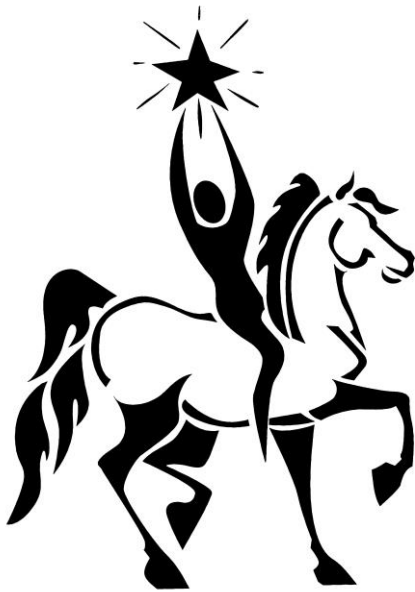


Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc.

Newsletter

Fall 2011



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Therapeutic Equestrian Center (TEC)

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Holyoke, MA 01040
413-532-1462**

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President's Message

Early in the 2011 Summer Session at TEC, I met the Mother of one of our newest Participants who asked what the guidelines were for putting a child with a specific group. I replied that it was age and ability of each, for the most part.

But the question reminded me of another frequently asked question: What makes TEC different from other apparently similar programs?

The answer is "Many things!" To begin with and most importantly, TEC is a dedicated facility where only individuals with specific therapy needs can ride. By itself, this is the greatest difference. As far as we know TEC is one of only a small number of so dedicated facilities in New England. Because of that fact, the horses, who try out for the program are chosen and kept because of a quiet, good natured and steady disposition. They are used to working with youngsters who have different kinds of issues. They know their role, enjoy being with children and understand working with the trained volunteers who act as side walkers and leaders to provide an extra measure of safety for riders.

Our TEC therapy equipment is our horses. Because they are crucial to providing a great experience to the children, they are treated with respect for their abilities and are exercised by volunteers who put them through therapy training cycles in weekly session.

TEC riders are grouped in classes of no more than four children so that the therapist can give each a fair share of attention and so that the children have a chance to get to know each other and make new friends. This "socialization" setting is one of TEC's great strengths. Additionally, in each class session, the youngsters ride exercise patterns specifically and individually designed for them for muscle strengthening, balance and general body control. At the same time they are receiving physical therapy, they are learning a new lifetime skill.

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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.

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Newsletter Editor

Judy Zedonis



PATH
INTERNATIONAL

Professional Association of Therapeutic
Horsemanship International

— MEMBER —

It's hard to believe summer is over!

TEC's summer classes finished mid August. The Jericho and Granby summer sessions were a huge success this year. The turnout of riders and volunteers was wonderful. We also continued our regular afternoon sessions, so needless to say the staff at TEC was very busy.

Special thanks to Dr John Cowley for locating and obtaining the fans. They made it possible for us to ride during some extremely hot days this summer.

Our end of summer picnic was held at the Jericho pool on Saturday, Aug 13th. Many thanks to the TEC board of directors for donating their time and efforts to make this possible. Entertainment was provided by one of our own TEC volunteers, Art Myer and friend. They gave a demonstration of African, Caribbean drumming, that we were all invited to participate in. It was a beautiful day and great fun for everyone. We were all pleasantly surprised when Julie & Rachel Gregory drove out from their new home on the Cape to join us. It was great to see them.

Fall classes were scheduled to start Monday, Sept 12th, but we will have to delay the start of class. The parking lot is scheduled to be paved Sept 12th & 13th. Therefore, classes won't start until Wednesday, Sept 14th.

Remember if you are not sure if classes are going to be held or 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.

Also, TEC's Annual Horse Show will be held on Saturday October 22nd. Save the date!

I look forward to seeing everyone again.

I hope you will all continue to submit your articles, letters and brags. Make this your newsletter.

Judy,
*Executive Director/
Newsletter Editor*

Observations of a New Rider!

As a relatively new board member, and a novice around horses, I will be the first to admit that the day to day operations of a facility like the Therapeutic Equestrian Center (T.E.C.) have often seemed alien. For this very reason my wife Rebecca and I decided the time was ripe to follow up on a long time goal to learn how to ride. It has been a surprising journey, and one that will only continue in the future.

Like most people, I have been surrounded by horse culture my whole life. This may seem like a sweeping statement, but the enormity of equestrian culture and its impact on the life of the average American is just as sweeping. In our American culture where we drive Mustangs, root for (or against!) Colts, Cowboys, Chargers and Broncos to name just a few, ride Merry-Go-Rounds, and have often revered the cowboy as the epitome of Americana, the horse is ever present. For that very reason, it was easy for me to think that riding a horse was, to put it bluntly, easy. I have rarely been so greatly mistaken.

