

SOUNDS OF STIRRUPS 'N STRIDES

Quarterly Newsletter

December 2010

Volume 2 Issue #11

A Chat with Betty Gray

2010 is quickly drawing to a close and it has been a real rollercoaster year—lots of ups and downs. The poor economy has affected everyone. Non-profits are faced with fewer donors and grant monies being cut or non-existent. I am so proud of all of you who stepped up to the plate and helped us face each challenge. Many of you volunteered hours of your time to chair, set-up, and run fund raisers. In October and November it seemed as if we were ending one event and starting another. You helped us hit a home run for Stirrups 'n Strides. Grants applied for and fund raisers held produced in excess of \$25,000 and we are still waiting to hear from several other grants for which we applied. Read about the success of each event later in this newsletter.

It is always difficult to find the words to say Thank You but please know while there aren't words enough to express our gratitude, our thanks for all your help is never-the-less heartfelt.

The Fall Months have also been very busy on other fronts. All of our classes have been full and our students are progressing very well. Congratulations go out to Megan Cyr who became the Grand National Champion at the UPHA Exceptional Challenge Cup finals in Kansas City, just a week ago, riding Barney. Megan worked very hard and it paid off in a big way. Hopefully, next year more riders will qualify to go to the National Championships; it is a very exciting trip for our riders.

We took a couple of our horses to the Sportability event at the Ed Croskey Center on Oct. 1st and again with your help we were able to give 52 rides to people with disabilities. This was the 1st time for many of these people to experience the thrill of riding a horse.

Volunteers had a great time at our volunteer ride day on November 23rd and all agreed we should plan another one soon.

There are many items to put on your calendar, check the "Important Dates" section to make sure you have them all. I would like to remind you of a couple. There is still time to sign up for our Fund Raising Cruise on January 30th. Remember, Stirrups 'n Strides receive \$75 for every stateroom reserved in our group. The Challenge Show will be at The Florida Carriage Museum & Resort in Weirsdale again this year and will be held on February 12th. Spruce Creek is once again going to host a fund raising spaghetti dinner for us on February 26th.

And of course do not forget our Christmas Party on December 6th. We will supply turkey and ham and ask you to bring one or two of your favorite dishes to pass. We look forward to seeing you on Monday evening 6 pm at the Ag Center on Jacksonville Road or 200A. It will be in there new building this year. So once again as the Board of Directors and I thank you for all your help and wish you a Merry Healthy Christmas we invite you to put your foot in the stirrup and stride with us into the New Year.

Betty Gray

SIGN UP NOW FOR FUND RAISING CRUISE

Our seven night cruise sets sail on January 30th. The ship is the "Freedom of the Seas". The ship leaves from Port Canaveral. The first stop is at Cococay, Bahamas and on to St. Thomas and St. Maarten. So join us for a great time and raise money for S'NS at the same time. For complete information please contact Ridgemont Travel at 757-345-3335 and ask for Barbara

THE HORSES' CHRISTMAS LIST

To update you on our horses, there are currently 11 horses & 3 ponies in the program. Our newest addition Annie is quickly becoming a favorite with our youngest riders. Gizmo has been retired and gone to lead a life of luxury in Claremont. Knickee is in Colorado and doing very well now that she is away from the Florida Allergens. The horses who serve you so faithfully all year long would appreciate a Christmas Gift. They need halters, grooming equipment, fly masks, and of course treats. The most wonderful gift of all is to sponsor a horse for a year. You will get your name in the newsletter, have your name on the horse's stall and have pictures with your horse. The cost for a year's sponsorship is \$2000. Look for their Christmas stockings on the tree in the volunteer room & please help fill them with each horse's wishes.

FALL MONTHS PRODUCE GREAT FUND RAISERS & GRANTS

For the first time this year we held a golf tournament. It was Jim Olson's idea and as always Jim carried it through to be a huge success. He asked Laney McGivern to help him and together they managed a very successful event. It produced \$6500 for S'NS.

Maddy Graham out did herself pulling off a very successful Haunted House at The Florida Carriage Museum & Resort. On Friday more than 250 people went through and on Saturday over 400 people joined in the fun.

"From Seats to Saddles" silent auction featured 63 chairs and other painted items. They were on display for an entire week at the Paddock Mall. Thanks go to Fay Wright who stepped in when Theresa Grimes was unable to continue and kept things on track to raise over \$4500.

We once again had a successful yard sale on Oct. 23rd. Donated items brought in \$2700 to add to our coffers to help our students and riders

The donation box at Petro (Iron Skillet) restaurant has given us over \$300 in less than 4 months. If you are near 318 at the I-75 interchange stop in for a good meal and drop some change into the box. Every penny counts. Please support the people that support us.

We just heard! The Endowment Fund Committee, a program operated through the United Way of Marion County, gave us a \$10,000 grant. There were 24 applicants and they funded 12. We are most grateful that they understand the importance of Therapeutic Riding and our program.

CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 6TH

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at the New Ag Center Building on Jacksonville Road or 200A on December 6th. We will have a wonderful show by a magician, a raffle, and gifts for all. Santa also has the date on his calendar. Please plan to arrive by 6pm so we can begin eating by 6:30. Please bring your favorite dish to share. Ham, turkey and drinks will be furnished.

