

Quarterly
Newsletter
December 2017

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A Word from Betty Gray, Executive Director



What a year it has been for Stirrups 'n Strides! So many wonderful things have happened, the most recent (and biggest) being our annual fundraiser, Jammin' at Jumbolair Extravaganza. With so many changes to the event this year, we were all a little nervous as to how the evening would play out. However, everything turned out wonderfully and it was a magical experience for everyone! The event was a huge success and we were able to raise lots of money for our continued growth in to the future. With so many amazing sponsors, donations and volunteers, I simply can't thank everyone enough for all you do; especially our presenting sponsors Wells Fargo, Jumbolair, and New Millennium Realty's Brian Cox and Mary Luster. Our community, and the Stirrups 'n Strides family, are truly the best!

This year, we had 3 riders travel to Kansas City, Missouri to compete in the UPHA Exceptional Challenge Cup and the results were amazing!



Daniel won Grand Champion on Stewart in Level 1, Sean rode Nick to Reserve Grand Champion in Level 2, and Becky piloted Tex for Reserve Grand Champion in Level 4. Way to go riders! We are all so proud of you!

On a slightly less positive note, Hurricane Irma blasted through Marion County and our farm

and knocked a dozen trees, leaving quite a mess.



One large tree took out a portion of our new Quail Roost Arena and a smaller tree crushed our storage shed. Thankfully, none of the horses were injured and the barn and our home did not receive any damage. So many members of the community stepped in to help us

clean up tree debris, and the arena roof has been repaired thanks to the Phoenix House boys.

The fall season is usually a busy one, and this year was no exception. With our huge yard sale, the Belk coupon sale and the Micanopy Fall Festival, Stirrups 'n Strides is very involved in our community and we love getting our name out there! Volunteer Orientation was a great success as well, with over 80 people attending! I saw plenty of new

faces that have already been a great asset to our Stirrups 'n Strides organization. Thanks to everyone that came!

We also had another visit from Santa this year at the Christmas Party. He was able to speak with all the kids and hand out some goodies.

It's been an amazing year and I hope that 2018 will be even better. A huge 'Thank you' to everyone that helped make 2017 a success. From my family to yours, Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year! *-Betty*

A Night to Remember

This year, we wanted to give our annual fundraiser a bit of a facelift and a fresh, different feel, and even a new name. Thus, Jammin' at Jumbolair Extravaganza was born! The newly created fundraiser committee hired Mojo's Elite Catering Company and decided on a Prime Rib and Chicken



Marsala dinner. Mojo's has an excellent reputation and they certainly did not disappoint. Everyone was commenting on the amazing food! Another change this year was the choice of entertainment. Previously, Stirrups 'n Strides has had great live music, but this year we decided to have Carmichael

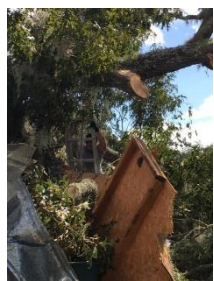
Music, from the Tampa Bay area, provide the entertainment. Ron Carmichael showed off his wonderful voice during dinner and played a fun variety of dancing music afterwards. Each year, we have the silent and Chinese auctions to raise money, but this year, we also added an exciting live auction. Local auctioneer Frank Gray of BidGray.com, did a great job getting the crowd into the action and raising over \$14,000 for Stirrups 'n Strides! We had some really unique items donated this year and we are so thankful for the continued support we receive year-after-year from our community.



As always, we have terrific sponsors and volunteers that allow us to put on such an amazing event. This year's fundraiser was certainly the most exciting thus far! We

will continue to build on our success to make next year even better!

Hurricane Irma came ashore in Florida in the



middle of September, and Hi-Time Farm, the home of Stirrups 'n Strides, was right in its path. Although the storm had weakened quite a bit, the property took quite a hit, with over a dozen trees coming down all over the farm. Some of the trees just fell in the

pastures and did do any structural damage to the property. Unfortunately, there was plenty of damage elsewhere: one tree fell on our new covered arena, ruining 2 sections of the roof, another tree crushed our storage shed behind the barn, and the small paddocks at the back of the farm had 2 big trees taking out the fence. Thankfully, there was no damage to the barn, nor the Gray's house, and all of the horses made it through without a scratch! We had some 'Hurricane clean-up days' and would like to thank the Ocala Rotary Club, Wells Fargo area managers, the University of Florida Equestrian Team and College of Liberal Arts & Science, and the boys from Phoenix House that are still helping every weekend! There remains quite a bit of tree debris to pick-up, and plenty of firewood to get us through the winter, but the farm looks better every day! A great big, "Thank you" to all those that have helped and continue to do so!

It's Show Time!



