



Naples Therapeutic
Riding Center

Scene + Herd

OCTOBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

Executive Director Letter

BY MISSY LAMONT



NTRC got back to basics this summer! We resumed our summer programming and hosted a sold-out summer camp for 45 kids. As we continue to think outside of the box to help those struggling with grief, trauma and pandemic stress, we launched a new collaboration with Naples Players that combined our unique strengths. In September, after a successful pilot with Avow Kids and a group of teachers, we officially launched a new four-week equine-facilitated psychotherapy program called *Expressive Theater Therapy with a Horse* – a first of its kind in the US!

In June, we hosted the *Gala of the Royal Horses* that featured beautiful horses from around the world performing traditional maneuvers from the battle field. With the help of 40 volunteers and 750 attendees, it raised \$7,000 and introduced NTRC to new friends.

We hosted a first-time *Veterans Fair and Open House*. The action-packed morning included a flag-raising ceremony, resource sharing and equine experiences. Special thanks to Marine Corps Veteran and Operation Strides participant, Joe Logrippo, for his leadership and support of our newly installed flag pole.

Lea Haven and I accepted leadership roles for *PATH International*, our accrediting organization. I am honored to serve as the Region 5 Representative and Lea is the Florida State Chair. We are hosting their *Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning Workshop and Test* at NTRC this month.

All of this growth makes this season's fundraisers more critical than ever. We are hoping to reach new donors and engage old friends in an exciting new event, *Reeling for Riders*. We are so thrilled for the return of the *Bootstrap Boogie Barn Dance* which is shaping up to be our best one yet with the help of chair, Davina Clark, and our new entertainment, the Ben Allen Band.

This season we will be working with our invaluable supporters to maximize the functionality of our current facility, expand programming and increase participation in our therapeutic programs through the planning phases of an exciting campus expansion that I can't wait to tell you about. Without you, none of this would be possible.

Tally Ho!



Donor Dollars at Work



“Our girls have learned a lot about themselves and how to be accountable to the horses. They are learning patience and how to pause when trauma is triggered.”

– Ana Stevenson,
Path2Freedom
Director and
Founder

PATH2FREEDOM PARTNERSHIP BRINGS EQUINE HEALING TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

NTRC has teamed up with a new partner, *Path2Freedom*, to help victims of trauma find peace. *Path2Freedom* is a local non-profit organization committed to offering hope and healing for child survivors of human trafficking by providing safe environments and long-term programs for recovery.

Residents in their newly opened Magnolia House, an evidence-based therapeutic safe home for adolescent girls rescued from sex trafficking, now come weekly for therapeutic riding lessons. The Magnolia program is a family-first model of care that engages, equips and empowers residents to claim freedom over the effects of trauma. The home features state-of-the-art services including home schooling, individualized curriculums, equine therapy and professional counseling.

Their treatment model relies on collaborating with existing service providers. Extending the supportive community beyond the Magnolia House fosters longevity, so that when girls graduate, the extended supportive community remains. Services such as equine experiences, cooking, fitness, and art classes are offered by partnering organizations, churches and businesses such as NTRC.

NTRC horses are helping these young survivors of trauma manage anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Horses are helping the girls open up in ways that traditional therapy can't. In addition to a riding experience, they are learning discipline and horse care – skills they can bring back with them to the horses who live on property at Magnolia House. Our horses help build their self-esteem and self-confidence, and we hope they inspire the girls to pursue their goals and aspirations.

Donor Spotlight

WESTWOOD INTERIOR CLEANING STEPS UP SUPPORT FOR BARN DANCE

My wife and I started Westwood Interior Cleaning over 25 years ago. It was one of several jobs I had while I was in the Air Force. I've had the pleasure of watching my business flourish over time. We now have divisions in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Being a 5th generation Floridian, I love supporting local organizations - particularly ones that serve children and Veterans.

I was introduced to NTRC six years ago by my accountant, Bridgid Soldavini-Clapper, who was serving as the Bootstrap Boogie Barn Dance Chair. I bought a table and became a sponsor. Through the Barn Dance event, I learned so much about the organization and how valuable it is to our community.

