras, compression tees, and underwear.
<http://smartknitkids.com/index.html>
- Try your best to be patient and keep calm when someone you know is having sensitivities.

What can cause sensitivity?

Sensory integration is the connection between your body and your brain. It gives you body awareness and helps you process what is happening around you like sights, smells, noises and touch. Sensory hypersensitivities, like sensory defensiveness, can be something someone is born with or it could happen later in life. Someone who has tactile defensiveness can perceive clothing as unpleasant or threatening to his or her body.

www.nspt4kids.com

Common items that cause sensitivity

- Zippers, belts, elastic
- Shorts, tank tops
- Bras, underwear, socks
- Tight fitting clothing, swim suits, tights or leggings
- Shorts, jeans, dresses, pajamas
- Jewelry, hair clips, bobby pins, pony tails
- Brushes
- Tags on the neckline or side seams

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, special awareness issues, and “perseveration”—dwelling on a certain subject.

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

The topic for my next article will be attachments and what happens when someone's brain attaches or latches on to a certain topic. If you have any questions or comments for Ashley, email wcrvolunteercoordinator@mail.com and put “Ashley's Corner” in the subject line.