



Naples Therapeutic  
Riding Center

# Scene + Herd

DECEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER



## Executive Director Letter

BY MISSY LAMONT



From event planning to strategic development, we've been working tirelessly to create fun and engaging ways to support our riders, grow our mission and plan for the future.

Always looking for new avenues to garner support for our mission, we brought back a wildly successful Derby Party with all the fanfare. As season ended, we held our rider trophy presentation and had a little fundraising fun with a dunk tank. Then we held a Christmas in July event to collect donated items such as jewelry, art and figurines to be sold at the Rodeo Drive Estate Sales and our first-ever Holiday Luncheon & Boutique held this month.

After a year of planning with Chair Brigid Soldavini-Clapper, volunteers and sponsors, we just wrapped our most successful Barn Dance ever thanks to you! We hosted 455 gals and gents under the beautifully transformed arena, where sponsors Jimmy Brantley and Gary and Connie Sharpe set the bar high with \$50,000 live auction bids! The excitement grew when many guests raised their paddle after the Sharpe's announced a \$100,000 matching gift for the newly launched 2020 Vision Special Appeal. The appeal allows donors to donate \$19.97 a month in honor of our founding year. I am humbled by the efforts of so many who worked tirelessly planning an event of this scale and overwhelmed by your support.

In order to achieve continued success, we realize we must invest in staff and be strategic in our efforts to bring the power of horse therapy to more people in need. I was honored to receive a Harvard Club of Naples grant to attend Harvard's Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management in Boston and bring back what I learned to my work at NTRC. Our 15-person team also participated in two staff development training sessions and the Board honed our strategic plan ensuring this fundraising season will be our best.

Our community partners are taking notice and new opportunities are coming our way. I'm thrilled to share the news that we've been invited by the Community Foundation of Collier County to participate for the first time in Give Where You Live, a 24-hour online giving campaign backed by a generous matching grant. Read on for more about all the happenings we have in store for you.

Tally Ho!



# Donor Dollars at Work



*“NTRC has brought so much joy to the children at Valerie’s House. They have established a bond of trust with the horses. The children take great pride when caring for the horses, as they share their love, positive energy and compassion. They have gained self-esteem and leadership skills while working with the animals.”*

– Frances Bustamante,  
Valerie’s House Program  
Coordinator

## THERAPY HORSES HELP CHILDREN FROM VALERIE’S HOUSE GRIEVE

Through an expanded partnership with Valerie’s House, a nonprofit children’s grief center, more children processing the loss of a loved one are benefitting from time with our herd.

Valerie’s House, which recently expanded in Collier County with a new Naples home, is on a mission to ensure no child grieves alone. Their program model, to provide a safe, comfortable place for children to bond, grieve and heal together following the death of a family member, was the perfect fit for the collective healing that happens every day at NTRC. In their support groups children identify, express and process the trauma of losing a loved one using a variety of holistic services including art, music and pet therapy.

The NTRC bereavement program is a unique equine-facilitated learning program designed to help children identify and vocalize feelings needed to process grief in an intimate, fun therapeutic setting where the trust and comfort of our loving horses helps facilitate healing. Through the exercises, children deepen awareness of their feelings and bodily tension while boosting self-esteem.

Loss is difficult, especially for a child. Often, grieving children experience feelings of guilt, loneliness, and fear. During the weekly sessions, children are prompted to use creative visualization to personify the horse as the loved one they lost. In one activity, participants share things with their horses they may not have been able to tell their loved one now that they are gone. Children in particular respond to the many therapeutic benefits of art, so exercises include painting their grief story on their horse and creating a keepsake of their experience.

Equine-facilitated learning programs are offered at no cost to children as a result of donations and grant funding.



## Meet a Rider

TIME WITH OUR HERD TEACHES GRIEVING TAKES PATIENCE

My father died in 2017 after a long battle with cancer. We had a great relationship and spent a lot of time together. Even after his treatments, he would play basketball with me. He was the kind of father everyone wished they had. The hardest part of dealing with his death is him not being here. I am a totally different person now. It’s weird to think of him not knowing the person I’ve become.

