



From the Director's Desk ...

What EAT has meant to us . . . (EAT Participant Family)

Our toddler was diagnosed with significant developmental delays at 2 and 1/2 years old. She had motor delays affecting fine and gross motor, along with speech delays. Normal activities that your typical toddler enjoys: such as going to the playground, sitting on slow moving trains (like at the zoo), and riding a carousel were almost torturous for us. She would refuse to do any of it without screaming, flopping, hitting, or kicking. She refused to do these things because she was weak in her legs and in her core, and it made her sense of balance so unstable that she was petrified.

We are now two years into riding horses with Equine -Assisted Therapy. The change was evident after the first few months. She could now get on her bike easily. Before, she didn't have the coordination or the strength, to swing her leg over her bike to ride her tricycle. She even mastered her scoot bike the first year.

Onto the 2nd year of riding horses: Her core is strong, her legs are strong. She has beautiful posture in her saddle. That strength has carried over to other things. She is now more adventurous: climbing trees, taking flying leaps off ledges/buildings. She is confident in her movement and her purpose when she is playing. Some things still scare her, and bring out her flight or fright response, but the number of things has lessened incredibly. She will purposely spin herself around to make her dizzy, which a year ago she wouldn't have been able to do.

As a parent, I wanted my child to be confident and strong. The world is already somewhat of a cruel place, and we have run into bullies already at the age of 2. Horseback riding helps give her that confidence, and the grin on her face when she's done something hard is priceless. She is now considered up to grade level with her gross motor skills, which I truly believe is due to the horseback riding (not the years of physical therapy).



From Judy, the EAT Certified Riding Instructor:

When this adorable little girl began her riding lessons with EAT, her parents' goals for her were to increase her confidence, strengthen her core, and to reduce her fear of animals and new situations. I decided our beloved (and now retired) Goose would be the perfect horse for her. He is smaller, super calm and has a nice trot to engage her core. She was quite timid at that first lesson.

We used a surcingle with a handle bar and she held on tight those first couple of lessons! Each week she gained confidence in commanding her horse to "walk on" and "whoa". Each week she gained confidence in commanding her horse to "walk on" and "whoa". As she realized that Goose really did listen to her, you could see the effect it was having on her to be able to direct this animal that was so large in her eyes.

For a small child to be on a horse, up above all those around her and be in command is a huge confidence booster. As a result, her speech and interaction with volunteers increased dramatically. She became a joyful rider and her smile lights up the arena. Her posture and tone were weak with a posterior tilt to her pelvis when riding, so I eventually switched her to a surcingle with no bar, just a grab strap, so she would not be able to rely on the bar for support. This also reinforced her use of reins. After a couple of sessions Julia was sitting up straight with good alignment.

Since surcingles have no stirrups, I used a modified mounting technique where I used my left hand as a "stirrup" and had her use her own strength to step up and to get in position. She struggled at first. Normally we would lift a small rider onto the surcingle or put them at the ramp where they could just lift a leg over the horse to mount, but I knew her parents wanted Julia to be able to do things more independently at home. Soon she was mounting by herself with just close support from instructor and sidewalkers and best of all, she was balancing on skates and riding her bike at home! She even brought her bike to class to show us how she "mounts" her bike.

Whenever we worked on two-point position or "heels down" in class, the sidewalkers would place their free hand under Julia's foot so she could get the feel of having weight in a "stirrup" and to balance against. Just recently Julia graduated to an English saddle on her latest mount, Sarge. All that fun "work" with the surcingle, games and activities in class that worked her core and the benefits of the natural movement of Goose and Sarge paid off.

Julia now has great riding posture and increased strength to control her horse when steering around barrels and weaving cones. Pretty amazing considering that she is not yet five years old! She is working on maintaining balance in the two-point position at longer distances and is getting better each week. And fear of animals? Gone, as far as EAT horses are concerned. Julia hugs her horse, lays on him, does a 360 degree turn on his back, and even has led him in the arena!

Next goal? Independent riding.



