

Upcoming Events

November Annual Appeal

December 29 Christmas in the Barn

Her Time to Shine

Nine-year-old Payton Lenhardt sits up straight and tall on a polka-dotted Arabian while occupational therapist Lisa Kafka walks alongside, leading her in sing-song rhymes. "Horse says neigh." Payton gives a melodious reply. "Neigh, neigh, neigh!"

The second of four children in her family, Payton has a brain injury from a car accident when she was two years old. She comes to Exceptional Equestrians each week for hippotherapy.

"With hippotherapy," her mom Erin remarks, "her posture is better, she is more vocal, and it's calming for her."

"Payton is highly sensory seeking," Erin explains. "Hippotherapy is able to incorporate so many uses of her senses—the smells, the feel of sitting on a moving horse, listening to Lisa and responding, singing, catching a ball. It's calming for her."

"And Exceptional Equestrians is great at adapting to each child's needs," Erin adds.

When Payton rides, her horse wears a Lycra



hood to keep its tempting mane out of Payton's "happy hands." On the front of her saddle she has a special mop-top surcingle

that satisfies her tactile needs.

Being able to ride year round has allowed Payton to make great progress. "She throws and catches a ball while riding, which is doing two things at once, a significant achievement," Erin notes. Another triumph is Payton crossing her midline. "She loves popping bubbles. She reaches across her midline to chase the bubbles, which is very difficult with a brain injury," Erin explains.

"It's hard when you have a child with a disability," Erin acknowledges. "You know she's not going to be the basketball star or the prom queen. So when she comes here, and we can see her making such great progress. As a parent, it's a source of pride. This is her moment to shine."

A fourth grader at Freedom Elementary, Peyton loves riding. At home when her mom asks her if she wants to go riding, she yells, "Yes!" and starts running for the door.

"We especially love the Horse Show when everyone comes to see her ride," says Erin. "Her brothers and sister have their things, and she has this."

From Lisa Kafka, Executive Director

September 12th was quite an evening at Exceptional Equestrians. There was cheering for chickens. There were photo shoots in the stables. Rodeo riders bedazzled, and friends danced in the barn.

We are pleased and grateful that Boots & Bling was a success. It was the first time we hosted our major annual fundraiser on our campus, and it brought many new people through our doors to see our impressive facility and realize the wonderful resource we have for the community.

We raised over \$48,000 to help kids and adults with disabilities with our equine therapy programs. On behalf of all the families we serve, I extend thanks to all who made Boots & Bling a success. We appreciate our guests who attended, our volunteers, including our board members and staff, and our sponsors, with special recognition to our major sponsors Cornerstone Foundation of Northeast Wisconsin and Schneider Foundation. Mark your calendar—next year's Boots & Bling is Saturday, September 24, 2016.





100 Women Who Care Green Bay in June gave \$7,700 to help children with disabilities get horseback therapies at Exceptional Equestrians. Pictured: Amy Johnson, left, presents the donation to Lisa Kafka.



EXCEPTIONAL EQUESTRIANS

Exceptional Equestrians is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization governed by a board of directors.

Our mission is to provide therapeutic equine assisted activities that promote physical health and development, communication, community integration, self esteem, and achievement of functional skills.



Our 17th Annual Horse Show August 29th was a day for our exceptional riders to take center stage in front of their family and friends. Approximately 250 people attended, including 46 Exceptional Equestrians riders. Pictured at top: Robert Bergner rides Dakota with side walkers Gail Brittnacher and Leo Skarlupka. Pictured above from left to right: Andrew Bergmann proudly shows his trophy as he rides Dakota with side walker Bob Jarvie; our wonderful team of event volunteers; and a beaming Teagan Quinn receives her trophy.

Wish List

Item	Cost
Sponsor a Rider	\$5,600
Sponsor a horse's annual care	\$3,500
Help heat our riding arena	\$1,500
Work saddle	\$850
Therapy saddle	\$500
Industrial hose reel and hose	\$450
Scholarship Sponsorship	\$350
Heavy duty vacuum cleaner	\$180
Rider safety belts	\$160
Under-saddle pad	\$125
Pay for Hay	\$75
Riding helmets	\$50-\$60
Fleet Farm gift card	any amount

You can help children and adults in need get horseback therapy. Thank you.

2015 Volunteer of the Year

Diane McInnis was named Exceptional Equestrians 2015 Volunteer of the Year at our annual Horse Show August 29th. Diane has given an extraordinary amount



of her time to help Exceptional Equestrians, volunteering countless hours each summer at the corn roast Exceptional Equestrians hosts at the Pink Flamingo softball tournament and at the food tent at the annual Horse Show.

As a pediatric physical therapist with Country Kids Pediatric Therapy Services, Diane sees firsthand how Exceptional Equestrians helps kids.

"Riding therapy offers a different kind of therapeutic input that really gets the body ready to work," she explains. But there is another important benefit, she adds. "Most of the kids I work with will be going to therapy for the duration of their childhood. Riding, in addition to its unique therapeutic benefits, gives kids something extra special that they look forward to, that their friends can relate to, and that they can be proud of."