Coming to Valerie’s House has helped give me words to how I am feeling. They made me feel that it is okay to cry. In group, you get to be around other kids experiencing loss. They make it fun just like this program at NTRC. At first, I was terrified of these giant animals, but after the first session, I relaxed. Horses are majestic. They give off good vibes and can feel your emotions. I vibed with Patty.

During one session, they told us to talk to our horse. While I brushed Patty, she sat their chilling, relaxing and listening to me vent about how no one showed up to my robotics club. She let me hug her that day. During another exercise, I had to take Patty up a bridge and weave her through cones. I think the program helped me realize I can be open with new people and to new experiences. They taught me patience and that I need to give myself time to grieve. I still have bad days, but with the help of Valerie’s House and now NTRC, I have the tools to get through it.



*“Horses can feel your emotions. I’m so relaxed around them now. They are so cool. My favorite part was grooming Patty, giving her love and petting her. I’m hoping to come back and volunteer now.”*

– Morgan Rettew





PHOTOSHOP HORSESHOE OUT





# Donor Spotlight

KENTUCKY DERBY BARN BURNER HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATION AND THE POWER OF THE UNDERDOG



*“ABLE Academy and NTRC work in the true spirit of collaboration on a number of projects. We are so grateful for the opportunities they afford our learners. It was our pleasure to return these winnings to NTRC so they can continue with their important work of improving the lives of those with special needs”*

*– Dr. Colleen Cornwall*

This year's newly returned Kentucky Derby Party proved to be a real barnburner. Lee Pinto, new NTRC board member and event chair, added a fun auction element that proved fruitful and had our heads turning! The nail bitter gave us an opportunity to shine a light on one of our treasured partners with a shared mission to serve those with unique abilities.

Horses from our dedicated herd along with adorable visiting miniatures were front and center with each horse representing a race horse slated to run at post time. It was an auction tied with a 50/50 raffle. The winner would walk away with half of the money raised through the horse auction. Donned in race silks and escorted by volunteers, the horses were paraded in front of the tent filled with 160 anxious bidders who raised \$26,000 in the horse auction alone!

At the end of the race, when Maximum Security crossed the finish line, a \$13,350 check was presented to the winners, longtime supporters Dick and Wilma Proctor. Moments later, for the first time in the Derby's 144-year history, the winning horse was disqualified and the check was turned over to a group of staff from ABLE Academy, our non-profit partner who provides intensive early intervention behavior therapy and therapeutic education to children with autism and other disabilities. Sporting their crazy pants and fabulous big hats Alicia Davis, Kim Raiser, Colleen and Josh Cornwall of ABLE Academy, who always champion for the underdog, pulled their money to bid on a miniature horse with low odds who had likely been underestimated by partygoers. Their generosity warmed our hearts with their surprise gift by donating their winnings back to NTRC!

Dr. Colleen Cornwall, Able Academy Executive Director said, “ABLE Academy and NTRC work in the true spirit of collaboration on a number of projects. We are so grateful for the opportunities they afford our learners. It was our pleasure to return these winnings to NTRC so they can continue with their important work of improving the lives of those with special needs.”

The evening concluded with dancing, dining, silent auction bidding and celebrating contest winners Matt Lamont, who won Best Crazy Pants, and Thema Lyon, who won Best Hat.

The event raised \$44,000 in total, in large part, due to our friends from Able Academy whose auction earnings will make a significant investment in our life-changing programs.



# SAVE THE DATE



## Rodeo Drive Estate Sales

Jan. 10, 2020 - 12pm to 6pm

Jan. 11, 2020 - 10am to 4pm

Naples Money Managers

Stop by at your leisure during this open house style shopping event. Skip the lines and retail madness while you enjoy refreshments and peruse the many beautiful donated items such as jewelry art and figurines. The cost is free to attend. 100% of the proceeds from your purchases will benefit NTRC. Shop til you drop!