♥ Thank You ♥♥ Thank You ♥

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A number of people are always working behind the scenes to keep our facilities beautiful and running smoothly:

- ♥ Barn Buddies - ur more than Wonderful Barn Buddies
- ♥ Board - Our Illustrious EAT Board
- ♥ Carla, our T&C Barn Manager
- ♥ CRI - Thanks to CRI's Judy, Liz and Marti for 2 beautiful new saddles – one for each location!
- ♥ David Frazier of Kona Ice donated 10% of his earnings from the T&C Community Days Event
- ♥ Homestead Veterinary Hospital
- ♥ Instructors - Our Expert Instructors
- ♥ Jody Delf did another amazing job decorating our WW Facility for the Holidays
- ♥ Judy, Marti, Carla, Liz, Linda, Chuck, Lulu, and Karen for keeping the horses Fine-Tuned Over the Winter
- ♥ Kathy Matti – Tack Donation
- ♥ Keith Pey - our Cracker-Jack Newsletter Editor
- ♥ Kevin Olson
- ♥ "King" Dave Holst (EAT's 2015 T&C) asked his family to donate to EAT in lieu of Christmas gifts this year – a truly gracious ruler!
- ♥ Linds and Brandon, our Super Office Team
- ♥ Mark Dorsey for bringing us 20 bags of grain for our therapy herd!
- ♥ Matt Eckelkamp for helping Gary build a drag for the tractor to pull around the driveway and arenas and for filling in the holes left in our wheelchair ramp by a slight mishap last year
- ♥ Paul & Christina Tobin— in honor of John Henry
- ♥ Pearson Family
- ♥ Rick Turner – Tack Guy
- ♥ Rick Winheim – Farrier
- ♥ Sally & Don Morton for making a donation to EAT in honor of MY birthday!
- ♥ Sandy Steinkamp – tack donation
- ♥ Scott & Chuck Smith for helping with the Pasture Clean Up
- ♥ St Louis Equine Veterinary Services – Dr David Hunt
- ♥ Volunteers - Our Fabulous Volunteers, one and all!
- ♥ Walgreens – Gravois Bluffs made a donation to EAT for Magic, Tator, Spuds and our special Elves, Katie and Nick, escorting their Santa into Fenton for the season



Every year we have the most wonderful group of annual donors who have supported all we do at EAT for anywhere from 1 – all 10 years of our existence. We wholeheartedly thank them for their continued support:

- ♥ Thank you to the donor - who wishes to remain anonymous - for the money to purchase new automatic, front gates at our Wildwood facility.
- ♥ Beckmann Family
- ♥ Mark & Diane Fletcher
- ♥ Sarah Trulaske
- ♥ Sugarbaker Foundation

- ♥ Black Family in honor of EAT Participant Lily Rogers
- ♥ Knights of Columbus Council 11139
- ♥ Gaye Welsh Ragen
- ♥ Gilbert Family
- ♥ Helen Wetterau thru Jody Delf
- ♥ Badler Family
- ♥ Ella Heimburger Fund, Columbian Charities of Missouri thanks to The Cortright & Wright families
- ♥ Perlmutter Optical
- ♥ Halley Family in memory of their sons, Graham & Derek
- ♥ MO Cameo Club
- ♥ Tom Rider
- ♥ Peggy Browne
- ♥ Don Morton – in honor of EAT volunteer, Sally Morton
- ♥ Tiffany Schroeder – in honor of volunteer, Sally Morton
- ♥ Todd Morton – in honor of EAT volunteer, Sally Morton
- ♥ Tracy Hersh - in honor of volunteers, Bob & Sandy Bower
- ♥ Shawn Bower in honor of volunteers, Bob & Sandy Bower
- ♥ Vincent, Dawn and Zia Zagarri



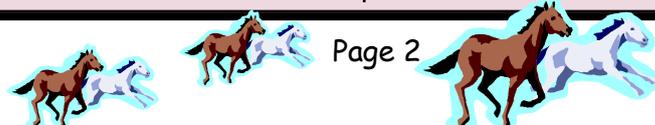
Many of our volunteers refer EAT to their Employer whether as a Matching Grant, a Charitable Foundation donation or the business practice of paying for each hour employees serve in a charity. This is such a cool way for employers to know their employees are active in the community as compassionate volunteers. Companies can donate to charities that really mean something to their own employees. This results in great donations to our super worthy charity. (-:

Thank you to:

- ♥ Denise Crow and Amgen
- ♥ Roger and Jason Fauss and Pricewaterhouse Cooper
- ♥ Ian Halley and Boeing
- ♥ Cal Kretsinger and Ameren/NAFA Fleet Managers Association
- ♥ Cheryl Barnett and Liberty Mutual
- ♥ Jeff West – Boeing Company