This misconception is one that I feel most folks, and many friends of T.E.C., share. From the daily maintenance of a horse barn, to the daily maintenance of a horse, just the behind the scenes work is intimidating in its scope. For every day of riding, countless hours of preparation have been invested by both our dedicated staff and our selfless volunteers. That is before anybody actually gets onto a horse.

As a person who had never ridden a pony, let alone a thousand pound animal, I was in for a whole range of surprises. First was how docile and full of personality a horse can be. Next was how much my best laid plans didn't always coincide with those of my four legged friend. Once I was in the ring, the next surprise was just how much work and strength it takes to ride a horse. Above all, the biggest surprise was not how much work it takes to learn how to ride a horse. I was, and still am, amazed by how much patience, expertise, and effort it takes to teach someone to ride a horse. Did I mention patience?

Every day, the staff and volunteers of T.E.C. use sheer effort, expertise, and tremendous patience to teach those with physical and developmental disabilities to do something that is difficult by any measure. For that I applaud them, and I hope that you do too.

James Sutter



Luna: Enjoying the new fan at TEC

Horse Trivia

- Horses can lock the muscles in their legs so they can go to sleep standing up and not fall over
- Horses can drink up to ten gallons of water a day
- There are over 300 different breeds of horses and ponies around the world.
- It is estimated that there are about 750 million horses in the world.
- Riders usually mount from the left side of a horse. Because in olden days men used to wear scabbards for their swords on their left hip. If they had got on from the other side of the horse the sword would have gotten in the way!

NOTES FROM THE HORSE DOCTOR

Ventilation: better environment for horses, riders and TEC personnel.

Last summer a heat wave required shutting down the program for a few weeks. It was decided to research options to provide healthy air exchange in the indoor arena so as to not repeat the problem this summer.

A healthy air environment is more than a comfortable temperature. With poor air exchange the atmosphere becomes stagnant with any airborne particles easily inhaled by horses and people as well. Awhile back when the program was put on hold for an extended period for renovations a very crucial improvement was made. Previously, the indoor arena was used both for lessons and routine “turn out” an exercise area for any number of horses especially during inclement weather. Most horses would actually have preferred to be outside. However, over time despite cleanup efforts, excrement mixed in with the soft footing as well as other organic matter such as ground soil accumulated. Under certain conditions these particles could become airborne and whether inhaled by people or horses create a health hazard.

So the indoor arena was cleared and then filled with non organic gravel covered with sand which provided safe footing, good drainage and no capability of becoming aerosolized. Horses were no longer contained in the indoor except during lessons or training. Manure would was removed immediately. This was a huge first step, however, ventilation was still an issue. Even with front and back doors open, without the right wind direction air became stagnant. Not much of an issue in cold weather, but with heat and humidity we once again entered a potentially unsafe and certainly uncomfortable situation. Many barns when built incorporated passive ventilation features. Historically the most common and still very

effective is the cupola, you will notice these on many barns as chimney like structures along the roof top. They actually function like a chimney as the warm air rises it is funneled out the top and in so doing, pulling cooler cleaner air into the lower part of the barn. This passive process requires no power source (although some do use fans to augment the system). Many homes have attic exhaust fans with thermostats to do this same thing, newer models are now solar powered.

Ideally TEC’s barn would have incorporated at least two of these cupolas, although somewhat expensive they are even more so as an after the fact addition. Eventually we hope to get funding combined with donation of services to accomplish this. Other options under consideration are ventilation systems at the upper peak of the arena to funnel out the hottest air either passively or powered. Energy savings are always on our minds.

In the mean time I managed to find some powerful portable fans to provide some relief which apparently have gained much popularity. The cost was minimal as two of the fans had minor dents easily fixed but available at substantial savings, on top of this Tractor Supply Company (TSC) knocked of another 10% as they always do for TEC. The larger expense was installation of electrical outlets throughout the indoor arena. So right now we have happier riders, staff and horses as well as an uninterrupted program.

In the future when funding permits, we intend to incorporate energy efficient passive and perhaps assisted passive air exchange systems. We are also looking into options for reducing dust during winter months when wetting the arena is problematic. Healthy riding my friends.

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

If you have any questions, please contact me at: thehorsedoctor@verizon.net.

President's Message

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All of the TEC tack and equipment is chosen to provide the safest possible setting. TEC owns its own maintenance equipment and thus the arena surface can be kept in fine condition.