OMBUDSMAN APPOINTED BY BOARD

The dictionary explains that an Ombudsman has its derivation in Scandinavian Countries where the Legislature appointed a person to hear, report and investigate concerns by private citizens. The Board has asked Sandy Donaldson to be our version of an Ombudsman. We realize that we don't get a chance to talk with everyone. The Board has asked Sandy to fill the role of chatting with you and bringing to the Board any suggestions you might have to help us improve our program, or any problems or complaints you might have. Don't forget we'd love to hear what we are doing right as well. What ever you tell Sandy you may do so anonymously. Sandy volunteers on Wednesdays or you can always reach her on her cell phone 352-445-9103.

DONATION BOXES HELP RAISE FUNDS

If you have a place of business that you visit often, stop in and ask them if they would allow you to place a donation box at their cash register. If they agree all you have to do is from time to time stop by and collect the money. If you are interested contact Betty Gray and she will see you get set up with the box. You'd be surprised how quickly folks just dropping extra change can add up to extra funds for us.

VOLUNTEER EXTRODINAIRE

This edition of the newsletter takes the opportunity to salute Donna Messer. Donna moved from Philadelphia to South Florida when she was 14 years old and lived with her Dad. Even at this young age Donna had a need to help others. She went into the medical field as a nurses' aide and then later became an X-ray technician working with OBGYN patients and in pediatrics. Donna and her husband of 18 years, Eddie decided to make a move, their house sold quickly in 2007 and a friend suggested Marion County. Donna explains that she is a city girl but when they say a 4 acre farm in Citra they knew they were home. As all of you are aware Donna is a high energy person and needed something to do. Eddie spotted our ad in the Ocala Star Banner and the rest is history. Eddie comes and helps out on Thursdays when the Belleview High School comes. When does Donna come? Every single day that we ride. She wakes the horses up and feeds them, grooms them, works with the students, tacks the horses, yes and mucks out their stalls. Donna also can be found helping us out at our fundraisers. Donna and Eddie raise Zeebus. These miniature cows were the original sacred cows in India. The starting herd of one bull and 3 heifers has doubled in size with 4 little ones. Donna loves working at Stirrups 'n Strides and says she is inspired by Betty and Kathy Gray and all they have accomplished. Her favorite thing about Stirrups 'n Strides is the smiles on the student's faces. She wishes there were two of her so she could do more. So do we Donna! Half Pint Acres is the name of her farm where she has also made room for our former therapeutic horse Bourbon who she manages to ride several times a week. When asked if she was granted one wish for S'NS what would it be, she quickly answered that we could be more financially sound. Our wish would be for more volunteers like Donna who always ask what more they can do.

A CHAT WITH JODY SCHAIBLE

Q: Should we be doing anything special for our horse's hooves during this very dry weather?

A: Dry weather is very hard on hooves just as it is on people's hair and nails. Hooves grow slower this time of year but still need attention. Horses need a 3 point approach, Nutrition, Blood flow and moisture. One idea is to let your water tanks overflow a bit. When the horses come to drink their hooves get moisture at the same time. There are also preparations on the market that you can apply to their hooves to keep them moist. Remember the key is not just moisture. There is very little if any fresh grass at this time of year so be sure your horse is getting the proper nutrition. Check the horses' frog it should be plump. If it is hard and flat the hoof is not getting enough moisture. The cracking of the hoof can be a sign of dryness but it also can be a sign of excessive moisture. If you need Jody's services please call him at 352-361-8031. We are all grateful for what he does for S'NS. You can show your appreciation by calling him when you need a Farrier.

IMPORTANT DATES

December 6th – Christmas Party
January 30th – Fund Raising Cruise
February 12th – Challenge Show
February 26th – Spruce Creek Spaghetti Dinner

FINAL THOUGHT

Never deprive someone of hope; it might be all they have. – H. Jackson Brown, Jr. (writer)



4246 W. Hwy 318
Citra, Fl. 32113

Betty Gray (Executive Director)

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Mission Statement

To provide therapeutic horseback riding and driving to anyone with physical, mental or emotional challenges, and to improve the quality of life for these individuals with the opportunity for emotional, educational and physical growth through horsemanship and competition.

OUR SPONSORS OUR "ANGELS"

Ocala Breeders Feed Supply /Dunkin Donuts / Tommy's Bar-B-Que/ Seminole Feed / Mid West Hay/
Berrettini Feed Specialists/ Kesmarc Rehab Center/ Cardinal Hill Farm (Norm Casse) /Farriers: Jody Schaible,
Billy Bishop & Paul Bender/ Ocala Equine Hospital (Robert Bloomer, DVM) /North Marion Feed / Quail Roost
Foundation

Please accept my contribution to Stirrups 'n Strides Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc. (a Not-For-Profit Organization)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Donation of: \$ _____

(Please make checks payable to Stirrups 'n Strides) & send to 4246 W. Hwy 318, Citra, FL. 32113

Contributions from this newsletter will be used to underwrite specialized riding and arena equipment.