



Premier sponsor for our 30th year

SOUTH SLOPE
PHONE INTERNET TELEVISION

Board President, Karla Miller, Welcomes All to a New Season at Miracles

Welcome to a brand-new season! We had such a successful 2017 that we look forward with great anticipation to 2018! New classes, events, and old and new volunteers are rearing to go! (Catch the horse reference?) Plus, we are celebrating Miracles' 30th Anniversary with our premier sponsor South Slope Cooperative Communications in North Liberty.

Last year was a rebuilding year for Miracles with new board members and newly hired part-time staff. We recruited Ashley Garretson to become our certified instructor with PATH International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship); held therapeutic riding and Hippotherapy classes in the summer and fall, and added a new class (Horse Grooming 101). We expanded services for veterans through a program called Military Veterans Equine Care Squad (MVECS), and we gave Miracles' property a facelift in preparation for our recertification as a Premier Therapeutic Riding Center with PATH.



A premier therapeutic riding center certification is the highest level of certification available through the international association that monitors therapeutic equine centers. Such a certification is rare and difficult to achieve. Miracles received the designation many years ago and has obtained recertification every five years since, meaning the organization meets or exceeds standards established by PATH, the association that sets forth best practices for therapeutic riding centers.

The standards cover every aspect of the program: administration (board and organizational structure, staff, policies and procedures; development and funding, financial accountability, records, etc.); grounds/property; buildings; safety policies and procedures; equipment; training; instructors; horse recruitment, qualifications, training, care and retirement; classes; medical clearance forms and parental/guardian permission forms; credentials of professionals who conduct Hippotherapy sessions, and some aspects I may have omitted. We also revamped our training manuals.

Why does Miracles want to be a premier therapeutic riding center? To assure ourselves, those who use our services, and communities at large that we are a legitimate center that goes above and beyond to ensure that our programs culminate in a safe and successful experience for our students, their families, staff, and volunteers. I am proud to report that we passed with flying colors!

The Miracles in Motion Board of Directors is unique. Board members for 2017 included Karla Miller, board president, Mary Chadwick, Jan Gorman, Lois James, Diana Harris, Joe Petta, John Mikelson, Amy McClure, and Lee Smith. We provided oversight, planning and accountability as all boards do. This past year, we rebuilt our base and we all came to know the agency better. Members of the board worked as team leaders, trainers, horse leaders, side-walkers, barn assistants, and horse transporters. And we worked on special projects.

And, yes, if you came out in the coldest and hottest weather every morning and night, you would see us working alongside other volunteers and the staff performing chores, and assisting the vet and farrier. We fed, groomed and exercised horses; mucked stalls; cleaned tack; swept and power-washed the barn and the arena; saw to repairs, and maintained the Miracles house. It worked well. We will continue to be involved as we move into the new year.

Staff members include: Ken Manley, Barn Manager, Maddie DeVore, Assistant Barn Manager and Haley Paulsen as Barn Assistant. Our current PATH-certified instructor is Ashley Garretson, with two other people, Maddie DeVore and Dabney Hofammann

as instructors-in-training. We have a couple other people ready to begin their instructor training. The staff is talented, experienced and brings many skills to their work. They received training and worked alongside a group of well-trained and dedicated volunteers.

We set up teams to be responsible for various parts of the program such as the Core Program Team, Exercise Team, Grooming Team, Horse Committee, Training Team, and non-horse-related teams to address property repair, maintenance, gardening, and special projects.

We are recruiting volunteers to help with the office, including coordination for classes and volunteers. And we maintain teams for every class and Hippotherapy session. Teams consisted of a team lead, horse leaders, side walkers, and barn assistants. The team concept was so useful that we will continue with it in 2018.

This report would not be complete without including two areas that were especially successful: events and fundraising (especially our year-end fundraising campaign). Mary Chadwick and Amy McClure spear-headed special events, with two most notable being “Boo in the Barn” for Halloween, and a wonderful holiday event co-sponsored with an Autism research team from the University of Iowa.

You can only imagine what we did decorating the grounds, arena, barn - and horses! These events were so much fun and so successful that we will hold them again next year.

We want to reach out to people who would like to volunteer with us, and to potential students and their families in 2018. We also will look to past, current and potential donors to help us make all this financially possible; from keeping the lights on, feeding and caring for our horses, training volunteers and instructors, and providing classes and events.

We feel incredible enthusiasm as we go into 2018! We look forward to continuing to witness each of the successes of Miracles’ students. We love working on 76 acres of gorgeous farmland with our Miraculous Herd of 15 horses. And, we have a great time working alongside our super volunteers.

If you like fresh air, the incomparable smells and feel of horses, the companionship of incredible people, invigorating hard work, and witnessing nothing short of miracles through the achievements of our students, or you can provide the means to make it all happen by joining us in 2018. We’re all waiting for you!

Karla Miller, Board President, Interim Administrator (including Volunteer Coordination Supervision), and Proud Horse Leader



New loafing shed completed on south side of hay barn

We ask a lot of our 15 horses; all are seniors, and we want them to have the very best care we can provide. During inclement weather, the horses currently congregate under the overhang to the arena or in the two loafing sheds that we have (one for the miniatures and one for the big guys). Now we have an additional option for their shelter. Ken Johnson Construction just completed the construction of a loafing shed on the south side of the hay barn. Our thanks to Jean Walker and Nelson Manufacturing Company for donations designated towards this project. Our thanks also to Ken Johnson for working with us on the design and favorable pricing.

What’s Jet thinking?

If only we knew what was going on in their minds! Mail or email me your thoughts and I’ll publish some of the responses in our March newsletter! loisjames@gmail.com

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