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EQUICENTER POST

2013

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EQUICENTER
POST

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WILLIAM LEVINE 1916 – 2013

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Bill Levine. It was Bill's shared vision in the EquiCenter's mission that enabled the EquiCenter to acquire the spectacular William and Mildred Levine Ranch, an event which Bill referred to as "An Opportunity of An Eternity." We will be forever grateful for Bill's generosity and commitment to helping others, and we will forever honor his memory as we continue to work hard each day to serve those in the community in need.

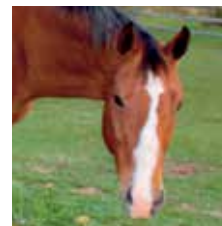
New Staff



Alf



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Moose



Smokey



Prince
Charming

EquiCenter Welcomes Claire DelMonte

Claire DelMonte, whose strong desire to help others has manifested in working for Save the Children and Open Society Foundations – global organizations that benefit people around the world – has joined the EquiCenter as Associate Director of Advancement. Claire will be assisting with a variety of public relations and fund development activities in her new role.



A former volunteer at the Jackson Hole Therapeutic Riding Association, Claire joined EquiCenter as a volunteer sidewalker shortly after moving to the Rochester area in 2012. "The dedication of staff and volunteers and the amazing impact on students kept me coming back," she says. "The opportunity to join EquiCenter staff was the answer to my search for meaningful work in the Rochester area. I am thrilled to put my skills and experience to work for this amazing place."

Welcome, Claire!

WHAT A NIGHT!

MANE EVENT A GREAT SUCCESS: GARNERS STRONG SUPPORT FOR EQUICENTER'S FUTURE

A booming thunderstorm may have briefly darkened the skies, but nothing could dampen the spirits of the many guests who made the EquiCenter's 2nd *Mane Event*, chaired by Terry and Terryl Butwid, a night to remember. From their arrival by horse-drawn wagon, to enjoying an inspiring therapeutic riding demonstration, dynamic silent auction, sumptuous food, live auction and after dinner dancing, guests got into the EquiCenter spirit of both fun and generosity.

By the time the last guests departed, and the tents and tables were cleared away, more than \$100,000 had been raised to help the EquiCenter continue our vital services to those in need.

123 WALK ON!

A highlight of the evening was a presentation by EquiCenter CEO Jonathan Friedlander, who outlined the program's many successes to date and exciting plans for the future, including the building of a new, heated indoor riding complex. "We are serving as many participants as we can with our current facilities," he said. "We have waiting lists for our programs and are severely limited by our small indoor riding arena. We need the space for multiple simultaneous activities and year round programming that our newly planned facility will allow."

Jonathan noted that the EquiCenter is currently serving 100 participants weekly, including children and adults with

physical, mental and emotional challenges, at-risk youth and Veterans of our nation's wars. "During the winter our ridership decreases by about 50%. Therefore, our first priority is to heat our existing indoor arena so that participants who currently can't come in winter will be able to continue their progress year round," he said. "It is also imperative that we expand our facilities so we can welcome everyone who turns to us. That way each can achieve his or her fullest potential from interaction with our staff, volunteers, wonderful therapy horses, and our beautiful land."

Guests at the *Mane Event* were given a publication called **123 Walk On**, which details the history of the EquiCenter, its steady growth and future needs. This information is also available on our website at www.equicenterny.org.

Jonathan explains: "Each time one of our riders is ready for his or her horse to go forward, they join with staff in the count down, telling the horse as best they can, "**123 Walk On.**" The EquiCenter has also taken very specific steps in getting ready to move forward," he says. "We are ready to Walk On! to building our expanded facilities and subsequent programs."

If you would like to help the EquiCenter as we raise funds to build our new facilities, please contact Jonathan at (585) 624-7772. Together we will "Walk On" to an even greater future for the EquiCenter!



123 WALK ON!



“EquiCenter is an outstanding organization providing world class programs which are sorely needed by many in our community to include Veterans returning from today’s wars who are suffering from post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. Jonathan and Stacy Friedlander and their team are to be commended for a job well done in helping Veterans reclaim their lives. We all appreciate the high standards, steadfast dedication and integrity of the EquiCenter team.”

Major General John Batiste, U.S. Army (Retired), Member, EquiCenter Advisory Board

Left: Skip (with Harley) Major General John Batiste, U.S. Army (Ret.) and Lyndon (with Rebecca)

HEROES AND HORSES: OFFERING HOPE AND HEALING TO THOSE WHO SERVE

The statistics are staggering: each day in the United States, 22 Veterans commit suicide. During the past year, many Monroe County Veterans have filed claims requesting assistance for post traumatic stress. And nationally, more than 45% of returning war Veterans since 2005 are dealing with diagnoses of mental illness.

