

# *Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc.*



## *Newsletter*

### **The Future Begins Here 2010**

The 2010 Future Begins Here Gala was held at The Holyoke Mall at Ingleside on May 2, 2010 and, because all of the costs of the event are underwritten by The Holyoke Mall, raised over \$23,000.00 for The Therapeutic Equestrian Center.

The TEC Board of Directors played an active role in making the evening such a success. Jill Leary acted as TEC's representative to the Balloon Sale with Gordon Alexander acting as the coordinating manager for all the participating agencies for the Live Auction portion of the evening which featured a beautiful gold and diamond pendant and chair designed and made by another TEC Board member: James Sutter of Sutter Jewelers. Former Board member and agency supporter Mary Buffum managed TEC's Silent Auction presentation and sales. Sue Panitch acted as overall Chairman of TEC participation and worked on publicity for the evening.

TEC and the other agencies are grateful to Uno's Chicago Grill which ran the cash bar for the event and donated the entire proceeds from its sales to the participating children's programs which also included Holyoke Rows, The Children's Museum and the Children's Room at the Holyoke Public Library.

As in previous years the participating restaurants, all members of The Fine Dining Group, served an outstanding and delicious array of their finest foods and again also made a cash donation to be shared by the agencies. This group includes The Blue Heron, Chandler's Restaurant at Yankee Candle, The Delaney House, Eastside Grille, Figaro Ristorante, Hofbrauhaus, Horizons, Tavern on the Hill, Carmelina's, Café Lebanon, and The Federal Restaurant and Bar.

Because of time issues during the Gala, the Restaurants and Bar were not able to make formal presentations of their additional donations. Your Board of Directors asks that TEC supporters patronize these establishments and thank them for their ongoing support.

Planning for Future 2011 will begin in September. This will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event and thus will be a special occasion. There will be a need for support in gathering auction items, for volunteers to work on the Silent Auction and Balloon Sale and for help in developing public relations. All interested TEC supporters and families are asked to leave their names and contact information with Judith Zedonis.

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### **Therapeutic Equestrian Center**

**537 Northampton Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
413-532-1462**

**info@equestriantherapy.org  
www.equestriantherapy.org**

*The Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc. (TEC) is a private 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 1984 dedicated to providing physical, learning and recreational opportunities to special needs children and adults.*

*TEC is governed by a Board of Directors and managed by the Executive Director.*

**President**

Sue Ellen Panitch

**Vice President**

DJ O'Connor

**Secretary**

Gordon Alexander

**Treasurer**

Timothy Deshaies

**Board of Directors**

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Judith Zedonis

**Barn Manager**

Nora Britton

**Instructors**

Nora Britton

Cassady Clark

Karen Dahmke

Nancy Karp



**NARHA**

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## The Long Hot Summer of 2010

Summer sessions at TEC this year were made very difficult by the extreme hot and humid weather. It was necessary to cancel many of the sessions. It was just too hot to ride. The humidity and poor air quality made it dangerous to participate in most outdoor activities. My congratulations and thanks to all the dedicated riders and volunteers that stuck it out during the summer months. We did manage to hold some sessions.

Summer camp sessions were held during the mornings in July and August. As always it was a lot of fun for the kids to be introduced to riding. For many it was their first exposure to horses. Everyone had fun.

TEC's summer picnic was held on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at the Jericho pool. It was hosted once again by the TEC Board of Directors. Luck was with us that day, it was a beautiful day. The highlight of the event was Stitches the Clown who did some remarkable face painting. You have to see her work to believe it. She is an artist.

Class sessions for the summer will soon be over. We will take a short break. Classes will resume on Monday, Sept 13<sup>th</sup>. We will have classes Monday through Friday. It looks like we will be very busy this fall with retuning riders and new riders. Once again I will need the help of all my volunteers. I couldn't do this without their help.

Also, some of you might have heard or noticed that I am taking on the responsibility of the TEC Newsletter. I believe that we need it to keep in touch and to keep everyone informed about the happenings at TEC. It will be in printed format for now but soon you will be able to opt for an electronic version. My goal is to publish the newsletter 4 times a year. And yes, yet again I am asking for your help. Make this your newsletter. I would appreciate your input. Please submit articles of interest; pertaining to you experiences at TEC or outside of TEC, articles that might be educational or informative to those at TEC. Or just express you opinion. Of course remember, I will have the final say as to what gets published!

