The winter certainly created challenges for us again this year, and we heartily thank all our volunteers for helping out with the horses and the lessons through all the freezing temps.

With spring here, we are ready to make up those canceled lessons, head out to Commonwealth National Golf Club for our annual charity golf tournament, and prepare for our spring horse shows at Thorncroft and here at Special Equestrians. The doctoral students from the University of the Sciences Physical Therapy department have been with us again this year to continue their hippotherapy study, and summer camp—with Advanced Camp running again this year for four days—will be upon us before we know it.

Before we look ahead, read on as we catch up on some news, on our featured volunteers of the past two sessions, and on our exciting affiliation with the Equine Science and Management Department of Delaware Valley College (soon to be a University).

Where Can You Find SE This Spring?

SE will be making outreach at these events:

- April 21
  - Chalfont Lions Health Fair
- April 24-26
  - Delaware Valley College A-Day
- May 16
  - Fox Chase Farm to Table Day

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Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 14-17</td>
<td>Make-up Lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 18-June 29</td>
<td>Session 4 (Late Spring, 10 weeks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>SE Charity Golf Tournament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May 23

- HRD at Thorncroft Horse Show

June 7

- Spring Student Horse Show

July 6-August 8

- Summer Session (5 weeks)
- July 6-10
  - Summer Camp: 5-10 yrs.
- July 27-Aug. 3-7/Aug. 10-14
  - Campers 10-16 yrs.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- Featured Volunteer Catie Tukdarian
- Featured Volunteer Cherie Cross
- Golf Tournament Information
- SE’s Equine-Assisted Therapies
- Course at Del Val
- Regional Therapeutic Riding Center
- Directors’ Roundtable
- Summer Camp Information
- News Bits
- “Saturday Night Dance Party”
Featured Volunteer of the Fall 2014: Catie Tukdarian

After Catie Tukdarian graduated from college, she knew she wanted to go on to vet school. To get some experience with large animals, a friend of hers, who was already in vet school, recommended that she check out therapeutic riding facilities. Special Equestrians owes a huge thank you to that friend because Catie Googled therapy barns, found SE, and became an invaluable member of our volunteer team in February 2013!

From the start, Catie volunteered several days a week, happy to take on any task asked of her, excited to learn all she could about our horses and therapeutic riding. She got so adept so quickly that she recently joined our barn staff. Our Barn Manager, Marika Jones says, “Catie is extremely detail-oriented, but has a fantastic sense of humor. Working alongside her is not only easy and efficient, but so entertaining.” Instructor Angelica Biehl adds, “Catie has become an integral part of SE, bonding quickly with students with her warm affection and deep caring. She came in as a volunteer, learned the ropes, excelled in flexibility, and gave her whole energy and took on the passion of the mission and made it her own. Volunteers, students and staff alike look forward to working with and being with her as her bright energetic ways motivate us all to new heights!”

Some of Catie’s favorite things about SE are “the volunteers and the staff, everyone is super helpful, just welcoming, friendly people.” After a few months of barn work, Catie started to volunteer in lessons and “fell in love with our riders!” With no previous horse experience, Catie “had no idea how wonderful the horses’ personalities would be.” When asked if she had a favorite, Catie said she loves “them all, but, well, maybe Halo . . . and Steven . . . and then there’s Sonja.”

When asked what she enjoys about being at SE, Catie said “This is my happy place, my home and my family. I wanted to come to SE to get large animal experience for vet school and now I want to go to vet school because of SE.” We at SE are so grateful to have Catie as a member of our family! Thank you, Catie, and congratulations on being SE’s Volunteer of Fall 2014!

WELLS FARGO HONORS SE
Citing our work to “strengthen our communities,” Wells Fargo Community Connections recently recognized Special Equestrians with a certificate and $1,000 cash award. Development Director Mary-jo May accepted the award. SE is pleased to receive this honor from this local Wells Fargo program.
Featured Volunteer of the Summer 2014: Cherie Cross

On her way to her son’s job, Cherie Cross often passed by Special Equestrians and thought about how much she missed being around horses. Cherie’s love of horses started as a little girl when she met a friend’s pony named Ginger, and continued with riding throughout her life, including on her college equestrian team. As her children grew older and more independent, Cherie decided it was time to look into volunteering at the place she had driven by so often. So, in the spring of 2012, Cherie attended a volunteer clinic and has been an amazing member of our volunteer crew ever since!