**In Memory of Annmarie Roberson
Riding Instructor at Baskin Farms**

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| ♥ Todd Strawser | ♥ Mrs Patty Taylor |
| ♥ Anne Koenig | ♥ Mary Kusmer |
| ♥ Amy & Mark Dodds | ♥ Charles Waeltz |
| ♥ The Reando Family | ♥ Stuart Huels |





Equine-Assisted Therapy

(314) 971-0605

EAT News

EAT Volunteer Training

Every week E.A.T. seeks to enhance the daily lives of its more than 100 participants by opening the gates of horsemanship to them so they can reap the benefits of mental and physical strengthening.

Come find out how you can be a part of the smiles we see every day brought about by the magnificent horse!

Our Annual Volunteer Training is February 7th from noon to 2 pm at our Wildwood location - 3369 Hwy 109, Wildwood, MO 63038

Ph - 314-971-0605 e-mail - info@eatherapy.org

Web - www.eatherapy.org

Current E.A.T. volunteers wishing to become leaders, your training will be at the same time. Please let us know if we are to expect you.

We Love Our Volunteers!!!



Lucky's Market – Ellisville, MO

EAT – 5 Years of Service



When you shop with a reusable bag at Lucky's Market in Ellisville, at the checkout you'll receive a wooden dime for each bag to donate to a local nonprofit.

Equine-Assisted Therapy is one of those nonprofits from January 1-March 31. And when you donate your wooden dime, Lucky's Market will match that donation!

It's a super easy way to help out a great cause!



Hip-Hip-Hooray for this year's 5 Years of Service t-shirt recipients! We thank you for your many hours of service to Equine-Assisted Therapy, its participants and horses. You guys are the best!

♥ Denise Bertrand ~ ~ Elliot Forseter
♥ Barbie Perlmutter ~ ~ Pam Schneithorst





Schnucks eScrip All-Star Ronnie Kaufman

A special Thank You to Ronnie Kaufman, T&C Volunteer, for his continued support of EAT through participation in the Schnucks eScrip program. Below is an excerpt from an email Ronnie recently received from Schnucks. . . .



" Dear Ronnie,

We'd like to express our appreciation for your patronage and community support. You are one of our very best eScrip supporters, and for that we say "thank you"!



We are proud to say we are a part of the eScrip program that has raised over \$395 million nationwide for our local schools, churches and nonprofit organizations, including the ones right here at home like Equine - Assisted Therapy Inc. "

NAFA Fleet Manager's Assoc. Visit Cal Kretsinger, CAFM—EAT Board Member

On Wednesday, December 17th, Equine-Assisted Therapy hosted the monthly meeting of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the North American Fleet Association (NAFA) . NAFA is an international organization of vehicle fleet executives and affiliates (suppliers) that focuses on education and networking, and offers a fleet management certification program (CAFM). Maria Gomez, Security Supervisor for Ameren Corporation, made an excellent and timely presentation on "Situational Awareness", skills that can assist employees when they encounter a protest roadblock, carjacking, or other threatening situations.



EAT Board Member
Cal Kretsinger, CAFM

The fleet executives from the St. Louis area, representing employers like Ameren, AT&T, The City of Kirkwood, and Clean Cities, along with affiliates from around the US representing General Motors, Ford, and others, enjoyed a catered lunch from Bartolino's. They also enjoyed riding demonstrations put on by Judy, Carla, Marti, and LuLu, who volunteered to come in and "exercise" some of the horses.

The December chapter meeting is also the local chapter's charity event. The group watched the EAT promotional video and Gary Hartke gave more details about the various programs offered, the benefits to our participants, and the scholarship program. The group responded with \$805 in cash donations and an interest in coming back again.

EAT board member Cal Kretsinger, CAFM, made the arrangements for this meeting. This is the second time that the local NAFA chapter has held their December meeting at EAT's Wildwood location.

Thanks to WW Alderman Sewell



A huge hug to Equine-Assisted Therapy's WildWood Alderman, David Sewell, for donating his entire 2014 Alderman pay to Equine-Assisted Therapy. A true testimony to David's belief in all we do at EAT in support of his beloved community.





Therapy with Horses?