Judy,

Executive Director  
and now  
Newsletter Editor

## NOTES FROM THE HORSE DOCTOR:



*For over twenty years we have been fortunate to have Dr. John Cowley care for the horses at TEC. Following is what we hope is the first of many articles related to the care of the other heroes of our program. TEC is pleased to announce that Dr. Cowley has joined the Board of Directors of TEC and will be a regular contributor to our Newsletter.*

- As the health coordinator for the Therapeutic Equestrian Center's horses for many years, I can easily say this is the best group ever! I am speculating, but I believe our good fortune with the current group of horses is primarily due to 1) TEC has built an extraordinary program over the years and this reputation begs quality donations and 2) sadly, the economy has produced a flood of unwanted horses on the market. The system is flooded and we are benefiting by this "trickle up effect". Rather than sell a good horse at current market price, someone may rather take the option of donating to a worthy cause with the added confidence that the horse would receive proper care and lots of attention. The riding students at TEC are the beneficiaries. Currently half of the 8 horses at TEC are in their teens with only one over 30 years of age. Moreover, the turnover rate is low due to good health and great temperament of the horses. Safety is always the foremost concern with any therapeutic agent, for me, health is the

perfect combination. Think of this as soundness of mind and body. I have reviewed medical records for the past years and am impressed with the recent lack of necessary medical intervention. Currently, sick or lame horses are a rare presentation. Much of my role in this health program is prevention of disease, appropriate vaccinations (including any related to human health), proper dental care, parasite control and nutrition. The program is careful in purchasing quality hay, which is the mainstay of their diet. Even an occasional bad bale of hay can not only disrupt their digestion, but more often, cause an allergic reaction. A reliable provider of hay has been in force for awhile now and this has been crucial in maintaining a healthy herd. While I prefer monetary donations to offset feed costs, occasionally hay or other feed is donated, the staff is always careful in assessing the safety. I feel I have trained them well, but am the first to admit we have a great staff with good "horse sense". I plan to follow up in future newsletters on more about or TEC horses, your comments or questions sent to my E-mail address are welcome.

John L. Cowley, M.S., D.V.M.

### **Doc's Best Picks:**

**Must Reading:** MUSTANG By. Deanne Stillman; Non-fiction, from prehistory to today

**Must Visit:** PRATT MUSEUM: Amherst College Museum of Natural History; A true gem right here in the Valley

**Movie:** MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER; I admit it always keeps me thrilled and captivated.

John L. Cowley, M.S., D.V.M.

Thehorsedoctor@rcn.com

## Our TEC Riders

I've been riding at T.E.C. since 1997; I'd always had a love for horses and an interest in the program, but thought it was only for disabled children.

Eventually, my husband Mark got tired of me asking about their program every time we passed by the stables on Northampton Street. I was to say the least afraid to do it, afraid I couldn't do it.

Thankfully, he made the call I was too nervous to make. We soon met with the director of the T.E.C. and one of the trainers – I, of course, was wearing jeans and boots in preparation of a ride (turns out the first time was for talking and paperwork). Mark could sense my disappointment that day as we left, but I remember him saying not to worry, that I would be riding soon – he was right, as I was on a horse within a couple of weeks!

I had my first stroke in 1979, with three more to follow over the next fifteen years. In spite of several physical and occupational therapy programs, I've been left with only partial use of my left leg and have suffered total loss in my arm. I hoped that riding would help to improve my balance, and, having always had a love for these gentle giants (horses) I thought what better way to rehabilitate! Anytime a friend or relative comes to visit, I bring them to visit me at the T.E.C. so I can show off. My mom and dad loved to see me sitting so straight and tall atop the horses, and my brother Steve has even seen me trot and canter. Nothing beats the big smile I have on my face while riding – I had set out with the hopes of attaining better balance, but I have gotten so much more. Not only has my posture improved, but also my *confidence* has grown in all aspects of my life – I've come to feel so good about myself that I began working with first grade children teaching CCD at St. Patrick's parish in South Hadley.