Area mental health professionals tell us these numbers fall far short of the true picture. Many Veterans suffer silently, not wanting others to know of their distress. These, after all, are the invisible wounds of war. And it is these wounds, as well as a multitude of physical injuries, that EquiCenter’s Heroes and Horses Program is working to heal.

“The Rochester community offers wonderful programs for Veterans,” says Dr. Susan Taylor-Brown, EquiCenter’s Director of Operations and Research Development. “We are unique in offering a holistic, non-medical, non-traditional means of healing through our people, horses and land.”

Therapeutic equestrian activities are at the core of our Heroes and Horses Program, with both riding and non-mounted activities. Recently, horticultural and canine assisted therapy pilot programs have been developed to further enhance the therapeutic environment for Veterans at EquiCenter at the William and Mildred Levine Ranch.

While numbers may suggest the scope of the problems facing Veterans, those who have served our country with honor and pride are not numbers to us ... they are individuals like Skip Baker, Lyndon Villone and others who have turned to the EquiCenter at a difficult time in their lives. Whether they are men or women; whether they are riding or participating in other therapeutic activities; whether their service to our nation was in Iraq, Afghanistan, Vietnam or other conflicts, regardless of their

branch of service ... it is our privilege to be here for them.

Our Heroes and Horses Programs would not be possible without the significant support we have received from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, the Bob Woodruff Foundation, and the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation. Support from the Wounded Warrior Project as well as funds raised throughout the year from the community are enabling us to provide our programs at no cost to Veterans and their families.

Two Heroes and Horses Veterans awarded Mission Continues Fellowships

The Mission Continues is a not-for-profit organization that helps Veterans of post 9/11 wars successfully and productively re-enter civilian life by finding their new mission in serving their communities. The organization offers six-month fellowships to enable Veterans to support themselves while training and honing their skills in preparation for employment, further education, or continued community service. Both Skip Baker and Lyndon Villone applied for and were awarded fellowships, enabling them to work at EquiCenter toward their new life goals. Skip is working in every aspect of EquiCenter life in hopes of some day owning his own horse farm. Lyndon is working towards his goal of starting a canine therapy program for Veterans. EquiCenter is proud to be the host service organization helping them and others on the road to successful lives.

“I believe in the EquiCenter because of the results. From Military Family Days to the work being done with individual Veterans, EquiCenter’s programs help improve both mind and body and are key to treating the unseen wounds of war. Our area Veterans that participate in EquiCenter programs are now thriving in our classrooms, in our area businesses, and the community we live in.”

Jeremy Bagley, Iraq War Veteran, Veterans Affairs Coordinator, Nazareth College, Vice President, The Veterans Business Council



“Katie has gained a lot of core strength from her sessions with Tammy. She is now almost able to pull herself to a sitting position without help.”

Mary Beth Speicher



Far left: Katie and her Hippotherapy team.
Left: Tammy Korpel, PT

HIPPOTHERAPY EXPANDS EQUICENTER OFFERINGS

Katie Speicher, 17, began coming to the EquiCenter seven years ago. “We’d been to other programs before but this is the first time she’s done really well,” says Katie’s mom, Mary Beth. Challenged by brain damage related to complications during her birth, Katie lives with developmental delays and cerebral palsy. Over the years, her participation in therapeutic horseback riding has been a steady source of both physical and emotional strength.

“I like the EquiCenter because everyone is so nice and helpful,” Mary Beth says. “Most important of all, there is so much emphasis on safety here.”

This past summer Katie began to participate in special hippotherapy sessions with physical therapist Tammy Korpel, PT, and Katie’s always supportive team of sidewalkers, horse leader and her special pony Hickory.

Hippotherapy (derived from “Hippo” which is Greek for horse) is a treatment approach that uses the movement of the horse to elicit specific adaptive responses from the rider with the goal of improving function in daily life. Unlike therapeutic riding, which improves function while learning varied skills associated with riding horses, hippotherapy simply uses the horse’s gait and activities as a specialized form of physical, occupational or speech therapy targeted to improving specific neuromotor and sensory processing functions.

While Katie has benefited from her ongoing therapeutic

riding, the addition of hippotherapy with a focus on stretching and strengthening has advanced her abilities further. According to Mary Beth, Katie’s hippotherapy sessions are helping to stretch her back muscles and build core strength, while continuing to provide the social interaction with her team that Katie loves.

“Katie has gained a lot of core strength from her sessions with Tammy,” Mary Beth says. “She is now almost able to pull herself to a sitting position without help.” Mary Beth credits Tammy’s encouraging, upbeat personality as well as her skills as a physical therapist with helping Katie to progress.

“Tammy’s doing a wonderful job,” Mary Beth says. “She’s very positive, personable and helpful. Katie is gaining a lot from these sessions. If we lived closer we’d be coming two or three times a week instead of just one.”

Says Tammy, “Katie is doing very well with hippotherapy. She’s becoming stronger and more flexible, and she seems to really enjoy our sessions. I think it’s a good adjunct for her therapeutic riding at this point in her development. She and Hickory are a very good team!”

