



Barn Chatter

Fall 2017

**The Horse As
Teacher, Therapist
and Friend**

**MISSION:
Serving those in
Greater Augusta
County with
Physical
Emotional
Developmental
Special Needs
through a wide range
of therapeutic equine
activities.**

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Special Events

February, 2018:
Bingo Fundraiser!

March 18, 2018:
Spring Session Starts

May 12—13, 2018:
Patrick King Clinic



*Happy Holidays from
Ride With Pride!!!*



President's Corner

Hello, everyone! We have completed another exciting year at Ride With Pride. We've had many changes and challenges and I want to express my appreciation and gratitude to everyone who has helped RWP through all the transitions. Both our staff and our volunteers, as well as our horses, are now looking forward to a wonderful holiday season and we are excited to start again in the spring.

Among the many changes for our program is a change in leadership. Ride With Pride is proud to introduce our new Program Director, Kelsey Lasher! For those of you who have supported our program over the years, Kelsey is a familiar face. She has been working with horses for over 15 years. She started riding when she was 7 years old and fell in love! She knew from an early age she wanted to build her career around horses and she has trained students and taught many lessons over the years. Kelsey has been working for Ride With Pride for a little over 4 years, starting out as a volunteer and gradually assuming new responsibilities within the program. She has worked as a barn worker, instructor, and volunteer coordinator. Kelsey is excited to continue her work for Ride With Pride in her new role as Program Director and one of our PATH Certified instructors. She plans to graduate from Bridgewater College with a major in Psychology and a minor in Equine Management in 2018. Please join us in welcoming Kelsey in her new role!

Finally, best wishes to all our volunteers, staff and supporters for a beautiful, safe, and happy holiday season this winter. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

**Laura Martlock
President, Board of Directors**

Director's Report

I can't believe 2017 is coming to a close and we are all preparing for the Holidays! I am so grateful for a wonderful year and to be given the opportunity to be Ride With Pride's new Program Director. Working with this organization for so many years has taught me a lot and now I hope to be able to take that knowledge to help this program continue to grow and flourish. I feel extremely honored to be able to take on the role as Program Director.

As we round out the year I would like to highlight a few things that we have done in the last several months. We met our goal of 150 students this year with 52 students riding this fall. We had our end-of-the-year Student Horse Show for our riders to demonstrate their skills to their friends and families and boy, was that a blast! We also updated our website so I encourage everyone to go to <http://ridewithprideva.org/> and take a look! I look forward to next year and all that it holds!

**Kelsey Lasher
Program Director, PATH Certified Instructor**



NICKER NEWS - Horse Report



“Ride With Pride is a fitting name, because it truly does instill pride in our participants. Riders with developmental and emotional challenges gain a sense of purpose, responsibility and discipline while those with physical challenges gain strength and balance.”
 - Alisa Fernez

Our wonderful team of therapy horses have gone home for their winter vacation. Our team of ten helped us finish up a wonderful year. The Ride With Pride area of the barn seems so much quieter without the soft chewing of the horses eating their hay, or the loud greeting whinny from Beau every time someone walks in the barn. But don't fret! All that noise will be back in March when the horses come back from their vacation. We will also be recruiting for new therapy horses this winter. Any new candidates will be coming to the barn in January to learn all about therapy. Our goal is to add a new draft horse or two to our team. If you are interested in more information or know of a horse that may work for our program, please contact Kelsey at info@ridewithprideva.org.

Stall Sponsorships

Our horses are the heart of our program. Please consider being a stall sponsor for one or more of these amazing animals. With this sponsorship, you will help pay for their monthly board at the barn as well as their hoof care and general upkeep. To find out more information please contact Kelsey at info@ridewithprideva.org.

Volunteer Corner

Ride With Pride is approaching the end of another wonderful year and we would like to thank all of our volunteers for making this possible! Without their help, our students would not be able to ride and achieve their many wonderful accomplishments. Our volunteers come from all over our community, from local community members to college students at Bridgewater and Murphy Deming. We would like to give an extra thank you to James Madison University. Several clubs and fraternities from JMU promote our name and strive to insure we have enough volunteers. So THANK YOU, JMU and thank you to all of our volunteers for helping us throughout the year!

The Spring session will be starting up again in March and we will be in need of volunteers. If you or someone you know would like to find out more information about volunteering with Ride With Pride, please visit our website at <http://ridewithprideva.org/contact-us/> or send an email to volunteer4rwp@gmail.com. You may also call us at 540-255-2210.



What's Happening at Ride With Pride?

Recent Events

Earlier this fall, Ride With Pride had more than just a full load of clients in the fall session. With the leaves at their peak of fall color, we also had an extremely beautiful benefit trail ride organized by Laura Martlock, our Board President. Assisted by Virginia Armstrong and several other community members, Laura mapped out the three trails riders could choose based on distance. They then spent several weeks clearing and marking these trails so our fellow community trail riders could have a wonderful time and a safe ride. We had a very good turnout and we hope to see more next year!

