



Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

May, 2019

Traveling with the minis!

It has been such fun seeing returning students and volunteers and welcoming new ones. Remember the first time doing something new? How you weren't sure you'd remember everything or do it right...and then you did just fine? Well, it's like that.

Lots going on with the mini ambassador program! The trailer conversion is almost complete, we're doing visits and Lucky is joining us. Biggest news is that the program has a forever name: Miracles' Little Horses Goodwill Ambassadors (formerly Mini Ambassador Program).

LHGA (as I'm sure it will come to be known) is evolving quickly, giving children and adults a wonderful direct experience with horses, and educating the public about these magnificent animals big and small. What a great way for people to learn about Miracles! The best is that sometimes our visits are especially therapeutic. We recently visited an adult day program. An upcoming visit that is a true honor for us is a visit to someone who wants to see horses one more time.

As one of the specialized four-person LHGA team (see?), I can say that I am so proud being a part of this elite team. Our team is developing skills and becoming more adroit at our duties with each visit we make. We had, however, a daunting challenge the other day that involved all four of us and pushed us almost to the brink.

Li'l Guy and Mr. Sea were safely secured back in the trailer, as were all the accoutrements of our trade (e.g., shovel, road apple picker, bucket). We gathered our personal belongings, took care of any last business and began to pile into the borrowed extended cab pickup truck from Jackie's daughter only to be stopped in our tracks...by a baby car seat. We even had two grandparents present! It took four of us about twenty minutes and a You-Tube "how-to" to even get it moved over enough for the two people in back to squish together. While we did the visit, Joe looked at another video and discovered the key. Next time this comes up, we'll be ready.

Karla Miller, Coordinator
Little Horses Goodwill Ambassadors



Mildred Chihak, Volunteer Coordinator

Miracles welcomes a new Volunteer Coordinator, Mildred Chihak, – and just in time to help with training and making sure there are adequate volunteers for Hippotherapy sessions and Therapeutic Riding classes.

Mildred has been around horses her whole life. She began taking riding lessons at a friend's barn in exchange for lessons. Then she began showing horses in a local riding club as well as in 4-H. Previously, Mildred has worked with older adults with dementia and individuals with disabilities.

Mildred obtained Bachelors degree in Social Work and Spanish from Loras College. Currently, she is working to obtain her Masters of Social Work with a concentration in gerontology at the University of Iowa.

Speaking of training – our next training session for horse-related volunteer positions will be May 18th. If you are interested, make sure you have put in a volunteer application (found on our website) and you will be notified with the details.

Thank you to the McIntyre Foundation

Miracles would like to thank the McIntyre Foundation for their continued support of our programs. They have made a significant donation again this year. The McIntyre Foundation is a private foundation started by the former chairman and son of the founder of United Fire Group, Scotty McIntyre. The foundation's support is truly appreciated!

Spring has Sprung here at Miracles in Motion!

The stable is alive with life and activity and, of course, some shedding! The herd's winter coats are almost a thing of the past and everyone seems to be enjoying the green grass and sunny days.

Classes/Sessions have gotten off to a great start thanks to our amazing instructors and volunteers. The positive, therapeutic connection between horse and rider is wonderful to see. Every riding session is full of smiles, happiness, peace and joy.

Maddie Lebben, Director of Operations



Left to right: Director of Operations, Maddie Lebben; MVECS's graduate, Kim Phillips; MVECS Coordinator, Ken Manley; MVECS graduate, Rodney Brewer; Past graduate and board member, TJ West; President of the Miracles Board, Lois James

Buckle Ceremony honors two graduates of the MVECS (Military Veterans Equine Corp) program

On Sunday, May 5th, Miracles was extremely proud to present MVECS Buckles to two of our distinguished Veteran students. This presentation included a "first" for MVECS. Our first FEMALE recipient!! Rodney Brewer and Kim Phillips both received the MVECS Buckle. Kim is our first female vet to receive this honor.

Our buckle program is for those who want to really "buckle" down and show their interest in horses. They are required to complete the class, volunteer at least 25 hours at the farm and pass an extensive written and practical test with a score of at least 95%. Much like a skills badge in the military, this is something that must be EARNED. Less than 1/3 of our students have actually earned the right to wear the buckle and they do so with pride.

Both of our students are Army vets. The buckles were presented by Ken Manley, founder of the MVECS program.