

# Special Equestrians



*Bits & Pieces*  
Issue No. 8

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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,

Special Equestrians is off to an exciting start to the new year. Our first fund raiser is a Beef and Beer scheduled for Saturday March 12, 7 pm at the [VE Club](#) on Davisville Road in Warminster. We'll have silent auction items, raffle baskets, and we'll be featuring the band [Wooden Wire](#), who also performed at the Poker Run at Iron Abbey last September. Tickets are just \$35.00 each, or a table of ten for \$300.00. Please come out and join in the fun! For more information, [visit our website](#).

Sincerely,

Tammy Westney  
Executive Director

## Featured Horse Story

### What makes Ebs so special?

*As told by Jacob Feldman and Marika Jones:*

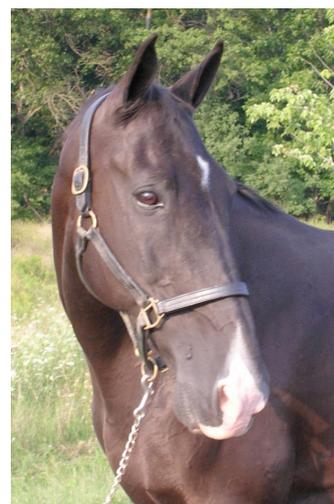
As told by Jacob Feldman and Marika Jones: Ebs is a one-of-a-kind therapy horse. Beyond being recognized as the 2009 NARHA Region 2 Therapy Horse of the Year, he is also known as being the oldest, wisest, and most patient horse at Special Equestrians. He is happy and proud to be working at 27 years young.

Kind, patient, stoic are a few words to describe Ebs. He was born to be a therapy horse and loves every minute of it. He is a teacher to both students and volunteers, and always remains cool and calm while doing it. Some people don't realize why Ebs is so unique when they first meet him. In 2005, Ebs had a tracheotomy, which, thankfully, has allowed him to continue to do the job he loves.

Ebs did not slow down as a result of his surgery and he has continued teaching students. He is the patriarch of the herd out in the pasture. Some mornings, you will find him outside the barn door grazing his way along as he's being led outside or making sure he has the first choice of hay by chasing off the other horses. Ebs loves his treats (and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches) and he is not above using bribery to get you to give him handouts!

Ebs has a serious weak spot for Gigi, one of our retired (and very pretty!) racehorses. Whenever she's outside with him, Ebs follows her around like a puppy dog, running after her with his tail held high and his chest puffed out to try to get her attention!

Ebs always seems to be paying attention to everything, like a soldier standing guard. His dedication to his job is truly inspiring. People love stopping by Ebs' stall and saying hi. He has a stall guard so he can hang his head out of his stall and keep watch over the barn, making sure everything is running smoothly. Even now, six years after his surgery, Ebs continues to remind everyone of the power of working hard at something you love to do. Thank you, Ebs, for being such a perfect therapy horse!



Ebs before his surgery - he looks just as handsome today as he did 6 years ago!

Do you have a funny or inspiring story about one of our therapy horses that you would like to share in a future newsletter? [Email the story to Anne!](#)

## Featured Staff

### Deb Saffren



Deb and her favorite therapy partner, Bear

Deb Saffren has been an OT for Special Equestrians since 1997, years before we moved to our current location. Our Deputy Director, Tracey Dripps, has known Deb the longest. She says "Deb is loved by students and parents alike because she's so sweet and celebrates a student's every success. Her enthusiasm is a constant inspiration to us all."

Program Director Anne Reynolds says "just being around Deb perks me up and brightens my day. I've learned never to cough or appear sick around her, because at the first sign of illness, she plies me with zinc lozenges, grass shakes, and all sorts of awful, but healthy, remedies. She's a caring, nurturing, and brilliant person, who you can always count on to lend a hand, help with new programs, and give her professional advice."

Deb embodies what we strive to be here at Special Equestrians: high-quality, professional therapists and instructors who make a lasting and positive impact on the lives of the students we teach. Instructor and Volunteer Coordinator Diane Sampson has this to say: "We are so fortunate to have Deb at SE. Students, parents, volunteers, and instructors all benefit from her knowledge, talent, and generous spirit. When I am lucky enough to inherit one of Deb's students [when they progress from Hippotherapy to Therapeutic Riding], I am always amazed at how far they've come under her instruction and how prepared she has them to move on. Deb's support of her fellow instructors is unwavering and means so much to all of us."

Nate Trevisan has been riding with Deb since September of 2009. His father, Scott, has this to say about Deb and Hippotherapy: "Of all the therapies and education interventions we've done for Nate, the most powerful, holistic, and influential has been coming to SE. Deb and the volunteers are the most amazing people, and these relationships are the most significant that Nate has among all his therapies. Almost more so than Deb's skills and professionalism as an OT, her positive energy and enthusiasm are a complete gift to us. Her love for all her students is so apparent and important that it has touched our family's collective heart very deeply. Anyone lucky enough to work with Deb is just that - really lucky!"

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

### Lori Giaquinto

In the fall of 1999, Lori Giaquinto came across an announcement in her local township newspaper for the September 26th Grand Opening of Special Equestrians in Warrington. Having a deep love of horses, Lori made sure to attend the event and signed up to volunteer that very day. She has been an invaluable part of our Sunday mornings ever since!



Lori and Ebs, best friends since the beginning!

Everyone who has worked with Lori has wonderful things to say about her. Instructor Jacob Feldman said, "Lori cares deeply about the horses at SE. I can always count on her to beat me to the barn on Sunday mornings and make sure every detail is attended to before we leave, from cleaning every stall to scrubbing the outside water troughs. She is a tremendous volunteer and incredibly deserving of this honor!" Kate Staffieri of our barn staff added, "Lori is one of the most dedicated and hardworking volunteers that I have had the pleasure of working with at SE! She is great with the horses and amazing at getting barn work done. Sundays are a thousand times harder without her, and I am so lucky that she chooses to donate her time and energy on that day. Lori is always happy to help out no matter how cold, rainy, or snowy it might be, and I feel that she greatly deserves to be the Volunteer of the Month for February!"

Instructor Diane Sampson said, "When I fill in on Sunday mornings, I am always so relieved to have Lori to rely on. She has everything that needs to be done down to a fine art and is so much fun to work with!"

When asked what some of her favorite things about SE are, Lori immediately replied "the kids' smiles and giggles!" She thinks the world of all the people involved with SE and loves how open-minded and caring everyone is. Lori also adores our wonderful, patient therapy horses. She explained her devotion to them by saying, "they can't talk back and they need someone to take care of them." Lori's heart has belonged to Ebs since she started volunteering. "He's so sweet and beautiful. I love to see him run in his Tennessee Walker style with his tail held high!"

Summing up her feelings, Lori said she loves SE and all that we do. We feel so blessed to have Lori as part of our SE family. Thank you, Lori, and congratulations on being February's Volunteer of the Month!

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](http://www.specialequestrians.org). Contact: Tammy Westney, Executive Director, 215.918.1001 x 102, [tamwestney@verizon.net](mailto:tamwestney@verizon.net).

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