



Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

March 2023

Horses + Therapy = Hippotherapy!



Therapists from ChildServe and the UI Stead Family Children's Hospital attended safety training to prepare for a new season of hippotherapy at Miracles in Motion.

From the Director's Desk

The word *hippotherapy* comes from the Greek and means “horse therapy.” Hippotherapy is defined as equine-assisted treatment and was introduced in the United States around 1970. Hippotherapy is a form of physical, occupational and speech therapy in which a therapist uses the characteristic movements of a horse to provide carefully graded motor and sensory input. A foundation is established to improve neurological function and sensory processing, which can be generalized to a wide range of daily activities. Unlike therapeutic horseback riding (where specific riding skills are taught), in hippotherapy the movement of the horse is a means to a treatment goal. Hippotherapy has been used to treat patients with neurological or other disabilities, such as autism, cerebral palsy, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, head injury, stroke, spinal cord injury and behavioral disorders.

Here at Miracles we contract with ChildServe and Stead Children's Hospital, both in Iowa City. The therapists bring their clients out to Miracles and place the client on the back of a horse for the client's treatment for that day. Miracles provides the setting, the volunteers, a PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and the horses.

Each year Miracles takes all the therapists through safety training. While the therapists are here they watch the gait of the horses that are used in hippotherapy to ensure they use the correct horse for the client once class begins in April. Watching a 10-week session from start to end, it is amazing the progress you see in the clients on their horse.



—Deb Leichsenring

Farmers State Bank Generously Supports Miracles



Farmers State Bank recently welcomed Deb Leichsenring, Lauren Crippes, and Tess Bracher-Dorrington to their Marion branch to show their support of Miracles with a generous donation. Standing in the lobby of Farmers State Bank, you may not realize the impact this local bank branch has on our community. Gene Neighbor, owner and CEO of FSB, leads with a community mind-set, and that is clear when you look at the data: over 100 employees volunteering, over 5,000 volunteer hours each year, and over \$200,000 in donations to nonprofits like ours annually. It was

a joy talking to Gene and his brother Kent about our mission and updating them.

Our donors, community sponsors and grants are the building blocks comprising the foundation of what we do. It is because of support like this that Miracles can continue serving the community and making waves of good. If you, your company, or someone you know would like to sponsor Miracles, please reach out to makemiraclesia@gmail.com

Welcome to Miracles!

Tess Bracher-Dorrington is the Director of Income Development—seeking out funding so Miracles can continue serving students, caring for horses and growing in impact and reach. Tess believes in the mission and the good Miracles provides to the community wholeheartedly. She grew up riding (a family tradition) and got her first horse at fourteen when her family moved to a farm in Virginia. She worked as the



director of a community school before starting at Miracles and looks forward to applying her talents in income acquisition to such an important cause. She lives in Cedar Rapids with her husband and their two cats.

Megan Conrad is the new Volunteer Coordinator. Megan is supporting the Miracles mission by recruiting new volunteers to ensure support for all our programs. She has volunteered at Miracles since 2021, helping with classes, chores, and special events. She is excited to get to know the volunteers more and help support an organization that has a significant impact on the community. Megan grew up in Cedar Falls, IA, and loved spending time with her uncle's horses. She recently graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Psychology and is pursuing a second degree in Equine Studies online at Ohio University. Megan lives in Marion, IA with her parents and three dogs and her cat.



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