



Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

February 2021

From the Desk of the Director of Operations:

February has brought a new set of challenges to all of us and Miracles, too: snow and sub-zero temperatures. Both the herd and all the volunteers are managing through these weather obstacles. As we know from living in the Midwest, this will not last, but it feels as if it is dragging on forever.

I think about working as a team as that is what we are at Miracles. For you, it also could be at school, at home, at work, or where you might volunteer. Being part of a team has so many benefits. It helps build relationships and bonding with each other. A team encourages creativity and increases accountability among its members. A team complements strengths, builds trust as you work together on a project. It establishes strong bonds that will enable each member to endure and overcome conflicts by building trust. A team gives a sense of accomplishment and makes you proud of what you have done together. Small teams make up a company, a school, an organization, but every team is working toward a shared goal of the company or organization, which helps it prosper when members feel connected and motivated.

Miracles works because the team of volunteers, donors, and board members we have. We also could not make the progress on the 76-acre property without the teams from schools, companies, and groups that come out for workdays. Now that we are in a new year, please think about coming to Miracles for a workday and help strengthen your team. To set up a work day call 319.857.4141. We would appreciate the help! Even now we have inside work that can be done and when the weather breaks there will be much to do outside!

Stay safe and warm! Deb Leichsenring



Photos from past work days

Miracles Moment – Megan Conrad



I haven't been around horses in years, but I recently found an article about the impacts of equine-assisted therapy on veterans with PTSD. The article talked about how veterans had a very notable change in their emotions and how they formed positive connections with the horses each week that overlapped into their personal lives. As a psychology student, this sparked my interest as I have a love for horses and a passion for helping people. I knew I immediately wanted to be involved and began to dig into the world of horses interwoven with therapy. Through my exploration into this field of opportunities I discovered Miracles in Motion and was captivated by their mission and how they help children with disabilities and veterans alike feel empowered and stronger through horses. I knew I had to be a part of the action and immediately signed up. I am a new volunteer, so I've just recently met the herd and I'm starting to meet the other volunteers. Already the horses have been so welcoming and are showing me the ropes alongside the other volunteers. Whenever I'm there I feel calmer regardless of the weather or the work I'm doing. The horses are very peaceful to be around. During my time here, I'm hoping to get an inside look at this field and make a difference in the lives of these wonderful horses and hopefully the students soon.

The Masterson Method and Miracles

In May 2019, I learned techniques developed by Jim Masterson that changed our horses' lives by relaxing them, reducing pain, and lessening stiffness in real time. Surprisingly, my life also changed in ways I could not foresee. This article describes my use of the Masterson Method with the horses at Miracles. It is also a description of what happened to me as I practiced these techniques.

Miracles in Motion's Miraculous Herd comprises 16 to 18 retired horses who range in age from 12 to early 30s. While not as physically vigorous as in their former careers, the work at Miracles is physically and emotionally demanding. They hold stock-still for a child who is scared, adjust to kids with no core strength or whose muscles spasm, and stay steady with a veteran with PTSD.

Our horses must be "bomb-proof" and non-reactive to stimuli that might spook a horse not trained to expect the unexpected. It requires them to "read" their riders and know what they are saying when they can't speak. They stay calm so their riders can do the same.

The work is hard, and the herd is aging. Many have arthritis or disorders that cause them pain, tension, and discomfort. I was interested in finding ways to relieve that while developing a deeper relationship. In April 2019, trainer Erin Malloy (erin@emevents.com) came to assess our operations and practices. She introduced me to Masterson techniques with Aspen, a big Palomino.

She had me very lightly touch points along Aspen's neck in a line known as the Bladder Meridian. When I found a place where his eyes blinked (the primary indicator of pain that horses can't control or hide), I stayed there. Aspen relaxed, responded, and released. His head shyness abated, his pain and tension released, and I was hooked. I wanted to know more.

Jim Masterson describes his methods as "an integrated, multi-modality method of equine massage and body-work that allows the horse to release deep, accumulated pain and tension in muscles and connective tissue . . . by following the horse's responses, you are able to access that part of the horse's nervous system that allows it to release deep levels of tension in the connective tissues of key junctions that most affect and are most affected by work and performance."

You must notice and reduce tension, pain, and distraction in your own body or the horse is going to react as if there is a present danger. It's not easy to do. You work on the horse's time. If you rush it, nothing happens. Put away the watch and iPhone, settle in and shake off tension when I notice that the horse notices it in me.

The purpose is for the comfort of the horse to release tension, decrease pain, and improve movement and performance. It deepens our relationship. They know it and so do I.

Karla Miller, Horse Committee, Board Member

Updated Mission and Vision Statement

As part of a strategic planning process, the Miracles board updated the Mission and Vision statement to make them more inclusive and reflective of the services we provide. Here's the updated version:

Mission & Vision Statements

Mission: We foster personal achievement for persons facing challenges by providing diverse equestrian activities with therapeutic, educational and recreational benefits.

Vision: We empower those facing challenges by creating opportunities to connect with the energy and spirit of the horse.

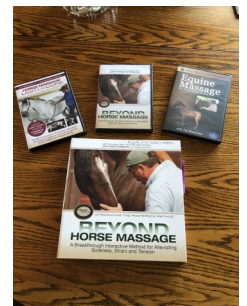
Core Values:

Compassion. We provide safe and ethical services for our students and horses. We are compassionate partners in our students' journey.

Inclusion. We accept the dignity of our students regardless of their background and respective needs. We value each of them.

Respect. We respect the individual needs of our students to empower their personal goals.

Achievement. We help students achieve their full potential and increase confidence, skills, and a sense of pride.



The end is in sight!

Property manager, Nick, has enlisted his dad to help with the interior work for the Upmier Arena addition. Our thanks to both Nick and his dad, Jeff Andeway (Andeway Construction), for all their hard work!

