



Premier sponsor for our 30<sup>th</sup> year

**SOUTH SLOPE**  
PHONE INTERNET TELEVISION

## Miracles in Motion celebrates 30 years of service to Eastern Iowa community!

The minis greeted attendees at our 30<sup>th</sup> Gala held September 13<sup>th</sup> at the South Slope Community Center. It was a time for past and present participants (including the first Miracles student, Andy), donors, sponsors, volunteers, families, veterans, board members, instructors and community members to celebrate 30 years of providing therapeutic riding instruction to children and adults with special needs. Welcoming remarks were made by current board president, Lois James, acting executive director, Karla Miller, and South Slope CEO, Chuck Deisbeck. Long time volunteer, Jackie Wallace, shared the history of the organization – see her remarks elsewhere in this newsletter. A parent of a long-time student, Wendy Trom, spoke about the positive impact Miracles has had on her son and her entire family, providing perspective on the work we do.

There were over 20 silent auction items including many hand-crafted items - a baby quilt, horse-themed tote and rocking horse; original artwork and pottery; tickets to a Cubs game as well as tickets to the Cedar Rapids Kernels and Cedar Rapids Roughriders, wine and a wine rack and several themed baskets.

Fireside Winery did a wine tasting, Munson Electric donated Kathy's Pies and Something to Share from Conrad donated the table decorations. In addition to our premier sponsor, South Slope, other sponsors included the University of Iowa Community Credit Union, Circle K Horse & RV Camp and Centro. A calendar featuring photos of our therapy horses was sponsored by NuCara Pharmacy. James Investment Group matched donations given that evening.

Our thanks to everyone's hard work and participation to make the evening a success!



**Your Community  
Your Credit Union**



**Circle K Horse & RV  
Camp**

[www.circlekhorsecamp.com](http://www.circlekhorsecamp.com)



# Photos from the 30th Celebration



Little Guy greeted folks as they arrived.



Kudos to Mary Chadwick & her mom, JoAnn Klein for all their work.



Diana Harris helped with the silent auction



Joe Petta & Ken Manley along with Karla Miller & Jackie Wallace were in charge of Little Guy & Mr. Sea, our miniature ambassadors.



Our thanks to Wendy Trom for sharing what Miracles has meant for her family.

Lois James & Jeremy James from James Investment Group matched the evenings donations.



## Hello, Supporters of Miracles!

Just because we are conducting Fall II classes, our final session for the season, doesn't mean that the work stops on the farm. The horses need to be trained and exercised, vet and farrier visits continue, and repairs are made all around the farm. Also, without grass, our twice-daily chores will include hauling hay to our herd as their beloved grass goes into hibernation.

Our classes this year went well. We saw the students gain in strength, skill, and confidence. They developed a good rapport with their instructors, therapists, and horse teams. More than once, kids broke into giggles, and sometimes gales of contagious laughter. The Miraculous Herd delivered in a big way. Such gentle giants! Oh, and we introduced Lucky and Li'l Guy into the working herd for classes. If you think you've seen the cutest thing in the world, I must tell you, watching little kids ride small, miniature horses takes the cake!

Some of the highlights of September included Miracles' 30th Anniversary gala with Mr. Sea and Li'l Guy in attendance; the mini ambassadors were the stars of a United Methodist Church Street Party in Coralville; and finally, our little ambassadors featured prominently at a benefit held at South Slope for one of our students, Grayson, and his family, who have been challenged by a rare and advanced brain cancer. Until recently, Grayson rode the big horses. He loves everything horses and loved seeing the minis at his big event. The entire day was well organized, a lot of fun, and an enormous success.



Winter is coming. It was cold and rainy this week at Miracles but we soldiered on through the weather when it was safe to do so. Of course, the dream remains of some angel (or angels) winterizing the arena so we can operate nearly year-round. Ever optimistic, sometimes dreams do turn into miracles, sometimes more frequently than you might think! We need insulation in the arena, weather-proofing for the windows and doors, and a heater or two hung high in the corners to keep it warm . . . Hmmm? Perhaps you are one of those angels? Let us know if this is a project you could wrap your arms around.

Finally, this year will be a spectacular "Boo in the Barn" event on October 27th. Kids or not, come on out and see this unbelievable event. You will NEVER guess what costumes the minis have chosen. See you then!

Karla Miller, Acting Director/Board Member  
Proud Leader of the Mini Ambassador Program

## It's that time of year again – Oktoberfest!



And once again, Miracles in Motion has provided volunteers to help make Oktoberfest a success. Our thanks to Becky Tranter, for making sure all the positions are filled and everyone knows what to do (otherwise known as "herding cats"), as well as Colleen Brems who coordinated for Miracles.

## University of Iowa Retirees Association (UIRA) visits Miracles in Motion

UIRA attendees had sunny skies, a breeze and high temperatures, for a tour of the farm on September 20th. With the high heat, some of the horses were delighted to come into the arena and greet the visitors. Karla Miller, acting executive director, and Lois James, board president, talked about what happens at Miracles, including the truly miraculous things that develop for Miracles students, like better motor skills, better muscle tone, and the calming effect that the horses can have. Attendees saw the indoor arena, barn, and tack room. They also experienced the sensory trail, though without the sound of hooves on the wooden bridge that riders at Miracles hear. They did play the xylophone and ring bells, as the Miracles riders do, though did not walk up and down the small moguls that give riders the challenge of leaning forward or backward as the horse goes up or down. We're glad they were able to visit and hope to welcome some back as volunteers!