Cherie is an awesome, dedicated volunteer, pitching in several days a week as well as for special projects. She is always happy to help out with whatever is needed and often comes to the rescue when we are in need of volunteers at a moment’s notice. Our Barn Manager, Marika Jones says, “Having Cherie helping in the barn, I know that everything will get done and done well. Her generosity and willingness makes her one of our key volunteers in the barn.” Instructor Pam Galante adds, “Cherie is one of my go-to volunteers on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. She is very supportive with the students and has a gentle, yet firm touch with the horses, which makes everyone involved in the lesson feel comfortable and safe. Cherie is quite willing to pitch in anytime and anywhere she is needed.

Thanks to Cherie, the behind-the-scenes at SE runs smoothly, so our students can come and enjoy themselves in a safe and friendly environment.”

“I just really appreciate what SE does. It’s uplifting, everybody wants to be here, making such a difference with our riders,” Cherie explained when asked about some of her favorite things about SE. Cherie loves all the horses, but has a serious soft spot for Ellie. “Ellie is so pretty, an elegant lady.” Cherie enjoys Ellie’s relationship with her best friend, Rolex, “her calls to Rolex are so sweet.” Cherie and her family are the proud sponsors of another horse Cherie loves, Steven.

When asked what she enjoys about volunteering at SE, Cherie said “I just love being here, being around people who want to be here and are so happy, we are making a difference.” We at SE feel so fortunate to have Cherie as part of our family! Thank you, Cherie, and congratulations on being SE’s Volunteer of Summer 2014!

WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION AWARDS SE
Representatives from the Wells Fargo Foundation recently came out to visit SE, meet our horses, and present Special Equestrians with $2,500 grant. Executive Director Denise Quirk, Bear, and Development Director Mary-jo May were on hand to received the check. Thanks, Wells Fargo!
Leaders from Therapeutic Riding Centers around the Region Gather for Roundtable

On March 15, 2015, Sallie and Saunders Dixon, founders and directors of Thorncroft Equestrian Center, hosted a Therapeutic Riding Program Directors’ Roundtable. The event ran from 10 am to 4 pm and included representatives from 12 centers in Pennsylvania and Maryland. While the idea has been brewing for a long time among Sallie Dixon, Barbara Wertheimer of Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Academy; and Denise Quirk of Special Equestrians, when Sallie extended the reach and sent an invitation in early March to 18 centers in the region, as many people as could make the date set aside the day to share ideas, troublespots, and plans for the future.

The group included Executive Directors, Program Managers, center Presidents, and other members of leadership teams who had in common a passion for the therapeutic riding field and a commitment to offering the best programs to their students, volunteers, and contributors. The represented centers included independent organizations; members of PATH International; the PA Council on Therapeutic Riding; and Special Olympics; centers with EAGALA-trained instructors; and a Maryland Horse Discovery Center.

Mary Shunk, of The Retreat at Beckleysville in Maryland, explained that the Horse Discovery Center is the statewide program of identifying select equestrian centers of many disciplines willing to open their doors to the public to help promote the horse industry.

Discussions addressed some of the important day-to-day details of running therapeutic centers: program fees, compliance, wage structures, board composition, and volunteer management. With everyone willing to share their center’s policies, the participants learned new ways of looking at these aspects of the programs and confirmed some programs’ best practices. As Marcy Laver of All Riders Up reflected on the day, “Our programs are diverse in size, geographic location, and in the services we provide, yet we share many interests, goals, and administrative challenges such that we can only benefit from a continuation of this opportunity. It allowed us to learn, teach, brainstorm, and rejoice in each other’s accomplishments. I’m sure everyone left having a renewed confidence in the ability to help each other, in addition to having learned new ways to improve our administrative policies to help the people we serve.”

In a discussion of programming, the participants shared variations on conducting common programs as well as highlighting some unique programs and different stages of development. Ben Noit of Capital Area Therapeutic Riding Association (CATRA), explained how they manage an impressive 40,000 volunteer hours a year at CATRA, where all labor has been volunteer for 25 years, from instructing to barn care to fundraising. Ben shared his wisdom and gracious ways of recruiting and marshaling the talents of people of all ages and abilities (including younger children, for whom CATRA has small-scale barn tools) to provide 36,000 hours of programs and year-round care for more than 50 horses.