We are never forced to use horses who have any other job or a location other than the one the horses and volunteers are used to and know.

All TEC therapists/instructors hold both Massachusetts riding instructors' licenses and certification by PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) the national association of handicapped riding therapy programs. The stable and arena are inspected and licensed by the State Massachusetts on an annual basis.

TEC has the ability to take the place of the clinical – and sometimes scary - setting and exchange it for a natural, athletic setting. This removes the burden of going for therapy” from the participants minds.

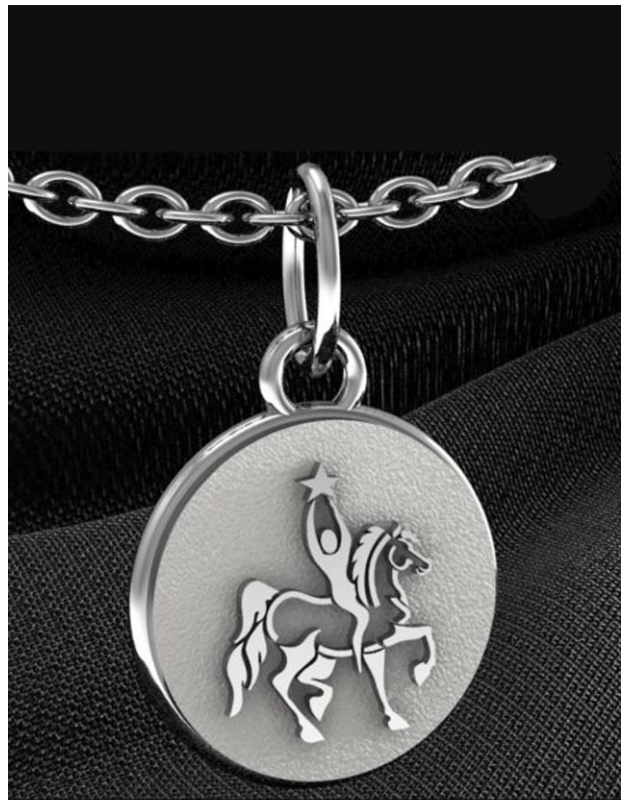
Additionally, our viewing room/lounge which allows parents, guardians and friends to watch a session in action is also a place where parents can exchange ideas and relax.

We welcome visits – especially during class times – so that we can show interested people what we do and how we do it.

Sue Ellen Panitch, President

TEC's WISH LIST

Hay, Bagged Shavings, Fly Spray, Corner Feed Tubs, Flatback or Corner Water Buckets, 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 local stores & Snacks & Drinks for the volunteers & riders



TEC Charms by Sutters Jewelry

Bracelet Charms
Sterling Silver \$70
14Kt Gold \$325

Pendants
Sterling Silver \$90 (with chain)
14Kt Gold \$335

Tie Tack or Lapel Pin
Sterling Silver \$85

Cufflinks (pr)
Sterling Silver \$150

All pieces can be set with a birthstone
or other gem of your choice.
To order, call Sutters Jewelry directly
413-534-3111

TEC Calendar of Events

Dec 18th: Holiday Celebration TEC & Jericho

Jan 17th: Start of TEC's Session #1 for 2012

Jan 23rd: 2nd Annual OpaOpa Fundraiser

May 6th: "Future Begins Here" Holyoke Mall

For more info Call TEC at 413-532-1462

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

TEC Class Schedule

Jan/Feb 2012 – Session #1

Monday:

Jan 23 to Feb 27, 2012 – 5 week session (no class 2/20)
Groups at; 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM & 6:00 PM

Tuesday:

Jan 17 to Feb 28, 2012 – 6 week session (no class 2/21)
Groups at; 9:30, 10:30, 11:30AM, & 12:30PM

Wednesday:

Jan 18 to Feb 29, 2012 - 6 week session (no class 2/22)
Groups at; 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM & 6:00 PM

Thursday:

Jan 19 to Mar 1, 2012 – 6 week session (no class 2/23)
Groups at; 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM & 6:00 PM

Friday:

Jan 20 to Mar 2, 2012 – 6 week session (no class 2/24)
Groups at; 4:00 PM, 5:00 PM & 6:00 PM

Session #2 will start in March

Save the Date!

For TEC's

First Annual

Harvest Dinner

Date: Monday, November 7th

Time:

6:00 Cocktails & Hors d'Oeuvres

7:00 Dinner

Location:

*80 Jarvis Restaurant,
80 Jarvis Ave Holyoke*

Cost: \$65 per seat

*Reservations: Contact 80 Jarvis
413-534-4000*

visit www.equestriantherapy.org for more info!