By Ally Dillon, EAT Volunteer

Opening New Ideas

One way that there has been a new way for therapy is with horses. It is truly amazing, to me at least, how well the kids and the adults get along with the horses so easily. I have been volunteering at Equine-Assisted Therapy for about three or four years now, and I love seeing the progress the participants quickly make. If they are nonverbal, they learn some signs very easily to help them communicate to the horses or volunteers. If they are afraid to ride at first but, after a little bit of time, they are having the time of their life!

On the horses, they work on balance, fine motor, and even some speech. Founder of Equine-Assisted Therapy, Ginni Hartke, was talking about one of their first riders, Evan, who had Cerebral Palsy. She said that "In Evan's first session we focused on strengthening his core muscle tone, the muscles that support the torso and all those organs- liver, lungs, heart, intestine and his skeletal structure- ribcage, spine, hips and shoulders." The lessons continued and Evan kept on getting better, so by the time his Dad, an anesthesiologist, was transferred to Chicago, he had started to speak very quietly as his lungs and diaphragm had strengthened, was able to sit up on his own and take a few steps! But it doesn't stop with just Cerebral Palsy, this can help all different kinds of people. Hartke later says that "...a horse can help every person it comes in contact with; whether they be physically or mentally disabled, a teenage girl, a senior citizen, at-risk youth, one of our veterans home from serving his/her country or even the parents of disabled children." She continues with how the horses will do amazing things, like "laying their head on the chest of a child in the midst of having a seizure or even bypass an offered apple and go straight over to put their head on a crying, grieving woman." These horses are capable of many incredible things.

While volunteering there, I have seen amazing things happen, but my favorite thing to see there is joy. The participants love the horses, and as Hartke said, "They smile, they laugh, they get excited, they play, they socialize, they are so proud of their accomplishments. All these things are *huge* to a child with disabilities." I have to agree, seeing them so excited and joyful on top of the horse always brightens my day. Hartke goes on to talk about how this helps the participants on a less visible level, "the heart begins to beat more quickly once a child is up on his/her horse just as in any exercise. This increases O2 to all parts of the body, parts that rarely enjoy such "luxury" for our physically disabled participants. For our mentally challenged riders, riding a horse offers stimulation they've never had before so we keep all other stimulation- talking, music, activity- to a minimum on their first visit while they adjust to the sights, smells, movement, new faces and magnitude of all they're experiencing at that moment."

These joyful experiences have been very eye opening as I have experienced other types of therapy for people, for example the place where I volunteered before, Small Animal and Farm Therapy, where I worked with the rabbits. But, no other place I ever been has made me feel such joy as working with the horses and the riders. Hartke finishes up what she has to say with this, "More and more research is being done on the effects of therapeutic horseback riding and the findings are very promising. Meanwhile, we just love what we do for our participants and their families. We've seen some of the most wonderful miracles occur at Equine-Assisted Therapy and although it is a non-profit, charitable, organization and caring for horses and their facilities required for this program is very expensive, I'm proud to be part of what's happening at EAT." Personally, I feel that there is no better way to say it than that.



EAT Guest Authors . . .

We have many different roles and responsibilities that come together to make EAT a success. This month we asked some of our folks involved with EAT to write articles for the Newsletter. Here's just a few of groups represented in this month's Newsletter.

[Barn Buddy](#) - Mary Kate Wiese, T&C Barn Buddy tells how she stayed was able to stay involved with EAT after volunteering as a Sidewalker was no longer an option for her.

[Board Member](#) - Cal Kretsinger, talks about bringing the fleet managers in and is spearheading a work day at EAT using his business co-workers from Ameren.

[Participant Family](#) - (Julia/Participant) - Julia's Mom shares some of the benefits gained from Julia's participation in EAT Therapy

[Certified Riding Instructor](#) - Judy, gives a different perspective on Julia's sessions.

[Volunteer Leader/Sidewalker](#) - Ally Dillon, shares her insights and experiences as an EAT Volunteer

[United States Veteran](#) - Victor explains his first days at EAT



Barn Buddy Insights

By Mary Kate Wiese, EAT Barn Buddy

Hi EAT gang! My name is Mary Kate Wiese and I started volunteering with this organization in the summer of 2010. I started as a sidewalker in the weekly classes and volunteered a few times a week. However, shortly after, my weekdays began to get more and more hectic and I no longer had the time to be a sidewalker.

