



Naples Therapeutic

 Riding Center

Scene + Herd



FEBRUARY 2019 NEWSLETTER

Executive Director Letter



BY MELISSA SARACINO
 LAMONT

It's hard to believe a year has passed since I became your Executive Director. Our goals include expanding programs, increasing collaborations, enhancing the volunteer experience and cultivating donor support. In this issue of *Scene and Herd* you'll learn about our recent initiatives that help us achieve those goals.

As I reflect on last year's accomplishments, they can always be traced to donor and volunteer support. I spent much of the year planning my first Barn Dance. As it is our signature fundraiser, we rely on its success to meet the demand for our innovative equine activities and therapies. Because of your support, we raised \$360,000 to improve the lives of children and adults with special needs! A highlight of the night was watching the hands fly during the "Horse Power" appeal after we shared an emotional video featuring the success of one of our longtime riders, Kendra Johnson. There wasn't a dry eye in the arena and the appeal successfully funded the annual costs to care for our expanded herd of 14 horses.

As a way to introduce new people to the healing that happens here every day, last year we launched Young Professional Strides, a group charged with cultivating ambassadors among local young professionals. Their inaugural event held last fall, Hole Masters for Horses, welcomed 100 people to our campus for a corn hole tournament and food truck sampling. I am really looking forward to seeing more from this growing group of go-getters in 2019.

We also had a little fun with creative fundraising competitions on social media which included everything from horse kicks for donations to voting for your favorite horse. The donations were tallied and you named Bear the 2018 Horse of the Year! Thanks for playing along.

As I look ahead at 2019, I am excited to work with our diverse, growing board of directors and new team members to continue this momentum. That includes bringing back our crowd-pleasing fundraiser, the Kentucky Derby Party, this Spring! It has been a wild ride so far learning, growing and serving our donors, riders and families. Together, let's make 2019 one of our best!

Tally Ho!



Donor Dollars at Work



“We are so grateful to NTRC for being open to collaborations and being our first partner in this win-win program. People with special needs are eager and happy to help and want to make meaningful contributions. The participants just love working alongside the horses. They are dedicated to the tasks given to them and take their work very seriously.”

– Karen Govern,
STARability
Executive Director

VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM EXPANDS, HELPS BLAZE A TRAIL FOR INCLUSION

Through a new collaboration with STARability Foundation™, young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are receiving experiential vocational training and life skills learning at NTRC through the non-profit's Trailblazer Academy. The academy is a full time, post high school transition program designed to teach job skills applicable to other organizations and responsibility with the goal being to help participants gain part time employment and long term independence.

Built on community partnerships with a variety of local businesses, the program gives participants exposure to the world of work and allows them to experience diverse jobs and businesses as well as discover how they can contribute through their unique abilities. The social interactions, confidence building, peer support, and teamwork enhance the experience and connect them to the community.

Several days a week, these trailblazers arrive at NTRC in their official blue uniform t-shirts ready to roll up their sleeves and tackle the day's tasks which can include cleaning the stalls, sweeping the barn, grooming and exercising the horses as well as doing laundry. The win-win program provides NTRC with dedicated, free labor while teaching participants valuable on-the-job training in an environment where they feel welcome, comfortable and appreciated. Their sense of accomplishment and pride is visible not only on their faces, but in the spic and span barn after they leave.

The Trailblazer Academy launched in September 2016, with NTRC being the very first community partner worksite. The popular program has had a wait list since it started and will expand this year to three groups of 10-13 people. If you see a sea of blue shirts working hard on our campus, be sure to give them a proper NTRC welcome and thank them for their hard work!



The Scene at NTRC

Interested in bringing a group to NTRC? Call (239) 596-2988





Donor Spotlight

VINCENT MILOT SPONSORS A HORSE TO HELP OTHERS GAIN INDEPENDENCE



I imagine I have a unique perspective on why I support NTRC. I am from Miami where I worked as an airline mechanic. I enjoyed an active lifestyle coming back and forth to Naples on fishing trips. I even rode horses as a teenager.

But when I was 35, life as I knew it changed forever when I was involved in a freak accident. I fell just two feet and crushed my spinal cord. I became paralyzed from the waist down. I know what it is like to depend on someone else, to need help and not have it.

I first heard about NTRC six years ago from my investment advisor, Dawn Litchfield, who is an active volunteer. She thought the mission was a good fit for my charitable giving, so I attended a Barn Dance. There, I learned how being with a horse is therapy for people like me. I was able to see the results in action and became determined to help if I could. Since then, I try to give a little each year because I believe what comes around goes around. People helped me when I needed it and I want to give back that same way.