## Give Where You Live Collier

February 19 - 20, 2020

Noon to Noon

[GiveWhereYouLiveCollier.org](http://GiveWhereYouLiveCollier.org)

NTRC is thrilled to be invited to benefit from Give Where You Live Collier, our region's 24-hour online giving challenge, organized by the Community Foundation of Collier County. During this 24-hours of local giving, every gift will be multiplied through a matching fund generously provided by the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation. The more money our donors help us raise, the larger percentage of the \$500,000 matching fund we will receive. Mark your calendars now, because we will need you to rally friends and family for NTRC to help meet our goal of raising \$7,000!



## Hoof & Hike Poker Run

January 19, 2020 at 10am

Picayune Strand State Forest -

The Belle Meade Tract

Event chair Lea Haven and her committee are devoted to our horses even after they retire. Whether you plan to hoof, hike or double down, there are plenty of ways to help raise funds at our annual Hoof & Hike Poker Run. Funds raised benefit the dozens of dedicated horses who served thousands of participants through our equine therapeutic activities. All proceeds fund the extraordinary care of NTRC's retired therapy horses. Tickets are \$50 per person. Hoof it, or hike it.

## Hole Masters for Horses

3rd Annual Corn Hole Tournament  
and Food Truck Party

February 2, 2020 to 11:00am

NTRC Covered Arena

The Young Professional Strides will host our family-friendly open house where we toss, tour and chow down with friends. Bags fly rain or shine at 11:15am. Complimentary beer is provided, and food and beverage is available for purchase. Prizes and bragging rights are awarded to the winning team. The cost to play in the tournament is \$25 per person or \$50 per team. Non-playing guests can join the fun and support their favorite team for \$20 per person donation.



## Kentucky Derby Party

May 2, 2020 to 4:00pm

Naples Therapeutic Riding Center

Lee Pinto had so much fun, she signed on to Chair her second Derby Party after its wildly successful return last year. Join us for hors d'oeuvres provided by our catering sponsor, Shula's, one complimentary Mint Julep and a cash bar and come ready to bid on your winning horses. A 50/50 purse will go to the winner



and prizes will also be awarded to Place and Show winners. Prizes will awarded for Best Hat for the ladies and Crazy Pants for our gents. Tickets are \$75 per person. Let's get down and Derby!

TO REGISTER OR LEARN MORE ABOUT NTRC EVENTS, FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK,  
VISIT [NAPLESTHERAPEUTICRIDINGCENTER.ORG](http://NAPLESTHERAPEUTICRIDINGCENTER.ORG) OR CALL 239-596-2988.



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*Thank you to our Barn Dance Sponsors  
for helping raise \$546,000!*

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## 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

### RIDER'S MOTHER GIVES BACK AS BARN DANCE SILENT AUCTION CHAIR

I grew up with a sense of giving back. My fundraising experience started when I planned my 7th grade dance. I worked on Wall Street in Manhattan which can be very self-involved. I wanted to do something more fulfilling, so I got involved with the Junior League of Bergen County helping with their fundraisers. It was very rewarding knowing my time was helping others. I've been hooked ever since.

Over the last 20 years, the charities I've supported have always served children and, in many cases, sick children providing everything from giant teddy bears and respite care to food for the homeless and medical research. Now, as the proud parent of an NTRC rider, I am thrilled to add horse therapy to the list.



*Chrissie Elmer*

What originally drew me to NTRC, was the ability to give my son Jackson, who as a result of being born 22-weeks premature experienced physical, emotional and social challenges, the chance to work with horses to combine physical and occupational therapy into one session. The horses made him more eager to come to therapy and work hard.

Over the last four years, my son has improved by leaps and bounds so I jumped at the chance to give back as a volunteer knowing they solely depend on fundraising and volunteers. I started by donating auction items and, this year, I was proud and humbled to serve as the Barn Dance Silent Auction Chair. It's a fun way to give back to a cause that has changed my son's life. The generosity and emotion under the arena were awe-inspiring.