If you’d like more information about hippotherapy at the EquiCenter, please contact Debi Houliares, Director of Programming, at dhouliares@equicenterny.org or (585) 624-7777.

HORTICULTURAL THERAPY IS “GROWING” AT THE EQUICENTER



Beverly Brown, PhD, HTR

Beverly Brown, PhD, HTR, Director of Horticultural Therapy at Nazareth College, is helping the EquiCenter design and grow our new therapeutic horticulture program. Our ultimate goal is to grow enough hay to feed our herd, along with vegetables and flowers for the EquiCenter family and broader community. “Humans have lived around green growing plants for thousands of years. Becoming reconnected to the earth is healing and satisfies a basic human need,” says Beverly. The Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation provided “seed funding” for our therapeutic horticulture program for Veterans. Based upon its success this program is being expanded.

Partnering with Chris Hartmann and the Harley School for the Harley Garlic Program, third graders develop a business plan for planting, growing, harvesting, and selling garlic grown. Red, white and blue potatoes, our “Star Spangled Spuds” are a “growing salute” to our military Veterans who have been involved in their planting.

Special thanks go to Dr. Brown and Nazareth College, which has a comprehensive program for returning Veterans. “Working the land is particularly helpful to returning Veterans and their families,” Beverly says. “When someone goes to war, the whole family goes to war. Gardening reduces the stress for everyone.”

If you are interested in joining us in this “growing” endeavor, please contact Susan Taylor-Brown (585) 624-7772 or staylorbrown@equicenterny.org.

Karen Werth Named Volunteer Coordinator



Karen Werth began her relationship with the EquiCenter as a lesson volunteer in the spring of 2011. In June of this year, she joined the program's staff as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Karen recently moved to the Rochester area from Charlotte, N.C. where she was the director of a preschool program.

Karen holds a master's degree in early childhood and special education with a research background in behavior management. She also happens to love horses, which lead her to do some beginning training in dressage, jumping and horsemanship. She is currently working towards becoming a PATH-certified therapeutic riding instructor at the EquiCenter.

As Volunteer Coordinator, Karen's responsibilities include volunteer recruitment and training, with the primary goal of staffing volunteers for the 100 lessons being taught this session. "When you consider that we have 200 active volunteers involved in lessons six days per week, with some participants requiring as many as three volunteers for their lessons, it can seem overwhelming. But it really is as simple as a person in need willing to learn, an instructor ready to teach, a volunteer eager to help, and a hard working horse. I'm busy all the time working with a great staff and volunteers who keep me motivated every day."

Karen is quick to say how fortunate she has been to find her way to the EquiCenter, "where I can still pursue my vocation of working with children with special needs, and have the added benefit of working with these wonderful horses. Spending time with staff and volunteers who share these loves is a perfect fit."

Congratulations!

The EquiCenter family is proud to congratulate two members of our Advisory Boards for outstanding accomplishment and international recognition.

Ann Dwyer, DVM of the Genesee Valley Equine Clinic, is serving as president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). More than 10,000 equine veterinarians and veterinary students from 57 countries are AAEP members.

Thomas McInerney, MD, FAAP of Golisano Children's Hospital, is currently serving as president of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP is the world's largest physician organization dedicated to child health, with a membership of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists.

We are grateful to have such outstanding professionals involved with the EquiCenter.



Paddles for Saddles

Nearly 150 paddle players raised their paddles for EquiCenter at this year's *Paddles for Saddles*. This is a fun event that combines a full day of paddle with a pre-tournament party and a dinner dance at Midtown Athletic Club. The event raised \$20,000 and all had a great time! *Paddles for Saddles* will be held on Saturday, March 1, 2014. Contact info@equicenterny.org to be added to the mailing list.

Fall Golf Classic

A beautiful autumn day at Irondequoit Country Club was the perfect setting for the Fall Golf Classic, chaired by David Slavny and Gary Knaak, that supports EquiCenter's vital therapeutic programs. More than 100 golfers hit the links and raised \$43,000. Next year's tournament will be held in September.

Military Family Day

On September 15th, the EquiCenter hosted its fourth Military Family Day, welcoming Veterans and their families to a fun day of games, therapeutic horseback riding demonstrations, music, pony rides, and food. Our staff and volunteers are always honored to be able to give something back to those who have sacrificed so much.

Rayne named PATH Horse of the Year!

Our beloved Rayne, whose calm, kind personality has endeared him to everyone at the EquiCenter, has now been honored by Region 2 of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH) as its Horse of the Year. He was selected from among many entries from Region 2 PATH centers. Rayne is shown here greeting his good friend and rider Justin Prescuitti.



United for Success!

For more information about EquiCenter programming and ways to get involved, call 585.624.7777 or write to info@equicenterny.org.

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