



# Miracles in Motion

THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

April 2025

## Miracles Moment

### **Diana Harris**



In 2016, I was invited to join the Miracles in Motion board because I owned a horse and had recently retired. After joining the board, I trained as a horse lead and sidewalker, and spent 2 years in those roles as well as being a barn assistant, team lead, and doing chores. I immediately loved getting to know the horses, and quickly appreciated the volunteers who taught me the Miracles way of doing things to be as consistent as possible. An obvious, ongoing need was therapeutic riding instructors, so in 2019, I started learning the necessary skills for that role. I became an instructor in 2020, and since then, I have been an instructor for hippotherapy and Connect with Horses, as well as adaptive riding and adaptive horsemanship. Seeing how riders and clients change, grow, and become knowledgeable and confident is wonderful and different for every rider. I am delighted to be one of the volunteers who makes a difference for our clients and horses.



### **Carrie Drum**

I grew up with a few horses on an acreage. Horses have always been in my life but I was not always interested in riding or working with horses. It was my oldest daughter's love of horses that inspired me to go back and learn more. First of all, she wanted a horse, but we did not have the space or money so we started volunteering in equine programs to satisfy her horse desires. It started at a Girl Scout equine center. I knew of an equine therapy center in the area, and we discovered Miracles in Motion. From there on, this place, the horses, and the programs were to be my forever fun hobby. I completed my riding instructor certification in February 2023 with a lot of support from everyone at Miracles in Motion. Now, my summers are filled with riding lessons and programs with some incredibly inspiring participants. When I am not with the horses, I am a nurse clinician for the pediatric cardiology clinic at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital. My husband, Josh, and our 2 daughters live in Iowa City. Kathryn, my oldest, is working for an equine veterinarian and studying to become a veterinarian technician. My youngest, Julianne, is a sophomore at Monmouth College in Illinois, working toward a degree in neuroscience and medical school. My husband and I met here in Iowa City. He works from home as a project manager in a software company. My family realizes that as Spring arrives that it is my busy time and they will not see me much. It is busy, but I would not want it any other way.

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# From The *Director's Desk*

WRITTEN BY DEB LEICHSENRING



I'm thrilled that we have a full slate of classes for our Spring Session! Summer and Fall Sessions will follow. Volunteers have been through their yearly training. The herd has been soaking up incredible care and training during the winter months. They are ready for whatever the instructors and therapists want for their riders participating in Hippotherapy, Adaptive Riding, and Adaptive Horsemanship.

This summer we will offer our MVECS—Veterans' Program and Connect with Horses. Many of you are aware of MVECS, but you may be wondering, what is **Connect with Horses**? Horses have been helping individuals with physical and mental challenges for decades, providing an interaction that can complement other therapies. With our Connect with Horses program, there is no riding involved.

Participants and horses come together in a partnership. This program offers small group classes for people who benefit from time with a horse. We are offering this program to patients with long-time physical issues, individuals with dementia, those with sensory issues, or those with high-stress jobs like first responders and nurses. When appropriate we would like to include the caregiver for people in the program so they might also benefit from the emotional support provided by our horses.

We would be happy to answer your questions about this program and explore the ways that Miracles in Motion can support you. Just email: [miraclesinmotion@gmail.com](mailto:miraclesinmotion@gmail.com)

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## Work Groups Lend a Helping Hand

Work groups are incredibly important to maintain the property, structures and education here at Miracles In Motion. A heartfelt thank-you to the work groups that helped out at Miracles in March. They were University of Iowa students studying to become paramedics spear headed by Jacob Van Zante; a team from Great America organized by Cody Jandik; and the Johnson County 4-H Horse and Pony Club with leader Kate Dale. Thank you!





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## Spacious New Barn Enhances Volunteer Training and Much More

One year ago, in April 2024, we were training our volunteers for the riding season in the chilly indoor arena and the adjacent lobby. Everyone had winter coats on, trying to warm frozen fingers and stomping our feet to keep the blood flowing. Things are looking much different these days! The Busse Barn has been a \*game changer\* in many ways, but the most notable recently has been during volunteer training the last two weeks. Yes, we've been blessed with better weather this year than last, but more than that, having the Clubhouse to congregate in—climate controlled, with access to technology for demonstrations and enough space to arrange seating—has taken our training to a whole new level!

After a presentation in the Clubhouse, our whole group of 20+ people gathered in the alleyway of our barn—an

impossibility before because the old alleyways were narrow and there were safety concerns for our horses and volunteers in such a tight space. In the new space, instructors were able to bring in a horse to demonstrate tacking and grooming without issue. Seeing a live demonstration made the experience more valuable: seeing the demo and getting hands-on experience had us more engaged.

After the training, we all congregated back in the Clubhouse before we departed. It was amazing to see the multi-purpose space filled with so much joy! From friends reconnecting after a winter apart, new acquaintances making connections, and experienced instructors and long-time volunteers sharing their knowledge and wisdom—the space was overflowing!

We are so grateful for the new opportunities our stables have brought Miracles. It is impossible to measure the thousand little ways our organization has changed for the better because of the structure, but it has quickly become the foundation for our community to gather and has elevated our programs to new heights. Thank you so much to all who took part in its creation and to all those who have cared for it since.



### Happy National Volunteer Month!

Our Miracles riders and herd are so lucky to have an extraordinary team of volunteers. Our volunteers are full of kindness and compassion and have a multitude of skill sets and backgrounds that enrich our community each day. We celebrate our volunteers this month for all they do, though it truly is a celebration every day at Miracles for all the care they give to our riders and herd. To our incredible volunteers, thank you, and get ready for some sweet treats and exciting giveaways for National Volunteer Week, April 20th-26th!

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