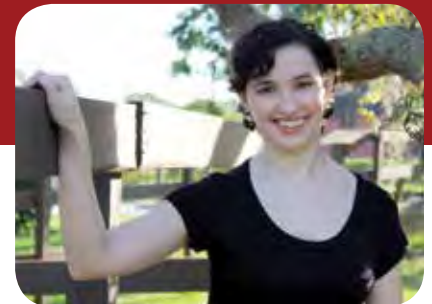
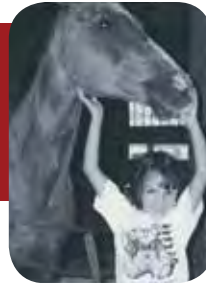
On the horses, the kids can forget they are disabled. They get to be free with the horse's help. I like how the horses are also given a second chance so, this year I made the commitment to sponsor a horse for five years. I sponsored Tacoma because I liked her spots and heard she was great with kids.

“The best part about giving to NTRC is you can see exactly how the money is being used. My money stays locally and I can visit the arena and see the results in action. The smiles on the riders’ faces are payment enough.”

– Vincent Milot

Meet a Rider

ONE RIDER MAKES A CAREER OUT OF GIVING BACK



I started riding when I was six and continued for 11 years. I've literally grown up here. I owe so much of my success to NTRC and the people who support this wonderful place. Now at 25, my NTRC journey has taken me into a new and exciting direction, and I could not be more excited about the opportunities that await.

Let me back up. I was born with cerebral palsy which comes with many physical challenges including stiff muscles exaggerated movements and a lack of coordination that left me unable to walk independently. Once I found NTRC, I fell in love with the horses and became determined to walk on my own. At first, I didn't have the core strength to hold myself up while mounting. The exercises helped me build physical strength and I quickly became unstoppable! I've been walking on my own ever since.

The self-confidence and appreciation I developed for NTRC sparked a passion in me for giving back. In elementary school, I donated my horse Dottie to NTRC. When she got colic, I opened a lemonade stand to raise funds for her care. As a teen, I volunteered as a counselor at the summer camp.

That leads me to today. After earning my degree, I was ready to start my professional career. When I heard about the opportunity to work at NTRC as a database administrator, I jumped at the chance.

I'm very fortunate to have had NTRC in my life then and now. Having this job is repaying the favor that was given to me. Like our donors, I want to give kids with challenges a place to grow, have fun and be a building block for the rest of their life. It will be a privilege working alongside donors to further the important mission of this very special place. Giving back makes the world go around!

“NTRC opened doors to other possibilities for me. Having this job is repaying the favor that was given to me. It is a perfect fit because it will afford me the opportunity to work closely with donors and share my experiences.”

– Tiffany Billings

Welcome

“Helping the board successfully bridge the connection between NTRC and our constituents, whether through community outreach or financial initiatives, is something I find very rewarding.”

– Jason Diefenthaler



“Seeing the growth and development of our riders, and how riding helps them and their families, is what motivates me. There is no better way to start my week.”

– Brian McNamara, Esq.



“I am inspired by both the passion of our riders and the compassion of our volunteers. I am eager to do whatever I can to help everyone associated with NTRC achieve their goals.”

– Gregory A. Otis



“I’ve learned first-hand how truly therapeutic horses can be for the mind, body, and soul. I am excited to use my knowledge and network to strengthen the relationship between NTRC and the horse community.”

– Melanie Penner



“I am looking forward to working with the board’s new dynamic and qualified leaders to continue maximizing the opportunity for Collier residents to experience the benefits of equine therapy – something I care deeply about.”

– Bill Swartz, DVM



New Board Members

JASON DIEFENTHALER

Jason Diefenthaler is the Director of Tax Exempt Portfolio Management with Wasmer, Schroeder & Company (WSC). He began his career with WSC in 2000, working initially as a Credit Analyst and Portfolio Manager. He is also a graduate of Leadership Collier. Jason will lend his expertise to the finance committee.

BRIAN MCNAMARA, ESQ.

Brian McNamara, Esq. is the President of McNamara Legal Services, P.A. which focuses on Wills, Trusts & Estates and Probate Administration. Prior to being an attorney, Brian was a political consultant and served as the Operations Manager for the Naples Historical Society. As a graduate of the Leadership Collier Growing Associates of Naples program and a member of the Chamber of Commerce’s Emerging Leadership Counsel, Brian is leading NTRC’s initiative to launch a young professionals group. He is also a frequent sidewalker during lessons.

GREGORY A. OTIS

Gregory A. Otis is a Senior Vice President and Private Wealth Advisor for FineMark National Bank & Trust. He brings over 30 years of experience in the Trusts and Estates field and community involvement to his new board position and role on the governance committee. He is also a board member for the American Cancer Society of Southwest Florida and volunteers at his church.

MELANIE PENNER

Melanie Penner began riding horses at the age of four and has been an avid horse owner and competitor ever since. After graduating college in 2013, Melanie worked as a barn manager in Naples and Wellington, Florida, before she and her husband built their own local boarding farm which she now operates. She will serve on the development committee.