Sallie Dixon spoke of holding multiple group lessons at a time in Thorncroft’s signature method of integrating able-bodied and therapeutic riders in the same lesson. Chris Brockett, president of Ivy Hill, talked of the new facility for Ivy Hill that opened in February, giving them a permanent home, and their move toward formalizing the structure of the organization. Chris Hanebury of Sebastian Riding Associates shared the details of their Riding Free program for teens with PTSD, while Denise Quirk shared news of Special Equestrians’ equine-assisted learning programs GaitWays for School Success, Youth Connections, and REINS that include unmounted and mounted activities for children and teens with emotional, cognitive, and social challenges that can interfere with school performance.

With so many founders of long-running programs present, a discussion of succession planning touched on a topic that every nonprofit must keep in mind: how to continue the great work when organizations are faced with strategic, generational, or emergency turnover in leadership. Denise Quirk’s experience at Special Equestrians since joining the organization in 2012 brought useful information to the group by focusing on the some of the “how-tos” of succession planning. However, she felt that a gem of the discussion was the experiences of the leaders in the room who had brought their organizations through all phases of development and generously shared their wisdom with equal measures of pride, poignancy, and humility. She commented, “It was a great opportunity to learn from some of the founders of similar programs who are still at the helm of their leadership teams twenty or thirty years since their programs’ beginnings.”

A resounding sense of a day well spent and agreements to meet in the near future ended a day of shared information and newly formed bonds. Jeannie Knowlton, of Hope Springs in Chester County, expressed later in an email what many of attendees felt about the day: “I truly feel that I was in the company of some extremely caring, knowledgeable, capable, and sharing professionals.”

With so much more to share, plans are to meet again in the fall, with the hope that representatives of other centers in the area will join the original group.
Equine-Assisted Therapies Course at Delaware Valley College: Growing Collaboration between SE and DelVal

Special Equestrians Executive Director Denise Quirk, assisted by SE staff members, offered an Equine-Assisted Therapies course at Delaware Valley College this past fall. Denise is an adjunct faculty member of the Equine Science and Management Department, and also sits on the department's Advisory Council. The course ran for 14 weeks and introduced 24 students to the history, purposes, theory, and methods of equine-assisted therapies, including therapeutic riding, driving, and vaulting; hippotherapy; equine-assisted experiential learning; and equine-assisted psychotherapy.

Denise presented the history and theories behind equine-assisted therapies, as well as the current research on the impact of therapeutic equine-assisted programs. A number of the sessions focused on the reasons horses make good therapy partners and the all-important issue of equine welfare. She also focused on the specialized training that instructors need, the required knowledge base about disabilities, and the range of education and certification programs available across the United States.

Most of the class sessions were held at SE to give students hands-on experience. Barn Manager Marika Jones led a session on choosing and training therapy horses, and Volunteer Coordinator Diane Sampson spearheaded a workshop based on SE's volunteer orientation clinics, grounding the students in the “how-tos” of helping out with therapeutic riding lessons and caring for therapy horses in the “SE way.” Instructors Claire Oestreich, Angelica Biehl, and Pam Galante addressed the methods and techniques for teaching therapeutic riding, driving, and vaulting to various age groups. Karen Basmagy introduced the DelVal students to the principles behind Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions that feature groups working on the ground with horses let free to wander around the arena. Claire Oestreich also engaged the students in some of the equine-assisted learning activities she and Karen use with the various school groups that take part in SE's Youth Connections, GaitWays for School Success, and REINS programs. A special session with SE's Occupational Therapist Deb Saffren gave the students an opportunity to ride the horses bareback and really feel the effects of hippotherapy and therapeutic riding.

We are delighted that the course has been renewed for fall 2015, with the expectation that future years will include an opportunity for students to gain experience shadowing and teaching lessons that will lead to their own certification as therapeutic riding instructors.

SE’s barn staff members Kaitlyn Staffieri and Tracy Canonaco are DelVal grads, and the DelVal Equine Massage class with Dr. Mike Burak visits SE each semester, treating the horses to massages as the students learn their craft. SE has also hosted a number of interns, class trips, and observers from DelVal. We congratulate DelVal's new official status as a University as of April 8, 2015.