Perhaps the greatest reward comes from the fact that while I am riding people see *me* and look into my eyes – they do not focus on the limp in my walk or the inability to use my left arm. Prior to my first stroke, I loved to run all throughout my

childhood/teenage years. The strokes have taken that away – I'll never be able to run with my own two legs again. Thanks to God, I feel like I've found a way of running once again – only I'm using four legs instead of two. The horses have given me back that wonderful thrill and sensation of running.

Since I began riding, I feel as though many doors have opened. I earlier mentioned teaching at St. Patricks, and my dedication there has earned me the Saint Pious X award. I've also earned numerous awards in the riding shows at the T.E.C: third place, second place, and several first place finishes – I've even won a "Best of Show"

Throughout my time there, the people of T.E.C. have always been so kind to me. I'm always greeted by Judy Zedonis's smiling face. And to think, I was once afraid to have Mark call; I would admire the horses from afar, but could never work up the courage to pick up the phone. Twelve years after my husband Mark picked up the phone for me, you can't get me off those horses!

In June of 2005 I was diagnosed with a neuromuscular disease called "Mitochondrial Disease" and have developed debilitating chronic pain throughout my body. Along with extreme fatigue, and muscle weakness. ("Mito" Mitochondria are responsible for 90% of all energy needed by the body and it's organs to function. this is where our energy to function throughout the day comes from.) Riding has helped to give my legs a gentle stretch that has helped to ease the pain. While my muscles no longer have the strength to do a lot of what I used to, riding and being around the horses has remained a way for me to cope with the disease. To this day, it continues to be one of the only ways I am able to exercise. I pray that I will always be able to ride...

God Bless,

Lori Jubinville

## Our TEC Volunteers

### Car Wash

A Car Wash was held at King and Cushman insurance on the corner of King and Finn Streets in Northampton on June 19th 2010 as a fundraiser for TEC. It was organized by Samantha Thorndike-Stark, our intern extraordinaire and Nancy Karp, TEC Instructor; and attended by many of our great volunteers including: Jillian Ruyffelaert, Sam and Zoe Frye, Glenn Munroe, Phil Lamothe and the vocational class from New Directions. It was a beautiful Saturday and there was a steady stream of cars pulling in to be washed and also to learn a little bit about our program. It was a beautiful Saturday and a great time was had by all.



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### A Volunteer's View

Walk into the Therapeutic Equestrian Center (TEC) on almost any day year round and you will be greeted by countless smiling faces, a group of lovable horses and a few quirky dogs and cats. I have volunteered at TEC for almost four years and am constantly experiencing first-hand the wonderful miracle of kindness which is received and distributed by riders and volunteers alike. Over the years I have seen many horses here at TEC, being trained, tested and eventually ridden by ecstatic kids

and adults. The fact that TEC has been able to acquire and mold all of these horses so that they take on the task to protect and heal the most fragile of people really mystifies me. This is one of the many reasons as to why I have become so enthralled with the world of therapeutic riding. With every confident grin and smiling child I am reminded of the many lives TEC has touched. Smiles and laughter are the best medicine and I hope TEC is always here to bring them about.

By Grace Lavelle, TEC Volunteer

## JOIN US ON FACEBOOK

The Therapeutic Equestrian Center Newsletter

# TEC Picnic

Saturday, Aug 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010



## How Can You Help?

The Therapeutic riding program provides a tremendous amount of benefit to individuals with disabilities. But the care of the horses and facility makes the program quite costly to operate.

You can make a difference in many ways.

Sponsor a rider: a six-week session of group lessons cost \$180. Donations to the Rider's fund will provide financial assistance for riders in need.

Sponsor or donate to the care of one of our special horses. Caring for a horse costs TEC approximately \$350 a month. Your donation could off set some of the cost.

Support TEC's events by participating and attending "Future Begins Here", Advertise in our Horse show program Book. There are many ways you can help.

### United Way for TEC

The Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc. is a qualified 501(c)(3) Agency. With this status, TEC qualifies as a designated receiver of donations through the United Way.

Please think of TEC when donating to the United Way. Helping TEC is a simple process

If you are interested in making a contribution to help support TEC please contact the office at 413-532-1462 or [info@equestriantherapy.org](mailto:info@equestriantherapy.org). All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We do appreciate your help.