University of Iowa Retirees visit

Miracles



Thanks to Leash on Life for sponsoring our newsletter. You can visit them on their website at [www.leashonlife.net](http://www.leashonlife.net)

Mediacom Newsleaders interviews  
Lois James about Boo at the Barn

If you would like to see the video, here is the link:  
<https://youtu.be/S99TVdY7nfs>



# 2ND ANNUAL BOO AT THE BARN

**OCTOBER 27TH 12 PM TO 4 PM**  
**Silent Auction (Fund Scholarships) Closeout 3 pm**  
**Raffle Drawing 3:15 pm**

**TRICK-OR-TREAT THRU THE SPOOKY STABLES**  
 (COSTUMES ENCOURAGED)

**EERIE INFLATABLES**      **AMY'S WALKING WITCHES**

**CREEPY CRAFTS & ACTIVITIES**      **FOOD**      **VISIT THE MINI'S**

**GHOULISH GAMES**      **PHOTO BOOTH**      **FACEPAINTING**

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC & FREE ADMISSION**

**Miracles in Motion 2049 120th St NW Swisher, IA 52338**

## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS








**Chris and Kiley Graw**








## SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

























## Jackie Wallace recounts the history of Miracles in Motion at our 30<sup>th</sup> celebration

Miracles in Motion was born from the experiences of a mother, Stephanie Gilbertson, giving pony rides to her autistic daughter, Andy, and noticing that her focus improved when she was on a horse. Stephanie boarded her two equines, Fenwick and Bucky, at Verne Upmier Stables and Verne guaranteed that Andy would always have a horse to ride.

Sandy Greer, a certified therapeutic riding instructor, helped start the program, beginning with six riders in the fall of 1988 riding at the Cedar Rapids Horseman's Club. Members of the Horseman's Club became some of the first board members and active volunteers.

The program held classes for the next several years at borrowed facilities including Upmier Stables, Dr. Darrell Winterowd's barn and arena in Ely, a stable outside Solon, and Mosica Arabian Stables in North Liberty. Miracles horses were Buck and Leo (purchased by Civitan) plus many other horses loaned to us. Classes were held up to twice a week during the summer months. Horses and equipment needed to be transported for each class session.

A benefactor purchased the current Swisher property and after extensive fundraising and the generosity of the community, Miracles purchased the ten-acre farm. Miracles in Motion took off at a gallop to expand the number of students who could benefit from riding and contact with our horses.

In 1992 we served 35 students, in 1994 with the new property we had approximately 100 students, seven horses, five instructors, and more than 150 volunteers. Eventually we peaked at 200 students and an additional 200 group visitors who experienced horses from the ground. Running the program took 8,000 to 10,000 volunteer hours per year. Americorps volunteers helped round out those hours for several years, performing property maintenance, building fences, and volunteering in classes. One year eleven Americorps volunteers built 7060 feet of fence to create four new pastures and a riding trail. The program was run entirely by volunteers until about 2002.

Miracles in Motion was honored by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, our accreditation organization, for Regional Horse of the Year, Fenwick, and Regional Volunteers of the Year. Gerry Friaf (volunteer, board member, donor, etc.) and Kate Hladky (volunteer, instructor, board member, donor, etc.) We hosted the Regional NARHA Conference two consecutive years (1997). We held Ride-a-thons, golf outings, and 5K walk/run events, and did presentations about the program to many, many community organizations.

Sue Bock was hired as the first program director. Our activities grew over the years she served. We held classes four nights a week, Saturday morning, and day programs that included Leg Up for at-risk youth, driving, and group visits for special education classes and group homes. During this time we prided ourselves on the motto "Everyone Rides." Grants and donations helped sponsor both student and horse expenses so families could pay what they were able.

We purchased 66 more acres. With help from grants and service organizations and donors, the Port-o-Potty was replaced by an accessible bathroom; Variety Club contributed toward paving the upper parking lot, adding five more stalls to the barn and doubling the size of the tack room, expanding the indoor arena, and adding new and additional fencing. An addition was added to the back of the house for the bathroom and an office. Compost bins were built. The sensory trail, pavilion, and a larger outdoor arena replaced one of our pastures. A hay and storage barn, loafing sheds and extended roofs for shelter were built. Some of the many organizations that have contributed include the Cedar Rapids Corvette Club, Civitan (purchased our first MIM-owned horse), Pilot Club (Chief Pilot), Ride to the River motorcycle club, and the McIntyre Foundation.

More recently we have had Business Leadership classes and a program for veterans run by Ken Manley.

But our Number 1 accomplishments are always what the students gain: strength, greater mobility, talking, focus, core strength, self-confidence, independent riding, and "holding up her head to the count of 30".

We have had many crises as well: shortage of volunteers, shortage of instructors, shortage of horses, and, of course, shortage of money. There was a time when I was meeting the farrier at the farm and made sure I took my checkbook in case we didn't have the money to pay him. These crises, however, became hard-earned successes because of the dedication of volunteers and board members, a small army of people who strongly believe in the mission of Miracles: to improve the lives of persons with life challenges through contact and activities with horses and volunteers.

This poem exemplifies to me what Miracles means to those we serve. Jackie Wallace

### Poem

I saw a child who couldn't walk  
Sit on a horse, laugh and talk;  
Then ride it through a field of daisies  
And yet he could not walk unaided.

I saw a child no legs below  
Sit on a horse and make it go  
Through wood and green  
and places he'd never been  
To sit and stare except from a chair.

I saw a child who could only crawl  
Mount a horse and sit up tall;  
Then put it through degrees of paces  
And laugh at the wonder in their faces.

I saw a child born into strife  
Take up and hold the reins of life;  
And that same child was heard to say,  
"Thank God for showing me the way!"