This year, when NTRC asked me to be the presenting sponsor at double our usual sponsorship, I decided to step up. Our business not only survived COVID, but thrived because of our new disinfecting services. Our clients invested more in cleaning and our sales grew 25%. I feel very fortunate to be able to give more to such a great cause.

I am so impressed every time I watch the video at the Barn Dance and hear how much children are impacted through their connection with a horse. I tear up every time. I love the event and the people who support it. In addition to giving through my business, I'm a sucker for an auction. One year, I came home with eight items. Then, I called the office afterwards, and offered to take whatever was left.

NTRC is a great cause doing a lot of great work. I know my financial support is making a big impact and touching a lot of people.



“I like giving to NTRC because you can see the direct effects of how the money is helping. I just wrote a check. The volunteers and staff are the ones who do the heavy lifting and give hours of their time.”

– Ryan Lolly,
Westwood
Interior
Cleaning

SPECIAL EVENTS



Reeling for Riders

October 9, 2021 | 7:00 am - 3:00 pm | NTRC

In partnership with the Young Professional Strides and event chair Jenn Williams, NTRC will host its first ever, catch-and-release fishing tournament. Reeling for Riders will bring anglers of all ages together for a fun (and competitive) day on the backwaters. Prizes will be awarded in the Guided, Open and Fly Divisions for total inches per boat of Redfish, Snook and Trout. Prizes also will be given to the individual with the largest catch of Redfish, Snook and Trout and a trashcan slam winner with the largest catch of Catfish, Ladyfish or Jack. There will be an awards dinner the evening of the tournament at NTRC at 7:00 pm. Raffle tickets will also be sold in advance and the winners will be announced at the dinner. Proceeds support the annual operating costs for NTRC's therapeutic riding and other equine-assisted activities and therapy programs. The cost is \$400 per boat or per team. Let's reel in the support for our riders!



Bootstrap Boogie Barn Dance

**November 13, 2021 | 5:30 pm
| NTRC**

Our signature fundraiser, the 16th Annual Bootstrap Boogie Barn Dance, is coming back on campus this fall. Event chair, Davina Clark, and her committee are bringing back all the fan favorites and a few exciting new additions! With the help of our title sponsor, Westwood Interior Cleaning, guests will enjoy live music with the Ben Allen Band while chowing down on tasty vittles, taking barn tours and supporting our wildly creative fundraising activities including the Pony Pie Bingo, Silent Auction, Golden Boot Raffle and a special cash call to support our future expansion. Proceeds support NTRC's annual operating costs. Can't make the event in person? Mobile bidding for the auction opens November 5th at 10:00am. Let's dance and dig deep for our riders.

Hoof & Hike Poker Run

January 16, 2022 | 10:00 am | Picayune Strand State Forest - 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. Come hoof or hike!



Kentucky Derby Party

May 7, 2022 | 4:00 pm | NTRC

Join us for hors d'oeuvres, one complimentary specialty drink and a cash bar. Come ready to bid on your winning horses at the Kentucky Derby Party. A 50/50 purse will go to the winner. Prizes will be awarded for Best Hat for the ladies and Crazy Pants for our gents. The Derby Party will not only be great fun, but will also help on-board new horses that will enable more riders in our programs to get the best care possible. Proceeds support NTRC's operating costs. Tickets are \$150 per person. Let's get down and Derby!



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

The Scene at NTRC



Meet a Rider

IMPROV AND RIDING HELPED A TEEN TACKLE CHALLENGES IN A FUN WAY

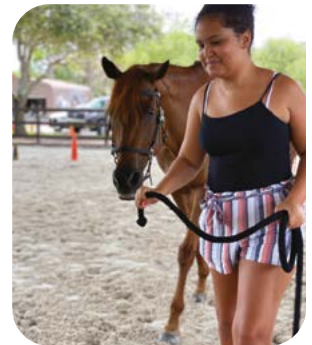
I love animals, so when we learned about NTRC, we thought it could help someone like me. I was diagnosed with Lyme disease. It can cause pain, headaches, nausea, and joint issues. I had extreme pain in my legs. I couldn't walk and used a wheelchair.