### Volunteer Positions available at TEC:

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Barn Help
- Horse Leaders during lesson
- Sidewalkers during lessons

## Therapeutic Equestrian Center

### WISH LIST

- Hay
  - Bagged Shavings
  - Landscaping plants
  - Corner Feed Tubs
  - Flat back or corner water buckets
  - Fly Spray (for horses and humans)
  - Cat Food (dry) & Kitty litter
  - Cleaning products
  - Hot & Cold cups
  - Keurig coffee, tea or hot chocolate
  - Garbage bags
  - Kleenex
  - Paper towels
  - Toilet paper
  - Gift Certificates to:
    - Feed Stores; Tack Shops;
    - Office Supply Stores & Hardware Stores
    - Snacks & Drinks for the volunteers & riders
- Volunteers to help in the program**

### Thank You Sam

It is always with mixed emotions that we say goodbye to one of our TEC volunteers. Samantha Thorndike graduated from UMASS this year and has returned to her home in Tennessee.

Sam has been a very active participant in our program for the past couple of years.

Just a few of her contribution: she was responsible for coordinating with the Canadian Cowgirls to have a group of TEC riders participate in the Equine Affaire's Pfizer Fantasia in Nov 2009; took over duties of Volunteer Coordinator; mentored many of our new volunteers; helped at "Future" and at our horse shows; joined NARHA's instructor program so that she could student teach; worked with and cared for our horses.

Sam was always willing to pitch in and lend a helping hand where ever needed.

**Good Luck in your new endeavors  
We will Miss You**

## **TEC** **Calendar of Events 2010**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the Month:** TEC Board of Director's Meeting, for more info call TEC at 413-532-1462

**September 13:** TEC Sept/Oct Riding Session #5 starts

**Oct 11:** No Classes at TEC Columbus Day Holiday

**Oct 30, 2010** Annual Horse Show

**Nov 1:** TEC Nov/Dec Riding Session #6 starts

**Nov 22 to Nov 26:** No Classes Thanksgiving Break

**Dec 17:** End of Riding Session 2010

**Dec 20 to Jan 2011:** No Classes Winter Break

### **Watch for Special Events to be Announced**

### **TEC – Cancellation Policy**

**Summer Cancellation:** If the temperature rises above 90°, especially if it is humid, classes may be cancelled. The safety of our riders, volunteers and horses is our concern.

**Winter Cancellation:** TEC follows the same schedule for cancellations as the Holyoke School system. If Holyoke schools are closed due to bad weather TEC will cancel classes.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call TEC at 413-532-1462 to find out if classes have been cancelled. If we are unavailable to answer the phone there will be a message on the answering machine at TEC with that information.

## **TEC Class Schedule**

### **Sept/Oct 2010 – Session #5**

#### **Monday:**

Sept 13 to Oct 25, 2010  
6 week session (no class Mon, 10/11)  
Groups at: 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Tuesday:**

Sept 14 to Oct 26, 2010  
7 week session  
Groups at: 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM,  
11:30 AM & 12:30 PM

#### **Wednesday:**

Sept 15 to Oct 27, 2010  
7 week session  
Groups at: 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Thursday:**

Sept 16 to Oct 28, 2010  
7 week session  
Groups at: 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Friday:**

Sept 17 to Oct 29, 2010  
7 week session  
Groups at: 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Saturday, Oct 30, 2010**

**Annual Horse Show**

### **Nov/Dec 2010 – Session #6**

#### **Monday:**

Nov 1 to Dec 13, 2010  
6 week session (no class Mon, 11/22)  
Groups at: 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Tuesday:**

Nov 2 to Dec 14, 2010  
6 week session (no class Tue, 11/23)  
Groups at: 9:30 AM, 10:30 AM,  
11:30 AM & 12:30 PM

#### **Wednesday:**

Nov 3 to Dec 15, 2010  
6 week session (no class Wed, 11/24)  
Groups at: 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Thursday:**

Nov 4 to Dec 16, 2010  
6 week session (no class Thu, 11/25)  
Groups at: 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM

#### **Friday:**

Nov 5 to Dec 17, 2010  
6 week session (no class Fri, 11/26)  
Groups at: 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 & 6:00 PM