

Inside...

Page 2

Presidents Report
The Freedom of
Therapeutic Riding

Page 3

2013 Pledge Ride

Page 4

Program Coordinator Report
Pyramid Stables Report

Page 5

Volunteers

Page 6

Fundraising Fiscal Report

Page 7

Sponsors, Benefactors
and Service Clubs

Back page

Board of Directors

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www.etra.ca

Meet Dante: All Smiles

Dante turns 13 this January and has been riding with ETRA since he was 7. Dante was born with cerebral palsy and weighed two pounds at birth. Dante uses a power wheelchair for mobility.

When Dante started horseback riding with ETRA he was overwhelmed by the horse and the sensation of riding. With the skilled assistance of Sheila and the amazing sidewalkers, Dante overcame his fears. He now looks forward to his Wednesday riding sessions and wishes he could ride year round!

As time has progressed we have witnessed some of the amazing benefits of being on a horse. Dante has developed a caring relationship with the horse he rides. A few weeks ago his horse was unable to carry Dante due to having a sore leg. The empathy and concern that Dante demonstrated about "his" horse was touching. Each morning he woke up and asked about "his" horse.

Dante's core strength has improved to the point where he can maintain his balance on the horse. His breathing capacity has become better as he focusses on his posture.

Dante has had numerous surgeries on his legs and two years ago his legs were "straightened" so he could start to weight bear. Along with other therapies he has continued to make excellent progress.



ETRA's 2014 Featured Rider Dante!

He does not have great use of his left arm and the surgeons were considering surgery. Since riding he has learned to focus on his left arm using it to hold the reins and participate with the bean bags. Currently there are no plans for surgery!!

Besides the amazing physical benefits of riding the social aspect has been important. At 7 Dante had very few words in his vocabulary. With the amazing work that Sheila and her team of volunteers do, Dante has become a chatterbox. The sense of humour that the volunteers utilize has been incredible to watch. Dante views them as friends and knows he is safe with them. It is important to a child in a wheelchair to know those around him are looking out for him.

Dante participates in many types of therapies but none have had the overall impact that horseback riding has had.

Words are just not adequate to express our appreciation for what ETRA has done for Dante. Sheila and the awesome team of sidewalkers have been a blessing to Dante and our family. - Ken Armstrong



ETRA generously supported by:



United Way
Central & Northern
Vancouver Island

President's Report

By all measurements ETRA had a very successful year in 2012/13. Last year I commented on the contributions of our CANTRA certified instructor, Sheila Morrison; the facilities provided by our host, Pyramid Stables; our clients and their caregivers; our sponsors and our very special volunteers. All of those positive comments could be repeated again this year!

What I want to concentrate on in this year's message is:

ETRA Pledge Ride: Our annual Pledge Ride is an important fundraising event. This last year's event took place in the worst possible weather conditions. In spite of the meticulous planning and trail grooming the one factor that can't be controlled is the weather. As we were setting up the morning of the event our volunteers saw the weather get increasingly worse with

high winds and rain. What amazed me personally was the response of the horse riding community, who, in the past, have been great supporters of ETRA. In spite of the weather a large number of riders did the event and an even larger number attended the barbeque. The event was a huge success raising over \$14,000, our highest number ever! Thank you to all who did the ride, raised the pledges and supported our deserving clients.

Our Clients: We saw a number of new clients that joined the program this year. In particular one stands out. This client, who is deaf and has other disabilities, was very apprehensive about horses. She didn't even face the horse in her first lesson, the second lesson she turned towards the horse but couldn't manage to mount it. The third lesson was a breakthrough moment that still brings tears to my eyes.

She not only mounted the horse, she had a ball during the lesson, high-fiving the sidewalkers, touching the horse and smiling the entire time. Everyone who witnessed this was ecstatic! This was only possible because our Instructor, Sheila Morrison and the client's caregivers were patient and understanding. They did not force the client to do more than she was comfortable with, they were supportive and were eventually rewarded with a very positive outcome.

In closing, I want to thank departing ETRA Board members for their dedication and service. Our Vice President, Dwayne Peverett, our Treasurer, Connie Baird and our Program Coordinator, Kim Jury. Fortunately able replacements have stepped up to continue ETRA's good work.