Ride With Pride also held our Student Horse Show and Halloween party this fall. The Student Horse Show was a huge success. Our students were outstanding and impressed our judge, Jacob Arbaugh, as well as their friends and family. There was also a great turnout for the Halloween party and we were able to give away some amazing prizes thanks to those wonderful individuals and companies that donated! We hope to see more join us next year at these wonderful events!



Upcoming Events

Giving Tree:

Please join us in supporting Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau, Inc. for their annual Ride With Pride Giving Tree. It's simple, just stop by the Staunton or Weyers Cave store and grab a tree tag from the tree! A sales representative will help you locate that needed item, and make sure that it reaches the Ride With Pride team!



Year-End Report

RWP has concluded its Therapeutic Riding sessions for 2017. It's been a successful year as we have increased the number of riders in all sessions from 110 in 2016 to 161 this year, an increase of 45%. Our income from therapeutic riding also increased by 18% from 2016. That's good news since we helped more people but it's not the whole story. We're not in this for the money but horses have to eat, need new shoes, and get sick once in a while. Without healthy horses, there is no equine therapy. There is an associated cost to partner a qualified instructor and horse as part of a team for a rider (volunteers are a necessary part of the team but they donate their time). We strive to be affordable for the majority of our riders. To break even, we rely on the generosity of donors and grantors. We would like to thank our many generous donors for their help.

- McDonough Toyota and Scion
 - Churchville Ruritan Club
 - Pleasant View Spring Hill Ruritan Club
 - Virginia Horse Trials LLC
 - Bike Virginia
 - Staunton Rotary Club
 - Tuesday Club of Augusta County
 - William & Karin Banks Foundation
 - St James United Methodist
 - Staunton Elks Lodge #351
 - Second Presbyterian Church
- And many individual donors**

We would also like to thank the following organizations for their grants. **Our most recent grant of \$500 came from the Shenandoah Valley Kiwanis Club (SVKC) and we very much appreciate it.** We are grateful to all of you for your help.

- Youth Philanthropy Council
- Community Foundation Central Blue Ridge
- J&E Berkley Foundation
- The Brant Foundation, Inc.
- Augusta Staunton VFW Post 2216
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charlottesville
- Shenandoah Valley Kiwanis
- American Quarter Horse Foundation
- Amazon Smile Foundation

For all our readers, please consider making a donation to RWP. Small, recurring donations are especially helpful in meeting our short-term needs. Look at our website at <http://ridewithprideva.org/donate/> for a wish list of our needs and a link to donate electronically. It's also easy to donate electronically through your bank.



Testimonials

I would like to give a big thank you to Ride with Pride! My name is Heather and I have a son, Dallas, that takes horseback riding. Dallas is taking lessons there for several reasons.

Now, about Dallas and our journey and how we got here - Dallas grew up with his father in and out of his life. His father has always stayed in trouble and is in jail. Even just the little bit of time that Dallas had with his father was not a great experience. I started noticing some things abnormal in Dallas that didn't represent at his child level. So I begin a long year of testing that finally gave me the answers I felt comfortable with. For that year Dallas was a big emotional roller coaster.

Dallas has been diagnosed with 16p13.11 microduplication with associated developmental delay and coordination difficulties. This genetic disorder is a bipolar disorder. He also has a sensory processing disorder and anxiety. He has a nerve disorder which sometimes makes it difficult for him to accomplish his own independent goals. He receives a lot of assistance at school as well as at home.

There's a big difference in Dallas when he has horseback riding sessions and when there's a break between them. When Dallas is on his break between sessions his symptoms get worse gradually. For example, on a worse day scenario I have had to keep gods faith on! Dallas wakes up in the morning and he is so determined to go to the bathroom and walk to the living room to get ready for school. But he collapses to the floor and looks at me. It takes him awhile to realize he can't move. So I'll ask him if I can carry him and I'll put him on our coach and I'll begin to massage his body until he has the mobility to move. He a very strong kid and he never gives up. But when a day is like this, he has the most difficulty writing, eating, and focusing on objects which makes him angry and he needs time alone to calm down. He also has a difficulty with people.

When Dallas is in horseback riding sessions, he is able to get up and have a great morning before school. Horseback riding has prevented him from collapsing to the floor. He also is in a more positive mood in school that makes him do fabulously and he is up for any challenge.

Ride with Pride has been a blessing to my family! If it wasn't for them Dallas would be on medicine that would lead him to be in a wheelchair for life! I would definitely recommend Ride with Pride!

- Heather Farley



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- Heather Farley

When my son was diagnosed with autism at age 2 ½, I wondered whether he would be able to enjoy the things that I did as a girl, like horseback riding. I also had the typical concerns of any parent with a special needs child. When he first started riding at age three he was non-verbal, could not tolerate a helmet, and would try to jump off his horse while it was in motion. Now 12, he can give his horse commands, happily wears his helmet, and **never** wants to end his ride prematurely! He has formed relationships with "barn buddies", other riders and his horses, too, which is often difficult for people with autism.

I was so impressed with Ride With Pride that I became a volunteer, and have seen over and over again the benefits of our program. Our students are children, adolescents, and adults, some with developmental challenges, some with physical, and others with emotional struggles. Ride With Pride is a fitting name, because it truly does instill pride in our participants. Riders with developmental and emotional challenges gain a sense of purpose, responsibility and discipline while those with physical challenges gain strength and balance. We have even started a program for Veterans, and the bonds they form with their horses have transformed their lives.

