



Special Equestrians



Bits & Pieces
Issue No. 7

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There are a limited number of our beautiful custom-designed Special Equestrians 2011 calendars still available. Chock full of pictures of our programs and our horses in action, and featuring all our currently planned vacations and special events, this calendar is a treat you won't want to miss! At just \$10, it's a bargain for your family and for your friends and co-workers, too. Call 215.918.1001 to reserve your calendar today.



Dear Friend,

Seasons Greetings!

The snow has finally arrived! As we turn the page from 2010 to 2011, don't forget your year-end contributions. Whether you would like to make a general donation, contribute to the emergency horse medical fund, or donate to the Ann Irwin scholarship program (which is running particularly low!), please consider supporting your favorite nonprofit: Special Equestrians!

Have a safe and healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

Tammy Westney
Executive Director

Featured Horse Story

Hello, my name is Music!

I'm so happy that Special Equestrians is my new home! Even though I've only been a therapy horse since my fuzzy winter coat started to grow, I really love my new job. In the past, I have always had kids to play with and carry around, but I like the kids here best of all. They're smart, funny, hard-working, and cute, just like me!

One of my new humans, instructor Pam, says that I'm like "a country boy just hangin' out on his front porch; laid back and easy going, but inquisitive." I don't know what "inquisitive" means, but if it means "likes his ears scratched", then I totally agree! Another new human, instructor Anne, tells everyone that I'm "the perfect addition to our herd. Just like our best horses, Music carefully listens to little hands and legs directing him where to go. He already understands the importance of his job, standing still when he needs to and stepping up when he knows the rider can handle it." You can't see it with all the fur on my face, but I'm blushing!



Me and my new friend Kira!

It's not just my new human friends who have made me feel welcome. On my very first day here, Ebs introduced himself to me, and offered up some very wise advice. "You will carry extra-precious cargo here," he said through a mouthful of grass. "Sometimes it will be hard to decide what to listen to and what to ignore, because our riders may communicate differently. But if you try your best and keep your riders safe, the humans here will love you forever!"

Sadly, one of my new horse buddies, Josh, moved away the other day. He's going back to live with his human mom at a farm not too far from here. I know we'll all miss him lots, but he told me he's excited to move back home and get spoiled rotten. He's going to miss us too, and has put me in charge of teaching many of the riders he will be leaving. I hope I can make him

proud!

I'll be moving in next to Miss Suzie soon, so look for me next time you're at the barn!

Love,
Music

P.S. Anne says there's this thing called the "internet", where you can vote on who your favorite therapy horse is. She says to "[click here](#)", whatever that means. Vote for me! :)

Featured Rider

Lauren

For 18-year-old Lauren, riding is extremely beneficial to her emotional well-being, and her gentleness and quiet nature are a perfect match for our horses. When Lauren tells her current mount, Rita, about her day at school or talks about things that bother her while she's riding, you can see her anxiety melt away.

Lauren has been riding at SE since 2002, and puts her years of experience to good use every week as she learns new skills and improves on old ones.

This fall, Lauren proved just how confident she's become when she competed at Thorncroft in Malvern. Rita had never been to a Thorncroft horse show before, and Lauren had never before competed in two of her three events, but they both did beautifully! We were so proud to see Lauren steering Rita all alone in the big show arena at Thorncroft with a giant smile on her face! Lauren's self-esteem has been bolstered by her participation in our program and she is always happy to participate in something special (like going to horse shows, demonstrating at our Fall Festival, and being selected as featured rider for this newsletter).



Lauren and Rita competing at Thorncroft with Susanne

Lauren remembers all of our horses' names, including ones she rode years ago. She shows a genuine concern for other riders and horses and is very open about sharing how the horses have helped "people like her with disabilities."

Lauren and her instructor Susanne enjoy their traditional lesson warm-up where Lauren brings Susanne up to speed on General Hospital happenings while mimicking Susanne's stretches. "Then," Susanne says, "we get to work! Lauren's become more willing to trust me (and the horse) to try new skills. Seeing Lauren enjoy her riding and our weekly discussions is one of the highlights of my week!"

Do you know a child or adult who may benefit from joining Special Equestrians? To learn more about our programs, [click here](#) or call Anne at 215.918.1001 x 103.

Featured Volunteer

Jennie Upton

In late 2009, Jennie Upton was looking to add some volunteering time to her busy schedule as a junior in high school. She had read articles about Special Equestrians and passed by the SE barn many times, so, lucky for us, she already knew where she wanted to volunteer. Jennie attended SE's orientation clinic in January 2010 and has been an awesome addition to our amazing volunteer crew ever since!

Over the last year, Jennie has spent many hours volunteering at the barn and helping out at volunteer clinics and special events, including last fall's Thorncroft Horse Show. Instructor Diane Sampson has had the good fortune of having Jennie participate in many of her Friday lessons. "Jennie is a joy to have in lessons. She has a kind, patient, and easygoing rapport with my riders and their horses and we all love having her with us." Instructor Anne Reynolds adds, "Jennie represents the best of what our volunteers bring to the program. Not only is she competent with the horses, but she is caring and compassionate with our clients. She always brings that 'little something extra' to each lesson she works and the clients love her because of it!"



Jennie with her favorite and sponsored horse El Frio

Some of Jennie's favorite things about volunteering at SE are "the smiles on everyone's faces and the happy atmosphere!" One look at Jennie grooming El Frio and there's no doubt who her favorite horse in the barn is...so much so that Jennie recently became a 2011 sponsor of Frio! She loves Frio's positive, quirky, and opinionated attitude. Jennie explained their early connection, saying that when she and Frio were both newbies at the barn, she felt she could make a difference with him. Watching Frio with Jennie makes it clear that he couldn't agree more! As for our therapy horses, Jennie loves them all, but is especially fond of our big, energetic pair, Rita and Ben.

When asked if she had anything else to add about her experience at SE, Jennie simply said "I love it here." The feeling is very mutual because we love having Jennie at SE! Thank you, Jennie!

Do you know someone who might be interested in joining our team? [Send them here](#) for more information about becoming a volunteer, or have them call Diane at 215.918.1001 x 306!

About Us

Special Equestrians is a 501(c)3 non-profit Therapeutic Riding program located at 2800 Street Road in Warrington, PA. Our mission is to improve the physical, mental, and emotional well being of individuals with disabilities through the equine experience. Founded in 1982, Special Equestrians has grown from a one rider, one horse, one volunteer program to a thriving organization with 9 horses, 17 staff members, and over 100 volunteers serving 145 children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities each year. For more information, please call 215.918.1001, or visit our website at www.specialequestrians.org. Contact: Tammy Westney, Executive Director, 215.918.1001 x 102, tamwestney@verizon.net.

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