Impact of Hippotherapy and Therapeutic Riding from the Rider and Family Perspective

Doctoral students from the University of the Sciences returned to SE in March to conduct research with riders and their families to understand from their perspective what they see as the effects of hippotherapy and therapeutic riding. Thanks to everyone who participated in the study. The students will present their findings at SE on Tuesday, April 14, at 7:15 pm. All are welcome to attend.
SE’s Annual Golf Tournament:

SE’s Annual Charity Golf Tournament tees off next month. This year’s event again runs in the afternoon, with lunch and dinner included. Dinner tickets for non-playing guests are available. A silent auction and various contests and awards for success on the course round out the event.

Commonwealth National Golf Club has a renowned golf course and has been a major sponsor of SE for more 14 years. The course was designed by Arnold Palmer and Ed Seay; it was recently rated one of the top 25 courses in Pennsylvania by Golf Digest and has a course rating of 74.7 from the Golf Association of Philadelphia. This is the highest rating in the greater Philadelphia area.

The golf outing is our major spring fundraising event and its proceeds support all our equine-assisted programs. This year we are honored to welcome Physician and Tactical Healthcare Services, LLC (PATHS) as our Title Sponsor, West Pharmaceuticals as our Dinner Sponsor, and Wendy Dixon and Jeff Itell as our Golf Cart Sponsors. Sponsorships are available from a $125 hole sponsorship through the $2,500 Golf Gift and go far to keep our programs running all year.

Individual Golfer: $200; Foursome: $800
Golfer fee includes: Greens Fee, Lunch, Driving Range, Carts, On-course Beverages (not including alcoholic beverages), Cocktail Hour, Gourmet Dinner, Contests. Dinner guests: $60

For more details, please contact Tracey:
212-918-1001 x100
info@specialequestrians.org or go to www.specialequestrians.org

Volunteers are also needed to help solicit sponsorships and on the day of the tournament to help out with setting up and other tasks. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Mary-jo, mjmay@specialequestrians.org or call 215-918-1001 x 106.

BEREAVEMENT WORKSHOPS RETURN — VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

The third “Healing through the Horse” children’s bereavement workshops held in conjunction with Hunterdon Hospice will be offered at Special Equestrians on June 13, 14, and June 20. SE’s Karen Basmagy leads these workshops with psychologist Judith Benoit and Diane Gilbert, who heads the bereavement group at the hospice. These workshops are based on Native American rituals of healing and are powerful experiences for all. Interested volunteers please contact Diane at volunteers@specialequestrians.org.
SE Featured around Town

SPECIAL EQUESTRIANS ON 6ABC NEWS

On Thursday, February 19, 2015, Special Equestrians was featured on the 6ABC Action News weekly segment called the Art of Aging. In it, ABC anchor Lisa Thomas-Laury introduced viewers to “some women over 50-years-of-age who are fulfilling a lifelong love affair to work with horses.” The ABC team spent a Thursday morning interviewing a number of our volunteers, including Judith K, Diane E, and Elaine B, as well as Executive Director Denise Quirk and Development Director Mary-jo May. They also filmed a Silver Saddles lesson as well as Jeremy S’s lesson with instructor Pam Galante. Not everyone made it into the final cut, but we appreciate everyone’s willingness to participate. The segment got some good airtime, and SE picked up volunteer and donation inquiries within a few hours of the broadcast. If you haven’t seen it, you can watch it here: http://6abc.com/524929/. Master therapy horse Ebs and Mary-jo were featured in the opening shot.

Program Coordinator Claire Oestreich Speaks at Franklin Company

Claire was the featured speaker on January 30 at the 150th Anniversary dinner of The Franklin Company for the Purpose of More Effectively Detecting Horse Thieves and Other Villains. In the past, this group met to gather local news and to help spread word of any missing or stolen animals. Nowadays, they ask local members of the equine industry to come and talk about their program. They were all enthralled by the presentation, and asked many questions about SE’s horses, students, and programs. Afterwards, many of the members told stories after of horses in their own lives, or in the lives of children and grandchildren with disabilities.

