



Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

September 2020

Construction will start in less than a month!

This year has been difficult because we haven't been able to hold in-person classes, our main source of income. Nevertheless, it's an exciting time at Miracles. We have used this time to identify property-improvement projects that we believe will have a big impact when our programs resume. The plans have been finalized for an addition to the west end of the arena. In addition, we are erecting sides on the pavilion. Construction should start within a month, weather permitting, and we have been actively fundraising to complete these projects.

The addition to the entrance area of our arena will tie into a new enclosed parent viewing area inside the existing arena. A new front door to the arena will provide a much more serene transition area for meeting the volunteers, instructor, being fitted for a helmet, or using the new handicapped-accessible bathroom. Also, we are building a quiet room/therapy room if it is all "too much" and a time-out would be helpful.

If you would like to see plans and learn more about the project, head over to our website. If you would like to help us hit our fundraising target (we are within \$15,000 of our goal!), you can donate on our website: www.miraclesinmotion.com



Naming of Upmier Arena

As part of Blaze a Path Forward, we are pleased to announce that our arena will now be known as the Upmier Arena! Verne Upmier was a well-known horse person in the Eastern Iowa area and was instrumental in the early days of Miracles in Motion. It seems fitting that Miracles pay tribute to a local pioneer who was so instrumental in starting and supporting therapeutic riding. We would like to thank Verne's nephew, Steve Hauser, for his support of Miracles in memory of Verne.

In 2003 Verne was honored at the Kirkwood Horse Expo. Jackie Wallace, a long-time Miracles volunteer, shared a tribute from Miracles, which we are including in this newsletter.

If you are interested in donating to our new "front door" to the arena, head over to our website to see plans and a video describing the project.



Online classes teach basics of horse care and behavior

Miracles online zoom classes have been covering everything that happens before one of our therapy horses comes into the arena for therapeutic riding lessons. The first four weeks showed students how to prepare the stall, go safely up to a horse, put on a halter, and lead the horse from the field to the stall. The next sessions were on grooming and getting the horse ready for putting on the saddle. The third four weeks were on tacking the horse for class and learning about the different types of saddles and bits. The final sessions will show what happens when horses are brought into the arena, lead around and introduced to any props that will be used in classes, and positioned at the mounting platform.

The program was developed by our PATH instructor, Diana Harris – on left, who is also teaching the classes along with instructor-in-training, Nikole Tutton – on right.

Following completion of the haltering and grooming sessions, students are invited to the farm one at a time to practice what they have learned. You can see how much Diamond is enjoying his grooming session with Nora!

Meet Brett and Raven, two of Miracles therapy horses

Check out this video of one of the Miracles volunteers reading letters to Brett and Raven and PATH instructor, Diana Harris, answering questions about these two therapy horses. <https://vimeo.com/456722273>



Miracles Moment with Volunteer Audrey

Back in March I was looking for ways to get involved in my community here around Iowa City. I hadn't done too much volunteering since I graduated high school a few years ago. I was looking online for different opportunities, and I came across the Miracles page. It seemed like a such a unique organization, and I wanted to be a part of it.

I came to Miracles with essentially no knowledge of horses, but since I started here, I have learned so much and have really appreciated everyone who has taken the time to help teach me. I started right before Covid hit hard in the US so unfortunately I have not been able to experience face-to-face classes, but I can't wait until the day everyone is able to come back!

My experience at Miracles has almost been therapeutic for me, as well. As I said, when I started Covid was just breaking out, my classes were unexpectedly transferring online, I was working in a hospital, and we were going into quarantine. Being able to interact with all the Miracles horses and volunteers was definitely a stress reliever for me and gave me something to look forward to!



Jet is adopted!

Our thanks to Tracy Kolosik for adopting Jet through Miracles in Motion Adopt-a-Horse program. In Tracy's words:

"I 'adopted' Jet through the Adopt-a-Horse program because he is such a gentle, willing, and responsive therapy horse. Having had the opportunity to hear the excitement in the voices of participants when they were getting ready to ride Jet, to see Jet perform during classes and sessions, and then to watch the interaction between rider and horse, led me to want to support Jet as he continues to contribute to the mission of Miracles in Motion."