BILL SWARTZ, DVM

Dr. Bill Swartz will return to the board after a brief one-year hiatus. He previously served for nine years and helped lead the campus expansion. Dr. Swartz enjoyed a 40-year career as a veterinarian owning hospitals in Virginia before retiring to Naples where he continues to enjoy doing relief work in various local animal hospitals. He is also a board member of Greater Naples Leadership. Dr. Swartz will apply his years of professional expertise and vast NTRC knowledge to the finance and development committees. You can see him in action working with the horses as a volunteer.

SAVE THE DATE



Volunteer Appreciation Hoedown



March 16, 2019
5:30 - 8:30 pm
NTRC Covered Arena

Because our volunteers mean so much to the staff, horses and participants, we have an evening just for you! Join us for a hoedown-style dinner in your honor and the always anticipated annual volunteer awards ceremony. This event is free for volunteers and their partners.

Hole Masters for Horses Corn Hole Tournament and Food Truck Party

April 7th, 2019
12:00 - 4:00 pm
NTRC Covered Arena

NTRC's new young professionals group, Young Professional Strides, invites you to the 2nd Annual Hole Masters for Horses corn hole tournament. This family-friendly event



is an open house format and includes a variety of food truck options and a raffle. Prizes and bragging rights are awarded to the winning team. There is a \$40 entry fee per team and a \$5 fee for those who wish to watch and learn.

Kentucky Derby Party

May 4, 2019
4:00 - 7:00 pm
NTRC Covered Arena

The wildly popular Kentucky Derby Party is back by popular demand and it's going to be better than ever under the leadership of our new chairperson Lee Pinto. Guests will enjoy hors d'oeuvres provided by our catering sponsor, Shula's, one complimentary Mint Julep and a cash bar. We will put the fun in fundraising when attendees can bid on the winning horses. A 50/50 purse will go to the winner and prizes will be awarded to Place and Show winners. Don't forget to come dressed to win Best Hat for the ladies and Crazy Pants for our gents. Tickets are \$75 per person. Let's get down and Derby!



Annual Volunteer Educational Series

March 12, April 22, July 16,
August 20, October 17, 2019
5:30 pm
NTRC Training Room

After successfully launching a new educational series last year to help our volunteers better understand the challenges and needs of our participants and the important role they play in their growth and development, we have earmarked this year's dates to continue this new effort. Save these dates and don't miss your chance to hear from the experts on topics and trends that will enhance your volunteer experience.



TO REGISTER OR LEARN MORE ABOUT NTRC EVENTS, FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK, VISIT NAPLESTHERAPEUTICRIDINGCENTER.ORG OR CALL 239-596-2988.



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #215
NAPLES, FL

Naples Therapeutic Riding Center
206 Ridge Drive, Naples FL 34108

NAPLESTHERAPEUTICRIDINGCENTER.ORG
info@ntrc.org (239) 596-2988

Our Volunteers Matter

Q: HOW DO VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTE TO NTRC'S MISSION?

A: In 2018, 385 people provided 16,332 volunteer service hours to help us everywhere from the boardroom to the barn. Our lessons and our riders depend on volunteer support. Our volunteers are more than mission critical!

Volunteer with us? Learn more and apply online.



Board of Directors

Anthony McClure, Esq., *President*;
William Villafranco, *Vice President*;
Harry Witt, *Treasurer*; James Dati, Esq.,
Secretary; Christy Daggett, Jason
Diefenthaler, Bonny Eads-Dery, OD,
Brian McNamara, Esq., Gregory Otis,
Annette Pakula, Melanie Penner,
Bill Swartz, DVM, Hillary Raines Wilson,
David Winebrenner

ABOUT NTRC

NTRC improves the lives of children and adults with special needs through therapeutic riding and equine-assisted programs. Volunteers and donors make it possible for NTRC to serve 700 participants each year. NTRC is funded by Naples Children & Education Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, and private donations. NTRC is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship Premier Accredited Center.

Volunteer Spotlight

LEE PINTO BRINGS HER PASSION FOR HORSES TO THE DERBY PARTY

I've been very blessed. I have healthy children and grandchildren. I feel compelled to give back. I like helping charities run successful fundraising events. I know what works and I've never been afraid to ask for money.

My affinity for those with special needs dates back to Chicago, when I served on the board of the Special Olympics. I was impressed by how hard the athletes tried and proud they were of their victories. After enjoying a career as a nurse and raising thoroughbred horses, I moved to Naples and got involved with Avow and the Naples Zoo. But I missed the horses.



After volunteering for Avow for nine years, I was looking for my next passion project. I heard about NTRC's collaboration with Avow on the children's bereavement program and was anxious to learn more. I came to the Barn Dance and saw firsthand how committed the staff was. I saw it as a perfect fit for me at this time in my life.

Having been to the Derby and hosted Derby parties in my home, being tapped to help bring back NTRC's Derby Party made good sense for my first volunteer effort. Having it at the NTRC campus will give attendees the chance to meet the horses who are the real heroes.

My goal is to reignite people who used to be involved and introduce people to the miracles that happen here. I hope to see the Derby Party become a sellout just like the Barn Dance. I am also anxious to volunteer with the horses. See you in the arena soon!