After a year on the waiting list, I was able to ride for over a year, but had to stop because of COVID. Riding was very special to me because I got to spend time with horses. Physical therapy was hard and boring. This is a much better way. I don't have many friends. Kids can be unkind. The horses aren't judgmental and don't care about my disability. I loved being around them.

Sadly, my legs got really bad during COVID. What we assumed was a lyme flareup, turned out to be a severe Chiari malformation – a structural defect in the brain – that was causing my inability to walk. I had two brain surgeries and missed a month of school. I couldn't ride while healing because of the risk of falling. This journey has been really hard, traumatic and lonely.

Finding activities that I could do despite my challenges was important. I love improv and acting. I've been doing it since I was little. I was really excited to learn about NTRC's new improv with horses, because it was a way to get back to doing something I love while waiting to ride again. During the sessions, we talked about our emotions and how they can change when we interact with horses while acting out feelings.

I think what NTRC does to help people with disabilities is amazing. I'm grateful for the opportunities they offer, and to spend time with horses. I walk with a limp now, and am no longer using a wheelchair. My doctors said I can ride again this fall. I will be working on improving my mobility, but am most excited to feel happy with my horse friends.



"Horses have a good energy. Being around them gives me a feeling of peace, calm and happiness."

– Gina Lawary

Program News

NEW PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUPS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

NTRC now has two new psychotherapy programs that are open to the public: a *Bereavement Program* and *Expressive Theater Therapy with a Horse*, an innovative, one-of-a-kind program.

NTRC has provided private psychotherapy groups for many years in collaboration with over a dozen community partner health and human services agencies. These new programs will allow more people struggling with their mental health to gain access to equine healing.

These equine-assisted services are customized to help individuals who are homeless, have been abused or neglected or witnessed violence. They can help those who have lost a loved one, endured trauma or been impacted by addiction and/or mental illness. Meeting a range of needs of at-risk populations, these groups help people who struggle with mental health and emotional well-being, and their families and/or caregivers.

The sessions partner our Clinical Manager and PATH Intl. Certified Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning with a horse to address individual psychotherapy goals. During the sessions, horses show participants how to build trust, grow self-confidence and develop communication and leadership skills. Horses help participants become aware of their emotions, and how they affect human interpersonal behaviors. The Equine Specialist interprets and invites participants to understand what the horse is trying to teach them.



The new sessions began in September and are available on Thursday evenings through May 2022. The four-week sessions are available for children and adults.



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ABOUT NTRC

NTRC improves the lives of children and adults with physical, social and mental health needs through therapeutic riding and equine-assisted programs. Volunteers and donors make it possible for NTRC to serve 800 participants each year. NTRC is funded by Naples Children & Education Foundation, The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, Clare Family Foundation, Clark Family Foundation, and private donations. NTRC is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship Premier Accredited Center (PATH Intl).

Volunteer Spotlight

COLLEGE-BOUND VOLUNTEER EARNS SCHOLARSHIP FOR HER SERVICE TO NTRC

I fell in love with horses during my first riding lesson when I was five years old. I continued to ride as a hunter and jumper until I was 16. Riding helped me develop life skills.

When I began doing community service in 8th grade, I knew NTRC was the perfect fit for me. For three years, I volunteered as a summer camp counselor where I provided riding instruction and horse care.



Natalie Bongirno

I loved helping children with special needs feel capable, accomplished and peaceful. Volunteering at NTRC has been the most fulfilling service activity of my high school career. Every moment enriched my life because I was in my happiest place – making kids feel great about themselves. Helping a child move from fear to confidence was awe inspiring and a great honor to facilitate.

I am beyond grateful and excited to be the recipient for the Deb PT scholarship. This scholarship, funded by a former NTRC volunteer through the Community Foundation, will allow me to focus more on my studies and less on finances, which I deeply appreciate.

I plan to study finance and economics and eventually earn my MBA. It is my dream to join a collegiate equestrian team. NTRC is a wonderful gift to our community. It provides invaluable therapy that is not offered elsewhere in SWFL. I am thankful for every hour I spent there and for this incredible scholarship.