

Making Strides

July 2017
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A Word from Betty Gray, Executive Director



Ten Years Strong

Spring has flown by and now we are already well into summer! Where has the time gone?! Did everyone know that we are celebrating 10 years of providing therapeutic riding to our community? Believe it, we are now in our 11th year! What a milestone! We've watched our riders grow in confidence, skill and ability. We've developed

needed programs. We've worked hard. We've changed lives. We *Empower, Enrich & Inspire*. A sincere "**Thank you all so very much!**" to our community supporters, donors, volunteers, horses and riders! You do make dreams come true! Speaking of dreams coming true ...

Show Time!

After kicking off the year with the *Challenge Show* in January, *Area Special Olympics* in February and then *State Special Olympics* in March, our riders continued to strive to meet their competition goals at the *Citrus Cup Morgan Show* in April. They also compete on the *Marion Saddle Club Show* circuit going for Hi-Point ribbons at the end of the year!



We have 5 riders currently working towards going to the prestigious *American Royal Show* in Kansas City in November where they will compete against riders from all over the country. The United Professional Horsemen's Association (UPHA) puts

on the *Exceptional Challenge Cup* there for riders with disabilities. They also help by paying for stalls, classes and

fees, and providing assistance shipping our horses to Kansas City! In September, we will show at the *Summers End Show/ Ocala* where our riders qualify for the *American Royal Show/Kansas City*.

What a great organization! We so appreciate how much they do to make it possible for our riders to experience and benefit from competition.



Staff Updates

On a sad note, Gail McDaniel left us at the end of June. Gail has grown Stirrups 'n Strides so much in the short time she has been with us. Our social media (Facebook) following

 has grown immensely. Along with her strong marketing/communications skills and people skills, she has helped Stirrups 'n Strides move forward into the future in a variety of ways. Gail is loved by all! But she isn't going far, only to Newberry, and the Springhill Equine Veterinary Clinic. She looks forward to volunteering when she can and to keeping in touch with us. We wish Gail the best of luck in her new job!

Welcome to our new program assistant, Katie Fuller! Katie brings a new perspective, lots of horse experience with equestrian events & shows. Her office skills, organizational skills and life experience will certainly be an asset to our mission. Katie has an educational background in Psychology and other areas that will be beneficial to program development. She has lived locally in Ocala for many years and is well known in the horse community.

We are excited you are here! Welcome aboard, Katie!

As always, I can only express how proud I am of our "red shirt team"! Thank you! ~*Betty*

Quail Roost Arena – Making Strides

The covered arena project (donated by the Quail Roost Foundation) is moving forward and making great progress! Both the electric and water are installed thanks to Clay Electric, Jerry Moore, Wayne Gray (and the grandkids, too)! Building has also begun on the 9 stalls at the end of the arena. A big thanks to Clay Electric, the Quesnel Family, the Bruce Pintok family & friends for pitching in and making the stalls become a reality. Our goal is to have them ready this Fall! Watch our progress on the Stirrups ‘n Strides Facebook page.

Yet to come are the community room, feed room, tack room and, high priority, the restrooms! It is all coming together, but grant, sponsorship, donation and volunteer support is needed to move forward. We are working hard at applying for grants to secure resources for many aspects of this project. We do need your help - we’re looking for volunteers with construction and carpenter skills. Know anyone who wants to help with this exciting project? Please call Betty Gray: 352-427-3569.

As we watch the covered arena project come to life, we are reminded time and again how fortunate we are to live in a community that truly cares.

Program Development

Ridership continues to grow at regularly scheduled Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday classes. It is great to see the progress being made with return riders and new riders coming in!

Mental Health Programs

Last fall, growth included the addition of the Phoenix House program, a drug and alcohol rehab center in Citra. Riders come every Thursday morning and have continued through the summer. The Arnette House Program continues to be effective and a success, as well and will continue in the Fall.



We are expanding our Veteran’s program, Stirrups ‘n Stripes. Along with our continued partnership with Vets Helping Vets, we are entering a new contract with The Vines Hospital

in Ocala to continue to develop healing therapeutic riding programs for our Veterans being held on Fridays. We are very excited about both of these programs! For more information, please call Stacey Spence: 352-804-1600.

Celebrations

Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

The theme for this year’s celebration was “Stirrups ‘n Strides Volunteers are the Heart & Soul, Thank YOU for all you do”. And this is so true at Stirrups ‘n Strides!