Jerry Mohwinkle adopts our new horse, Memphis

Miracles thanks Jerry for not only adopting Memphis, but spending time weekly to help Memphis adapt to the "Miracles way"! Here's how he describes working with Memphis:

"Memphis reminds me in many ways of my Horse 'Red'. Handsome fellows, but when first meeting Memphis he was a bit of challenge much like Red, till we got to know each other. Memphis would not be caught to be haltered. He would not run away in the pasture but only keep his distance - keeping another horse between us - so as not to be reachable. It has been 14 weeks now and he is now working well in the Arena, even to the point where I have unclipped him only to find him following me and honoring the 'whoa' and 'walk-on' commands. Diana, our horse committee chair, shared that he had been an excellent trail horse and knowing this has helped a lot in understanding him and getting him ready for classes next spring. (He likes to follow.) He is quick of step, resembling our late horse Scooter. He freezes in mid-stride on a whoa command, where just moving ahead another step to square up would be fine. With his youthful energy and willingness to work, I think he will be a great addition to the herd and our classes."



Large donation of blankets, pads & tack

Our thanks to all those who donated the remains of a tack sale from a clinic at Bent Creek Farm near Solon. Also thanks to Jean Walker, who alerted us to the potential donation and Diana, Sarah & Jackie who sorted through the large number of items.

VERNE UPMIER TRIBUTE

from

MIRACLES IN MOTION

Kirkwood Horse Expo

August 23, 2003

If you are attending this horse expo today, you likely have an interest or a passion for the horse. But few of us here can spend as much of our time with horses as we would like.

It is the fortunate horseperson who can step outside the house in the morning and be at work: feeding, grooming, tacking up, vetting, shoeing, riding, and training horses.

Verne Upmier has lived and worked with horses all his life. Along the way he has shared his love, knowledge, and respect for horses with others. Nearly everyone in this area who has been in the "horse world" has met someone who rode or bought a first horse from Verne. It says a lot about a man who has been a horse trader and lived and worked in the same area all his life.

Hundreds of children have experienced horses and hay rides at Upmier Stable, but about 15 years ago one special rider made a different impact on Verne: Andi wasn't always connected with her world the way other children were but it was obvious she loved her pony rides! Verne vowed she would always have a pony to ride at his place. The idea grew; and with Verne's quiet but steady support, Miracles in Motion was born.

In its early years, Verne helped keep the program alive in countless ways: finding horses and ponies suitable for the riders, boarding the horses, providing Upmier Stables as a site for classes, equipment storage, and the annual Ride-a-thon, and serving on the Miracles Board of Directors from its beginning to the present day. In horseman's terms, to Miracles in Motion, Verne was the foundation stock. Without his support it is unlikely the fledgling program would have survived to grow into the expanded program it is today. It was Verne's unselfish sharing of what he had in life that we are honoring today.

From six riders on borrowed horses the first year, Miracles in Motion now serves over 100 children and adults each year. They benefit physically, mentally, socially, and recreationally from weekly interaction with one of the most exciting animals on earth.

We've all heard the quote "The best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse." (Winston Churchill/Lord Palmerston) Sir Winston Churchill also said, "I say to parents, . . . 'Don't give your son money. As far as you can afford it, give him horses.' No one ever came to grief – except honourable grief – through riding horses. No hour of life is lost that is spent in the saddle."

This, too, applies to Verne Upmier: "If you have it, it is for life. It is a disease for which there is no cure. You will go on riding even after they have to haul you onto a comfortable wise old cob, with feet like inverted buckets and a back like a fireside chair." (Monica Dickens)

From all the riders, the parents and families, the volunteers, and the staff at Miracles in Motion:

**Thank you, Verne Upmier,
from the bottom of our hearts
for sharing your enjoyment of horses**