Soon I discovered "the barn buddies" and knew it sounded perfect for me. I have been a barn buddy for almost four years now and I still love every minute of it. Being around animals has always brought me great joy, and spending time each week with "the boys" has only strengthened that feeling.

Being around the horses is not the only reason that I am so enthusiastic about this volunteer position, but also knowing that what I'm doing is helping the organization and that it couldn't function without the work that the barn buddies put in every week. I have seen the smiles on the kids' faces while they are up on the horses during class and it makes me very happy to know that my volunteer work is helping make that possible.

Volunteer work has been a large part of my life starting at about sixth grade and I continue to participate in various volunteer groups outside of EAT, including National Honor Society (NHS). I will be attending Mizzou next fall in pursuit of a career in Veterinary Medicine, and I hope to continue to volunteer work both on and off campus while living in Columbia.



God Bless our Veterans!

By Victor, EAT Veteran

A few words from one of our troops:

The things I learned from taking the therapy session at EAT. It was intimidating at first to know that I would be working with horses. When I first saw the different types of horse, I was immediately looking for the smallest one. But it turns out, all horses are big. :)

The first horse I worked with did not work out. So I had to look for another one. But when I found Cowboy, I knew we were going to make it work. It was great to learn all the things it takes to maintain a horse and that all that leads up to bonding with the horses, or the one that chases you.

I learned that if you give them respect, you will get that in return. Sometimes they like to test your patience but will always let you control them. Even though you do not need to talk a lot with the horses, they do know how you feel and will respond to your feelings. The horses also have feelings and they may be having a bad day just like humans. It was interesting to know that they are a lot like humans. I can continue on with this story as I have learned quite a few. But I am greatly please with the opportunity that was given to veteran's and knowing that horses can provide some form of therapy for them.



~Victor



2015 - EAT Calendar . . .

WINTER SESSION – Dec 1 – 20, 2014 and Jan 4 – 31, 2015

NEW VOLUNTEER AND LEADER TRAINING - Saturday February 7th – noon to 2 pm at WW

SESSION 1 - Feb 8th – March 28th – Wildwood only

ANNUAL EGG HUNT MARCH 28th – 11:00 am at T&C

Session break – no classes March 29th – April 4th

No classes April 5th for Easter



SESSION 2 - April 6th – May 22rd – both locations

No classes Saturday May 23rd for Memorial Day Weekend

No classes Sunday May 10th for Mothers Day

Session Break – no classes May 24th – May 30th

SESSION 3 - May 31st – July 19th – both locations

*note extra Sunday class due to so many events falling on Sundays

No classes Sunday June 21st for Fathers Day

No classes Saturday July 4th or Sunday July 5th for 4th of July weekend

Session break – no classes July 20th – Aug 1st

SESSION 4 - Aug 2nd – Sept 19th – both locations

3rd ANNUAL HOE DOWN – SATURDAY Sept 26 – 4 – 8 pm at WW

No classes Sept 5th, 6th or 7th for Labor Day weekend

Session break – no classes Sept 20th – Sept 26th

SESSION 5 - Sept 27th – Nov 13th – WW

Sept 27th – Oct 24th – T&C

FALL FESTIVAL – Saturday Oct 3 – 3 pm – 6 pm – T&C

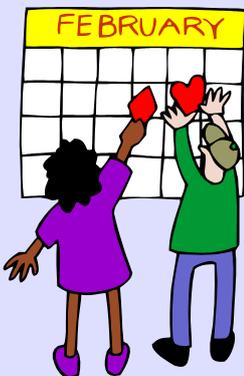
No classes October 3rd for Fall Festival

4th ANNUAL PARTICIPANT HORSE SHOW – SUNDAY OCT 18th – 10 am – 2 pm at WW

VOLUNTEER THANKSGIVING DINNER – SATURDAY NOV 14th – 6 pm – 8 pm at WW

No classes Sunday Oct 18th for the Participant Horse Show

No classes Saturday Nov 14th for Volunteer Thanksgiving Dinner



*even though WW and T&C are not the same as far as #'ing sessions goes, they will be marked the same for bookkeeping purposes.



EAT's Mission . . .

Equine-Assisted Therapy, Inc has but one purpose; that is to provide horsemanship experiences to persons with mental, physical, and psychological disabilities in order to enhance the quality and productivity of their lives.



Please 'like' us on Facebook
www.facebook/eatherapy

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