

## HORSE'n' Around Helps Kids

In 2002, two women came together with a single purpose in mind; to help children and their families live better lives through equine assisted therapy. No, these are not physically challenged youth. This is not what many think. It is not handicapped riding. These children and adolescents come to H.O.R.S.E. Helping Others Reach Success & Excellence with emotional, mental and behavioral problems. Some difficulties are mild. Most are not. Many of the youth struggle with a history of being abused or neglected. Some come to H.O.R.S.E. with severe depression, debilitating anxieties, anger control problems. Some are diagnosed with forms of Autism. They may have a serious mental illness. Many children struggle in school and most have problems getting along in their families. They all come to H.O.R.S.E. to feel the healing power of caring people and to receive the therapeutic help from their equine friends. I would like to share with you the story of Rachel, because Rachel's story highlights many of the reasons that H.O.R.S.E. exists and the help and hope that the therapy provides. Rachel is an extremely intelligent young lady, and as she will tell you herself, was diagnosed recently with Asperger's Syndrome, which is a form of Autism. This is just one of the several mental health and physical diagnosis that Rachel has received over her short life.

*Hello, my name is Rachel, and I am a fourteen year old girl who has had to face alot of challenges. What are these challenges is usually the first question that I am asked, but because I want to come out victorious against my weaknesses, I want to address my strengths first. I am a gifted student, and being homeschooled has allowed me to pursue things academically that I would otherwise be unable to do, such as reading *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in eighth grade, and using high school curriculum earlier. I have a passion for foreign languages, and have studied Greek, Hebrew, Austrian, Provencal, and Esperanto at different times. I play the euphonium, which is akin to a baby tuba, and am a member of Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, Parkville Community Band, and church orchestra. I participate in activities with horses(a passion)between eight and ten hours a week. I have an active social life, and attend Northland Academy, a homeschool cooperative, once a week. Here I am a member of the Bear Essentials Staff(the school newspaper), and I am also a proofing editor.*

*That being said, it is often hard for people to believe that less than a year ago I was totally confined to my home by agoraphobia, and that I couldn't even sleep upstairs in my own bed, because I had thoughts of throwing myself headfirst down the stairs onto the granite below. I didn't have any friends. In November of 2004, I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism that afflicts average to above average intelligent people. Ever since birth I have struggled with separation anxiety, mind blindness, sensory issues and chronic visual difficulties. I have also struggled with a lot of health issues. I take six medications every day-some for chronic pain/fibromyalgia, some for headaches and some for allergies/asthma. I also take a variety of*

*vitamins on a daily basis to improve my overall functioning. I have been to the doctor's 33 times- a variety of doctors for a variety of issues-since August of 2005.*

*So what has made the difference between me barely surviving and me completely thriving? H.O.R.S.E.! How does H.O.R.S.E. help? Horses help me with balance, midline crossing, posture, flexibility, and sensory regulation. Horse helps me be able to think clearer, stand straighter, and tolerate my environment better. My spirit lifts and my emotions become 100% better when I am with the horses. The games that we play with the horses help me to be able to multitask. There is something about being around horses that has made my thinking more flexible, and I have even been able to imagine (something that I had difficulty with before because of the abstract thinking that it requires).*

*I have been struggling with self injury or "cutting" for four years now. Since I have been with H.O.R.S.E. I am alot better able to keep my impulses under control and have learned a lot about stress management and problem solving. H.O.R.S.E is such a healing program. It is like there is something magical in the air there. When I am with the horses, my problems seem to disappear. When I am riding, my life seems perfect. It doesn't even require any effort to clear my head and be happy. For the first time in my life, I have experienced exhilaration.*

*If you give a girl a depression pill, she may be happy for 24 hours, but if you give a girl therapy with horses, she'll be happy for the rest of her life.*

Rachel has been coming to H.O.R.S.E. for about 6 months and as her story tells, she has had to overcome a considerable amount of challenges in her life. Rachel's family almost didn't contact us because they didn't think they could afford the services but through the generous donations of folks in the community, Rachel has been able to come to H.O.R.S.E. on scholarship moneys. There are many others, like Rachel, that need our life changing services but can not afford it. That's where you can help. You can help by providing donations - tax deductible - to H.O.R.S.E. to help provide services to children like Rachel. There are many ways to do that and for more information about how to help us help those who need us most you can call us 816-318-1881, you can go to our website at [www.HORSEhelpspeople.org](http://www.HORSEhelpspeople.org), you can email the Executive Director, Stacie Stoltz at [Stacie@horsehelpspeople.org](mailto:Stacie@horsehelpspeople.org) and/or you can come to our fun fundraising events such as the one coming up September 16, 2006! On that date, we are holding our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HORSE'n' Around Benefit Barn Dance, Dinner and Auction! Last year was our inaugural event and it was a rousing success with almost 400 people in attendance. The silent and live auctions were remarkable, the meal was superb, the bidding was awesome on both the live and silent auction and the music and dancing were incredible. Feedback from the event poured in over the next several weeks exclaiming what a great time everybody had and how much they were looking forward to the event next fall. So.....

Why mess with success? We continue to collaborate with the Saddle and Sirloin Club, holding the event in their main barn and indoor arena and their chef will again be providing the mouth watering BBQ dinner. Scott Duncan will be back to provide the awesome acoustic guitar dinner music and Hazzard County returns to provide the boot scoot'n' tunes following the live auction.

We have over 155 items for the silent and live auctions this year. Exciting live auction items donated include:

3 year old AQHA brown filly "Minted In Black Gold" N/N

Sire: Coosas Mr Black Gold x Dam: JS Impressive Future  
donated by Jerome Gabel and Roxanne Brennan

Yearling Sorrel filly "Double Dosa Baileys"

Sire: Mr. Cotton Jeans x Dam: Wise Kim Bar,  
donated by Jerome Gabel and Roxanne Brennan

Blue Damsel Lodge Fly Fishing trip in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Montana with rountrip airfare.

donated by Orion Adventures, air flight donated by Continental Airlines

Golf getaway for four to The Osage National Golf Club including lodging

donated by Diane and Bill Clarkson

C Lazy U Guest Ranch – 7 day stay for 4! C Lazy U is the premier guest ranch in the Colorado Rockies!

KU Basketball tickets with hat and t-shirt signed by Coach Bill Self

These are just a few of the live auction items. More auction items include artwork, jewelery, resturants, live theater, American Royal tickets to various events, gift baskets, sporting events....and the list goes on!

Tickets to our event will be \$60 per person and can be payable by cash, check, Visa or MasterCard. Contact Susan O'Neal at 913-492-8537 to buy tickets. Happy Hour will begin at 5:30pm so remember to mark your calendars for September 16<sup>th</sup>, pull out your wallets for some more great auction items, dust off your dancing boots and come have a great time this year at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HORSE'n' Around Benefit Barn Dance, Dinner and Auction at Saddle & Sirloin Club!

We thank you and more importantly, the kids and their families thank you!