Thanks to All
- Barry Galenzoski, ETRA President

The Freedom of Therapeutic Riding

This year at ETRA we had some unusual situations. We had one girl take 3 weeks to mount, but then after enjoying riding for 6 weeks decide not to continue. We had a second girl similarly take 3 weeks to mount the horse, but she has been so happy we expect her back in 2014. Another young man took 6 weeks and a lot of encouragement before he mounted the horse. It will be interesting to see if he is willing to try again in the spring session. Naturally such long preliminaries make one wonder what these clients are experiencing and what we can, and perhaps more importantly should, do to help them, especially if they have trouble expressing themselves. The first thing we can do is remember that all of us share some basic needs and preferences.

A sense of freedom is important, even essential, to all of us. The freedom to move, to act, to choose, to speak, to believe is as important as freedom from constraint or coercion. Many people, particularly children, are drawn to horses because they symbolize freedom. Horses are beautiful, powerful, fast and graceful, and by riding them we believe we can enhance our own power, speed, stature and ultimately freedom to move, act, and choose. One who does not ride remains "ground bound", or subject to constraint.

All of us are ground bound in some way or another, but the degree to which therapeutic clients are constrained is greater. Some lack freedom of movement, while others have less freedom of choice and action because of language or cognitive deficits and/or a greater susceptibility to anxiety or fear. Some have such difficulty both understanding and making themselves understood that we must just assume that they would rather be and feel more free than less. We know well how therapeutic riding helps some of our clients become physically freer; we also think simply being on a horse gives all of them the pleasure of feeling more free.

Yet horses are powerful and unpredictable and staying on them while they move is not that easy or even comfortable. It takes courage to get on and to stay on. Some of our clients, though terrified, are willing to take the risk because they know, consciously or not, that a greater sense of freedom is the reward. They are willing to increase their vulnerability for the sake of that reward. These clients bring to the lesson a strong desire for the freedom the horse represents. Other clients are more cautious and need time to watch the lessons and consider the risks and rewards. They may then decide that riding, but in a quiet way, perhaps just walking, with sidewalkers, is



Simon expressing his enthusiasm

ETRA generously supported by:



...continued page 4

24th ANNUAL Pledge Ride

- from the perspective of a cute, cantankerous, pleasantly plump and very smart pony

Hi, my name is Buddy. I am living at Pyramid Stables and am helping with ETRA's therapeutic riding program.

On September 22nd I attended together with some other horses and riders from our stable ETRA's Pledge Ride. I also met numerous horse buddies and riders from Silver Spurs Riding Club, Paradise Acres Ranch, Pyramid Stables, Cedar Horse Club and the Central Vancouver Island Chapter of the Back Country Horseman of BC. That was fun!

These ETRA guys managed to pick the first truly ugly day after a long, hot, gorgeous summer - what can I say! It was raining hard -I am talking torrential rain! - and it was stormy!

But we four and two legged participants did not mind this wet day: over 50 riders with us brave horses came out to support ETRA's program. Our humans managed to collect \$ 14,500 for ETRA, which - measured by the big smiles - was quite something! Good for them!

After we completed the trail ride, which I have to admit was really fun: nice trails, interesting scenery, good company, I walked down to the BBQ area. Of course we horses got fed before the riders went for their burgers and 'hot dogs' (better than 'hot ponies!'), I am talking of real nice horse people!

I was not too crazy about all the noise the humans made when Barry announced the top five pledge-amount winners, Barb McGowan, Jennifer Payne, Terry Kinch, Lesley Coultish and Helen DeFago.



Therapeutic pony Buddy and pledge rider Alexa Kyler

But then, in the middle of all the noise my highlight of this already pretty awesome day happened: I ran into Jonathan, my rider on therapeutic riding days! He had dropped by with his family and we had a very nice visit!

Finally back home again, I was very pleased with this wet, stormy Pledge Ride day and was really looking forward to start the riding sessions with Jonathan again - and of course nip the ETRA guys in their behinds, if I get the chance!

- Buddy (with a little help from Gini Eder)



Grace & Jonathan (2013 featured rider) visiting Buddy

ETRA thanks the following businesses for their generous 2013 Pledge Ride support:

- Arbutus Meadows Equestrian Centre
- Boston Pizza Parksville
- Breezes Salon Spa
- Bridles & Bits Feed and Tack
- Buckerfield's Parksville
- Coast Realty Group
- Cutting Edge
- Eaglecrest Golf Club
- Earl's Restaurant
- Fairwinds Golf Course
- Flight Centre Woodgrove
- Ken-Dor Nursery
- Lefty's Cafe
- McDonald's Parksville
- Memorial Golf Club
- Milanos Café & Grill
- North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre
- Oceanside Star
- The Old Country Market Coombs
- Paradise Mini Golf
- Parksville/Qualicum Beach News
- Quality Foods Parksville
- Shar-Kare Parksville
- Shaw TV
- Shear Creations Hair Salon
- Smitty's Restaurant Parksville
- Starbucks Country Club
- Swiss Chalet
- Thrifty Foods Parksville
- Tiger Lily Farm
- Tigh-Na-Mara
- Tim Hortons Parksville
- The Trading Post Feed & Tack
- White Spot
- Zougla Restaurant