Stirrups ‘n Strides celebrated volunteers during National Volunteer Week at the Grand Lakes RV & Golf Resort, Citra, FL.

The celebration included a tasty buffet luncheon, a huge theme cake, special punch, and a slide show that captured a variety of events and activities showcasing volunteers over the years. Festivities included drawings for theme baskets and prizes.



Sandy Donaldson and Wayne Gray received special recognition as “Outstanding Volunteer”

The volunteer event committee included Gail McDaniel, Anita Gossett, Elaine Richter, Sandi Kidwell, Fran Christman, Pat Lepak and Betty Gray. Speakers Betty Gray, executive director, Stacey Spence, board president and Cynthia Moody, PhD, College of Central Florida spoke to the group with heartfelt messages about appreciation and how important volunteering is to the mission of Stirrups ‘n Strides. Betty Gray herself was surprised to receive an “Our Hero” recognition for her unending drive and motivation.



End of the Year Party

We had a grand time at our End of the Year Party where riders, families and volunteers attended after classes. Friends and families gathered to cool off in the pool, participate in a scavenger hunt to win prizes and enjoy a pot luck spread of all kinds of good food brought in by all. One of the highlights of the event was the announcement of the Horse of the Year!

Poncho - Horse of the Year



Poncho was 4 years old when he came to us from the back woods of Bronson, donated by Kathleen Van Ryder and her family, he has been with us now for 6 years. Poncho is a beautiful chestnut & white Paint Quarter Horse cross who is loved by riders and volunteers alike. Poncho's story: When we met Poncho, his attitude was very laid back

with a sweet disposition. I asked the previous owners if they thought he would remain so quiet in a new environment after he put on some weight. This is what I was told: "I take him out coon hunting at night, in the dark and shoot my gun off of him and he never moves!" I knew then he would make a great horse for us one day and he has proven this to be true. We can count on Poncho to be a steady, dependable mount suitable for any rider level.

Poncho and Kathleen still make a great pair; he is her pride and joy! Special thanks to Kathleen for sharing Poncho with everyone here at Stirrups 'n Strides.



Poncho voted **Therapy Horse of the Year** by riders and volunteers.

Grants and Awards

Morning Star Grant - \$7,500

Amy Toman, volunteer and her family sponsor the Morning Star Grant, of which we were awarded \$7,500 this quarter! We are so grateful to be receiving this grant!

Quail Roost Foundation Sponsor Award - \$3000

Thank you Quail Roost for your continuing support! The covered arena project is a dream coming true!

Wells Fargo 2017 Community Connection - \$1,000

We are pleased to receive the Wells Fargo 2017 Community Connection award this April! We recently welcomed District Manager, Angie Clifton and Reddick Manager, Ange Banta to the farm for a great visit and rider demonstration by our own Kathy Gray on Stewart. We loved having them out! Wells Fargo is a great supporter and we look forward to working with them more in the very near future!

Out and About in the Community

Farmland Preservation Festival – \$177.

Summer Fun Horse Show – \$580.

Tack Shack Yard Sale – \$1,273.

Special thanks to Starbucks, Ocala (Melanie and Mimi) along with our many generous yard sale item donors! Everybody loves Starbucks and the raffle baskets bring a very enthusiastic response at events! The many donations we received help so much. Thank you!

From the Board

★ BOARD MEMBERS ★

Stacey Spence, President
Rebecca Moore, Comptroller
Sandy Donaldson, Secretary
Elaine Richter, Treasurer
Laney McGivern, Member
Jim McGivern, Member
George Sawyer, Member

Welcome to George Sawyer, volunteer and most recent board member appointment! Your expertise will be most valuable with helping us grow into the future. Thank you for joining, George!

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

July 16th Marion Saddle Club Show

July 17th – PATH State meeting hosted by MTRA

August 4th-6th – Region 5 PATH conference in Atlanta

August 19th – Marion Saddle Club Show

September 8th - Summers End Show, UPHA riders

September 16th – Volunteer Orientation

September 24th - Marion Saddle Club show

September 26th – Fall riding programs start

October 21 – Stirrups 'n Strides Yard Sale

November 4th-8th – American Royal in Kansas City

December 2nd - Jumbolair Fundraiser – Save the Date