This year, we had 3 riders travel to Kansas City, MO for the UPHA Exceptional Challenge Cup Finals, and the results were astounding!

Daniel rode Stewart to become Grand Champion in level 1, Sean piloted Nick to Reserve Grand Champion in level 2, and Becky rode Tex to a Reserve Grand Champion in level 4! Betty and Kathy Gray took great care of the horses while there, and Kathy even handed out awards to all the riders. What an amazing week it was for all the riders! Stirrups 'n Strides would like to thank Wayne Gray for driving the horses out to Missouri and safely back to Florida. While the boss was away, everyone pitched in at the farm to make sure everything continued to run smoothly, and classes went on without missing a beat!

Everything is on Sale!

The fall season brought about the Stirrups 'n Strides annual yard sale, which was bigger than ever this year! We were absolutely



overflowing with donated items, including furniture, artwork, clothes, toys, Christmas decorations, and of course plenty of horse and farm supplies!! Our volunteers worked tirelessly to get organized and set up by the road, making everything look great! People were stopping by on Friday to shop before we even got all the items in place! With Bob Adler cooking up lunch on the grill, Saturday was a bit crazy with so many shopper's, and by the end of the day we were all exhausted. It was well worth it though as Stirrups 'n Strides made over \$3,300!

Out and About

Another fun activity that Stirrups 'n Strides took part in this year was the Micanopy Fall Festival. Each year, thousands and thousands of people descend upon the small town of Micanopy to shop



and visit local vendors and craftsmen. This year, Stirrups 'n Strides took advantage of the crowds and set up a booth hoping to

attract some new volunteers and supporters. Betty Gray put together a huge Starbucks gift basket, (with items donated from our favorite Starbucks store downtown Ocala!) to raffle off and the winner was extremely thrilled to receive it! Thanks for having us Micanopy; we will be back next year! Stirrups 'n Strides also worked with the Belk's Department store in Ocala, selling coupons to shoppers. We are able to keep the \$5 from the sale of each coupon and the shopper saved \$5 on their purchase. It's a win-win for everyone! Thank you Belk for inviting us to be a part of this, we really appreciate it!

Volunteer Orientation 2017

Stirrups 'n Strides is always looking for fresh new faces to help out with daily farm chores and special events. As the summer is drawing to an end, we begin to advertise in local papers and shops around town in the



hopes of generating some interest. Since we had a little over 80 people come to our Volunteer Orientation, we would say that it was a success! We were able to secure some wonderful new volunteers that have already turned out to be a wonderful asset to the Stirrups 'n Strides family!

It's Party Time

Santa and his Elf came to Hi-Time Farm to visit the riders and their families' at the annual Stirrups 'n Strides Christmas Party! Lazer delivered Santa and his bag of goodies just as everyone was finishing the wonderful pot-luck lunch. He listened to what the kids wanted for Christmas and even heard from a few adults. Overall, it was a wonderful and relaxing day for all those in attendance.



Final Note

After the excitement of Jammin at Jumbolair Extravaganza, things begin to slow down at the farm as we settle in for the holiday season. The last day of riding will be December 20, 2017 and we will resume classes on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

Things don't stay quiet for long as we have Special Olympics Local Games coming up January 13, 2018 here at the farm. Then on February 10, 2018, the Special Olympics Area Games will be held at The University of Florida Horse Teaching Unit with the State Games at The Grand Oaks Resort in Weirsdale on March 23-24, 2018.

At the beginning of April, the Citrus Cup Horse Show takes place in Newberry, Florida, just west of Gainesville. Our big spring event will be the Exceptional Challenge Cup, April 14 at Grand Oaks. Stirrups 'n Strides will need lots of extra volunteers for the Challenge Cup as we organize and coordinate this wonderful event. Please come lend a hand and support all the riders and their hard work!

Important Dates:

No riding classes 12/21/17 – 1/1/18

**Special Olympics
Coaches Training-January 7, 2018
Bakas Equestrian Center
11510 Whisper Lake Trail
Tampa, FL 33626**

**Special Olympics
Local Games- January 13, 2018
Hi-Time Farm
4246 W. Hwy 318
Citra, FL 32113**

**Special Olympics
Area Games- February 10, 2018
UF Horse Teaching Unit
1934 SW 63rd Ave
Gainesville, FL 32608**

**Special Olympics
State Games- March 23-24, 2018
Grand Oaks Resort
3000 Marion County Rd
Weirsdale, FL 32195**

**Citrus Cup Horse Show-April 5-8, 2018
Canterbury Showplace
23100 W. Newberry Rd.
Newberry, FL 32669**

**Exceptional Challenge Cup
Horse Show-April 14, 2018
Grand Oaks Resort
3000 Marion County Rd
Weirsdale, FL 32195**