Special Equestrians is delighted to have been featured in Pennsylvania Equestrian, a newspaper that reaches more than 38,000 readers across the state and beyond. The article has been archived and can be read here: “Horses and Kids Are at the Heart of Special Equestrians.” Suzanne Bush, the reporter, visited with the horses and people of SE in February and donated horse show apparel for our riders getting ready for our Spring show and the HRD at Devon. Thanks, Suzanne!
Special Equestrians Summer Camp

Enrollment is now open for our Summer Camp. We are offering four weeks this year:

“Littles” (Campers 5-10 yrs.): July 6-10
Campers 10-16 yrs: July 27-31, August 3-7, 10-14

Fee per session: $275--includes a camp T-shirt. If enrolled in more than one week: $250 per week.

- Camp runs Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Each day will include one-hour mounted lessons, one-hour unmounted horsemanship lessons, group activities, and time for lunch (bring a bag lunch). Each session ends with a Friday horse show; family and friends welcome.
- Registration and payment due May 26, 2015. Slots can only be reserved with complete registration and payment. No refunds after June 22, 2015.
- Registration forms and further information is available at specialequestrians.org/programs/summer-camp or from Tracey at 215-918-1001 x 100 or info@specialequestrians.org

Special Equestrians Offers “Advanced Camp”

Special Equestrians is excited to offer our second Expanded Equine Activities (EEA) “Advanced” Summer Camp. This year camp will run 4 days (June 30-July 3, 2015) and an hour longer each day (8 am - 1 pm). We will be learning advanced ring figures to sharpen our dressage skills, focusing on sharpening the finer skills of centered riding, refined, balanced body position, advanced riding aids (communication with our horses), plus unique equine games and team-oriented riding activities. With each camper assigned his/her “own” horse for the sessions, we will build on our basic horse knowledge and add discovery of equine digestion, disease, and special needs of horses. We look forward to trying new things, learning more about our wonderful equine partners, and developing new riding skills. Camp fee $225. Ask your instructor about eligibility.

2014 “Advanced Campers” with Instructors Angelica and Marika and Volunteers Erin, Katie, Frances, and Shannon
The Special Equestrians

Saturdays Night Dance Party - The Beat Goes On

Thanks to Our Sponsors, Volunteers, and Supporters

SE’s “Saturday Night Dance Party-The Beat Goes On” in the fall was a great success! The Geator had everyone dancing through the night, the silent auction brought out the competitive shoppers, and we raised $31,000!

Thanks to everyone who attended, showing their support of SE and having a great time goovin’ for a cause!

Thank you to Our Sponsors!!

Platinum
Dr. Wendy Dixon & Jeff Itell

Silver
Mangione Physical Therapy
Mr. and Ms. Don Cornagie
Carol Alesi

Bronze
Martin and Laurie Bucko

Record Producer Table
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Quiet Corner Farm
Do Trot In Tack Shop
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Brian Zamrin & David Rzaca
Sommerfield Stables at Waterstream Farm

45 Record Label
Eulalia Cross
Chris Dwyer
William Kimmel & Sandra Yeager
Erin McCann
Amy McKenna
Jeanne Morin
Jamie O’Rourke in honor of Wendy Dixon and Jeff Itell
Janet Sidewater in honor of Wendy Dixon
In Memory of Loretta Quirk
Quiet Corner Farm

Thanks to Our Volunteers!!

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Cherie Cross
Doris Rafaeli
James Pacceretti
Jane Ferris
Kathryn Quirk
Mary-jo May
Rebecca Barnett
Glenn Carlson
Tracey Dripps
Joan Logan
Denise Quirk

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Tina Borelli
Denise Chaney
James Pacceretti
John May
Rush Sherman
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Special Thanks
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Diane Blackmore/
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Development Director, Mary-jo May
Operations Director, Tracey Dripps
Program Coordinator Claire Oestreich, TRI
Barn Manager, Marika Jones
Volunteer Coordinator, Diane Sampson, TRI

Instructors
Senior Instructor, Angelica Biehl, TRI
Pam Galante, TRI
Lisa Luongo
Asst. Barn Manager, Christina Stutz, TRI
Deb Saffren, OTR/L
Marsha Berger Grant, PT, DPT
Kate Muro, OT

Special Programs, Karen Basmagy, TRI, ES

Barn Staff
Tracy Canonaco
Kaitlyn Staffieri
Catie Tukdarian
Harry Roth (Vocational)
Chris Goodbred (Vocational)

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Our Mission
The mission of Special Equestrians is to improve the physical, mental, and emotional well being of individuals with disabilities through the equine experience.

Special Equestrians is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1982. The official registration and financial information of Special Equestrians Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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