

## 16th Annual Horse Show

Our annual Horse Show is Saturday, August 23, 2014, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Our exceptional riders take center stage to showcase their talents and accomplishments. The family event includes picnic lunch, kids games, and raffles, sponsored by Thrivent Financial, Bellin Health, Green Bay Eye Clinic, and Bodart Electric Service.

### Non-stop Smiling

At one glance, you can tell Megan Mielke is proud to be an equestrian. Her long brown hair is neatly braided under her riding helmet, and her riding breeches are spotless. You don't need a second glance to also see that she is delighted to be riding a horse.

"When she's here, she never stops smiling," her mother, Jeanne, tells us.

Happiness and confidence are gifts Megan gets from riding. "I feel free," Megan says. "Riding gives me a sense of accomplishment—that I can get that big animal to do what I say," she marvels. That confidence carries with her outside the arena too. At age 29, Megan holds jobs with Archetype in Green Bay and with UW Extension in Kewaunee.

Megan started therapies with Lisa Kafka at age one and was Lisa's very first hippotherapy rider. Almost 28 years later, she rides in our Adaptive Riding program.

"It's her special thing to be proud of when she talks to family and friends," says her father, Dave. "There are not a lot of opportunities like this for people with special needs," he adds, "to have something that is their own."



**Then and now** Megan Mielke is all smiles on the horse from the first days of hippotherapy at Country Kids to her Adaptive Riding lessons at Exceptional Equestrians

### From Lisa Kafka, Executive Director

I am happy to report that if the summer hippotherapy schedule is an indication of the impact of this treatment and the quality of care at EE, we have achieved that goal. Our services are in high demand. We are happy to help so many people.

We sometimes get questions from people unfamiliar with us about what sets EE apart from a farm that may offer therapeutic riding. Hippotherapy is the hallmark program that elevates the level of all of our services at Exceptional Equestrians.

Hippotherapy is an occupational, physical, or speech therapy treatment strategy provided by a licensed and specially trained therapist. We are the only program north of Madison with an American Hippotherapy Association–certified hippotherapy clinical specialist.

Therapeutic riding involves group activities and is conducted by our riding instructors. EE instructors are certified by the industry standard, PATH International, and enjoy the benefit of being under the direction of a licensed therapist as part of our comprehensive program.

For additional information on hippotherapy and/or therapeutic riding or any of the other programs at EE, please visit our Web site or call to schedule a tour.

## Teaching Special Kids

We are pleased to welcome Kerri Haertl on staff as Therapeutic Riding Instructor. With a background in Special Education and experience with horses, Kerri conducts our Therapeutic Riding groups for children of all ages with disabilities. The classes incorporate themed games, academic activities, and socialization.

Kerri has a master's degree in education from Viterbo University's reading specialist program and a bachelor's degree in special education from UW-Eau Claire.



*"Working with children with disabilities makes me believe that anything is possible."*

—Kerri Haertl,  
EE Therapeutic Riding Instructor



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

- Ellie Janssen - President**
- Laura Weber - Vice President**
- Nicole Gerend - Treasurer**
- Lisa Stark-Jones - Secretary**
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- Nancy Jacobe
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- Cindy Sleeman
- Anne Michalski
- Kevin Schommer
- Elizabeth Moberg-Wolff, MD \*
- Linda Kliebhan, PT \*
- \* Honorary Members

Our mission is to provide a family- and community-focused program for individuals with special needs with an emphasis on therapeutic equine-assisted activities.

## Inspired to Share our Story



Anne Michalski is a donor and an ambassador because of the impact she sees. "I see people getting stronger as they ride," she says. "Exceptional Equestrians is increasing the mobility of kids with disabilities. They provide a therapy benefit that I think people just don't realize." Anne was first convinced at the Grand Gala when she heard Maddie's story. "She has been able to avoid surgery," she remarks.

Connecting EE to grantmakers, bringing friends to fundraisers, and recruiting new volunteers (including herself and her husband, Mike) are some of the ways Anne helps. Through her employer, Thrivent Financial, she has linked us to avenues of support such as gift matching, sponsorships, and member-directed charitable outreach funds.

## Charitable Choices

We are pleased to announce that we are enrolled as a Thrivent Choice grants fund recipient. Members of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans can designate Exceptional Equestrians for their Choice Dollars. Help us spread the word to anyone you know who may be Thrivent members.



*Therapeutic riding groups feature a visit from local veterans (left) and superhero capes.*

## Going Above and Beyond

Volunteer Birgit Dierberg takes pride in her work at Exceptional Equestrians as a therapeutic riding horse leader. She is always looking for ways to help the program.



*Birgit works with horse Cody during a recent volunteer training session.*

A retired nurse, Birgit has service in her nature. Helping with horses for weekly groups and doing anything else that is needed, Birgit is always dependable. It's easy to see why Birgit was selected as Volunteer of the Year for 2013.

"I am a horse lover, so this is a great fit for me," she remarks. "I feel fortunate to be able to serve people so deserving by doing something about which I'm passionate."