Save the Date! Next Pledge Ride SEPTEMBER 14, 2014

The Freedom of Therapeutic Riding continued...

enough reward for the risk. Others are willing to try but soon find that riding is not for them... they do not feel more free, but rather more threatened by the strangeness of the horse, and the greater social demands inherent to the riding lesson. While we may think it is in everyone's best interest to ride, some clients do not want to risk losing what little control they have over their lives. While some are determined to ride, others are equally determined not to ride. If our job is to enhance the feeling of being free we must respect the choices of our clients.

As for those of our clients who are unable to express clearly their desires and choices, some are more susceptible to the pressure to conform than others. All we can do in instances where we are unsure of what the client wants is to remind ourselves that our goal is greater freedom for the client, and the means to this end must not involve too much pressure, even if we believe riding would be good for the client. Patience is crucial, as is encouragement, but so too is the willingness to let each client decide wherein freedom lies. Interestingly enough, this is also true of riding in general. We cannot achieve our goal of riding a horse who moves freely and beautifully by over pressing or unduly restricting it. All we can do is help it to balance under our weight so that the freedom of movement and expression that attracted us to it in the first place is enhanced. It is by taking the risks inherent in riding so as to enlarge our horse's sense of power and freedom and well being that we can reap the reward of feeling less ground bound and more free ourselves, at least for a few glorious moments. If we can also give our therapeutic clients the opportunity to accept freely the risks of riding, there is no reason why they cannot experience, each in his or her own way, that same joy. – *Sheila Morrison, ETRA Instructor*



Feels like freedom

Program Coordinator

The volunteers and clients of ETRA enjoyed a very successful 2013. We continued with our two 11-week sessions, one in the spring and one in the fall. We ran 5 one-hour lessons on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with a maximum of four riders per lesson. We can accommodate up to 40 clients each session, and in 2013, we again were full to capacity for both sessions. We also continued to have an extensive wait list.

We have many clients that return to us session after session. They return over and over again because there is nothing quite like riding a horse. The time with the horses gives

them not only the opportunity to achieve physical goals, whether they be riding skills, improving their balance, or strengthening their muscles, but it also gives many of our clients a sense of empowerment that they often don't get in other areas of their lives. While many of our clients were returning clients, we also were able to give several new clients the opportunity to try riding. It is always such a pleasure to watch a client new to horses climb on for the first time, sometimes overcoming fear of the unknown, and sometimes with giddy excitement.

As a volunteer with ETRA, one of my favorite parts has always been seeing the

clients progress on so many levels. We've watched some clients too nervous to pet the horse on the first day, and others who had to be held up by sidewalkers due to lack of core strength. Before we know it though, the too nervous client is practically running up the ramp, so excited to get on, and the client who had little to no core strength is now holding himself completely upright with no help at all. It's magic and I am grateful to be a part of it.

I know 2014 will be just as successful as 2013 for ETRA and ETRA's clients.

– *Kim Jury*

Pyramid Stables and Farm Inc

Pyramid Stables continues to be a great home for ETRA. The new fern-lined trail along the golf course has proven to be a nice addition to our outdoor rides and is enjoyed by both the volunteers and clients. As well, the volunteers have very much appreciated the installation of storage cupboards in the kitchen. The cupboards have saved many volunteer steps by not having to move supplies back and forth daily.

Horse highlights of 2013 include the addition of two new horses to the program: Chester and Turbo. Both are larger horses, making them great additions to the program. Turbo especially has become a favorite

with clients and volunteers. Prince returned to the program this fall after a long absence. He loved all the extra attention and pats his return brought and is happy to be back working. Rosie, a long time favorite, has left



Happy retirement, Rosie!

the program. She has earned her retirement and has moved to a new home. Her even temperament and her ability to cope with most clients will be missed.

Jenny, Howie and their great staff always make us feel welcome and continue to accommodate us where possible. We look forward to what the 2014 sessions will bring.

– *Kathy Calder*

www.pyramidstables.com





Volunteers

We have enjoyed another great year of therapeutic riding. It seems there is no task that our volunteers won't take on, whether it be cleaning tack, clearing trails, assisting with parking, setting up tents, cooking up some burgers or counting up the money, there are always enough volunteers willing to help.

