



Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

September 2023



From the Director's Desk

There is the saying "if these walls could talk..." At Miracles, I wish the pastures could talk! As Miracles in Motion celebrates its 35th year of operation this year, I reflect on how many riders have come up the driveway to the arena, how many horses were used for those riders, how many donors made this nonprofit function, how many staff members, board members, instructors, farriers, veterinarians, deliverers of feed and bales of hay, volunteers—I could go on!

The idea of Miracles in Motion started with a mother giving pony rides to her autistic daughter at Verne Upmier Stables in Ely, Iowa. Next, Sandy Greer, a certified therapeutic instructor, helped start Miracles in Motion, beginning with six riders in the Fall of 1988 at the Cedar Rapids Horsemen Club. Members of the Horsemen Club became some of the first board members and active volunteers for Miracles. For a while Miracles went to other facilities as the program grew, transporting horses and tack for each class session. *(continued)*



University Club Visits Miracles



Members of the University Club visited Miracles in Motion in early September to tour the farm and learn about our programs.

From the Director's Desk *(continued)*

Thanks to extensive fundraising and the generosity of the community, Miracles was able to purchase the first 10 acres of its current home and the program took off—well, you could say, galloped off! Miracles' history continued with purchasing the other 66 acres which gave access to more pasture and hay ground, the ability to create a creative sensory trail, shelters for the horses, hay barn, additional arenas, pavilion, addition to the indoor arena, addition to the house, and so much more.

All of this was created so Miracles in Motion could exist as a Premier PATH center, which stands for Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship. So what does that mean? As a member of PATH, Miracles adheres to a high standard of professionalism and safety standards for our volunteers, riders, instructors, horses, facilities, and much more.

Truly the bottom line is that Miracles exists for the riders, students, and participants. In reality Miracles has been changing lives since 1988. The healing qualities of equine companionship are hard to deny. All types of people can get help from horses to cope with different mental and physical issues. I watch the therapists from ChildServe or the University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital guide their clients through activities on the back of our horses. The improvement in the riders is hard to quantify, but it does happen. It has to do with the horse's gait and the horse's calmness, which can promote therapeutic outcomes. In our Adaptive Riding and Adaptive Horsemanship we see progress that builds the riders' self-advocacy and self-confidence. We see ground work where the horses can be used for emotional or behavioral support. The beauty of horses is that they do not judge you; horses are there for you. It does take a certain type of horse to become a therapy horse and part of the Miracles program. The horses have to have a certain size, movements, and temperament. Our herd is definitely the core of the program; without them there is no program. We are grateful for our horses and the volunteers and staff who take care of them.

Now Miracles embarks on a new era called the Next InSTALLment, which is our new building that is going to be constructed in the coming months. You can go to our website to view the progress once we break ground. On to another 35 years and more for Miracles! For everyone who has been involved past and present from all the students that have ridden prior and ride now thank you! Everyone who is part of the Miracles Community—you have made the past, present, and future a reality—my sincere gratitude.

—Deb Leichsenring



Thanks to all who supported

The Next InSTALLment:

our campaign has reached 90% of the goal!

Visit Miracles' website if you wish to donate.

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