I have had the unique privilege of witnessing the magic of Ride With Pride as a parent and volunteer, and am honored to serve on the Board of Directors, which has given me an appreciation for all that is involved in ensuring the continuation and success of our program. Ride With Pride's home is in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and in the hearts of the many lives we have touched.

Respectfully, *Alisa Fernz*



So, How Can You Help?

VOLUNTEER!! We need volunteers to help with for classes!! Call Kelsey at 540-255-2210

Be a BARN WORKER!! We have openings. Call Kelsey at 540-255-2210

Are you an INSTRUCTOR ? We need them urgently. Call Kelsey at 540-255-2210 for details.

RWP is a volunteer-based, 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Rider fees only cover a small percentage of our costs and we turn no one away due to an inability to pay. Therefore, we rely on the generosity of individuals, community businesses, and foundations to help us provide our very special services. Donations are fully tax deductible.

Participate in our Scholarship Program. Consider being a partner for one of our young men and women and their families by providing a scholarship for an individual session or an entire year. Your tax deductible gift will support a child or adult for one session: \$180 for spring or fall sessions (6 weeks); \$240 for summer session (8 weeks).

Make your holiday gift purchases at Amazon Smile. A portion of the proceeds from your purchase will be donated to Ride With Pride. Simply go to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1583440> and shop!

Make a choice off of our Wish List – visit <https://www.amazon.com/registry/wishlist/281ZPVT535E9A> and see the items you can purchase for us. We especially need the following:

- Seventeenflat - Collapsible Practice POP-UP BARRELS
- Total Saddle Fit - Shoulder Relief Cinch - Western Cinch
- Rubbermaid Commercial Heavy-Duty Warehouse Corn Broom, Blue

It won't take much effort on your part. Giving to RWP is easy and tax deductible.

Go to <http://ridewithprideva.org/donate/>

Or send a check to Ride With Pride, P.O. Box 1203, Staunton, VA 24401

Keep Up With Ride With Pride!

Ride With Pride is happy to announce the launch of our newly remodeled website! Visit us at <http://ridewithprideva.org/> to sign up for newsletters, track events and to learn how you can help our cause!

Follow us on Facebook for the latest updates on events, horses, riders and much more!

@RideWithPrideTherapeuticRiding



(Tear here to return with donation)

Thank you for supporting Ride With Pride!!!

Check Enclosed

Please make check payable to **Ride With Pride**

American Express

Discover

MasterCard

Visa

Name as it appears on Debit/Credit Card: _____

Card #: _____

Signature: _____

Return in enclosed envelope to: **Ride With Pride, P.O. Box 1203, Staunton, VA 24401**



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December 4, 2017

Dear Friends of Ride With Pride,

For most of us, the holidays are a truly magical time of year. We gather with family and friends, enjoy renewing the important relationships in our lives, exchange gifts, and bask in the warmth of the season. Soon, we will celebrate the New Year and the new opportunities we will have in 2018.

However, this is also a time to remember that there are those among us who are not so fortunate; and I'm not talking about the abundance of gifts during the season. I'm talking about people with special needs that affect them every day of the year.

To them, the holidays may not feel magical. Difficult physical, mental, or emotional challenges make it tough to experience the joy of the season...or any joy at all. But, I can tell you, for more than 150 people with special needs in our community, the truly magical time of year is in March, when the 2018 Ride With Pride Spring Session begins! It is not the typical festivities of the season to which our clients are looking forward.....it is the weekly visits they will make to be with a group of very special horses! Their greatest gift each year is spending quality time with special equine friends--caring for them, learning from them, bonding with them, spending time in the saddle, and feeling the love that only horses can give. I am asking for your help to make this gift possible.

As you are making your list, and checking it twice, please remember Ride With Pride. Help us make 2018 the best yet for the children and adults we serve.

I'm proud to share with you this year-end report of Ride With Pride activities and wonderful achievements. I want call your attention to the fact that the number of clients requesting a place in our program continues to climb. With your support, we are helping more people with a greater diversity of needs and challenges than ever before. Through our therapeutic equestrian program, we are helping our clients lead more fulfilled and productive lives.

With your continued generosity, we will be able to maintain our policy of turning away no one, regardless of their ability to pay. We won't have to say *no* to a young child with a disability who wants to experience the exhilaration of riding a horse. We can welcome the military veteran who needs help remembering how to trust and care for others, following traumatic experiences in service to our country.

Please help us keep the magic alive throughout the year. Together, we can make 2018 the best ever for the members of our community who need us the most.

Your generous, tax-deductible contribution to Ride With Pride, may be the one gift that brings the greatest joy to the most people. Simply use the tear-off form on the reverse side of this letter to support our program. Please, share the joy of your holiday season with those who need a little extra help to feel the magic. Thank you, in advance.

Happy holidays!

Laura

Laura Martlock
President, Board of Directors
Ride With Pride, Inc.