I hope that every volunteer has had at least one special moment that makes what we do so worthwhile. I personally met a young lady in our community who rode with us a few years ago. She praised everyone involved with our program saying that riding not only improved her strength and balance but also gave her some much needed confidence. She now has 2 horses of her own and rides independently.

Thank you all for the time and effort you have put in to making this program so successful. - Karen Anker



Fundraising Report for Fiscal Year 2012/13

ETRA's fiscal year ended August 31, 2013 and left it in a good financial position for providing the Therapeutic Riding program in 2014. A team effort by board members and volunteers resulted in ETRA exceeding its goal of \$36,500 by an excellent margin.

	FY 2012	FY 2013	Increase/(Decrease)
In house fundraising	\$10,753.00	\$14,145.00	\$3,392.00
Grants	\$7,100.00	\$13,800.00	\$6,700.00
Service Clubs	\$11,050.00	\$9,967.00	(\$1,083.00)
Others	\$6,338.00	\$12,056.00	\$5,718.00
Total	\$35,061.00	\$49,968.00	\$14,907.00

This year's Pledge Ride has been an outstanding success, raising \$14,500 and it has given us a good start for our new Fiscal Year 2013/14. Our grateful thanks go to all our generous supporters and benefactors.

– Hanna Coulson



David Hahn, Costco Warehouse Manager and Lori James, Costco employee being presented a Certificate of Appreciation from Dwayne Peverett ETRA-VP (2013)

ETRA Exposure

2013 was a busy year for promoting ETRA through a variety of events. Our volunteers helped greet visitors from all over the world at the Parksville Beachfest Sand Sculptures. We also had information booths set up at the RCMP Musical Ride, the Mid-Island CADORA Dressage show, International Day of People with Disabilities at VIU as well as our commitments to United Way and Service Club talks. Shaw came to tape a TV segment at the stables. They are all opportunities to raise funds, spread the word of ETRA, recruit volunteers and make new friends. Well done ETRA!



ETRA generously supported by:



AN ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



District of Lantzville

Sponsors, Benefactors and Service Clubs in 2012/13

ETRA gratefully acknowledges the support of the following Sponsors, Benefactors and Service Clubs in 2013

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- Bellevue Veterinary Hospital
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- Phillips Brewing Company
- Polycom
- Martha Pow
- Pyramid Stables (Home of ETRA)
- Quality Foods
- Seabreeze Riding Stables
- Shar-Kare
- Silverspur Horse Club
- Toby Stubbs
- The Trading Post (Cassidy)
- Thrifty's
- Tim Horton
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- Vancouver Island Real Estate Board
- Bruce Whitehead

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- Benevolent Association District 69
- Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
 - Lodge 26 Nanaimo
 - Lodge 589 Parksville Qualicum
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 - Church of the Ascension Parish
- Fraternal Order of Eagles
 - Aerie 15 Nanaimo
 - Aerie 2096 Port Alberni
- Independent Order of Odd Fellows
- Kiwanis Club
 - Parksville/Qualicum
- Lioness Club
 - Harbour Lites Nanaimo
 - Parksville

- Lions Club
 - Hub City Nanaimo
 - Qualicum Bay
- Rotary Club
 - Daybreak (Nanaimo)
 - Lantzville
- Royal Canadian Legion
 - Branch 49 Mount Arrowsmith
 - Branch 211 Bowser
 - Branch 256 Mount Benson
 - Branch 257 Lantzville
- Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary
 - Branch 49 Mount Arrowsmith
 - Branch 211 Bowser
- Women of the Moose
 - Chapter 197 Nanaimo



Our sincere apologies if we have missed donors in this issue.

This sign appears at all ETRA functions and at Pyramid Stables. We are very proud to display the names of those who make our program possible. From our clients, their families and caregivers, and our volunteers thank you for making a difference.

**2013/2014 ETRA
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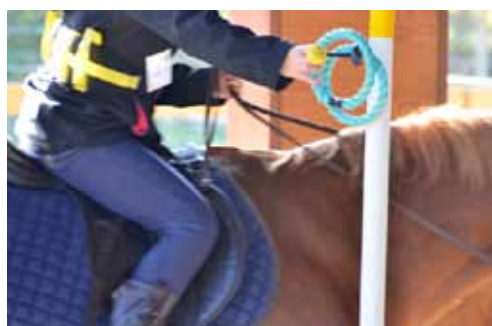
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