



SHEPARD MEADOWS THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER FALL / WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2018

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

By Amy Degumbia

We have enjoyed getting to know all of our volunteers over this past year. The success of Shepard Meadows is a direct reflection of the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers.

Our volunteers are an invaluable resource – no matter what your role, or hours served – you have helped change the lives of our participants.

When times were challenging you all came together as a team to make it work, and for those experienced volunteers who mentored our new recruits –

Don't ever think that anything you did went unnoticed or unappreciated. We know there were a lot of favors called-in, such as asking you to come in early, stay late, or come in when you weren't necessarily available.

Thanks too, for taking advantage of our specialty training, learning to tack, or becoming a team leader.

We hope to see many of you this winter, and all of you and more come spring.

We wish you and your family a Happy Holiday season!

FIRST ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE: DECEMBER 1, 2:00 TO 4:00PM

On Saturday, December 1, 2018 the farm will be having a Holiday Open House. All are welcome to come learn about our programs and volunteer opportunities.

There will be a blacksmith shop demonstration, barn tours, holiday crafts, equine "Santa" photos, raffle and merchandise sales, rider demonstration and hot chocolate and cookies.



ABOUT SHEPARD MEADOWS

Our Mission

To support the growth and wellbeing of all individuals, including those with special needs, by providing Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) in a safe, caring and professional environment.

Our Vision

To be an industry-leading, inclusive therapeutic horseback riding facility that promotes quality of life for all individuals. Our programs focus on participant strengths and abilities to ultimately increase function, independence, confidence, health and wellness.

VISITING INSTRUCTOR AND CENTER FOUNDER REFLECTS ON GROWTH

By Janis Clifton

I had the wonderful opportunity to come back and teach at Shepard Meadows this autumn from CA. 14 years after helping to create the center, Shepard Meadows is still offering programs to serve those in the community with special needs in a way that was only a dream.

What keeps Shepard Meadows running over all these years and into the future is the dedication of all the people involved and the special horses that partner with us. It's the wonder of the horse-human interaction that makes this service possible.

Those that come to Shepard Meadows as riders, volunteers, staff and board members are drawn by the love of horses and the possibilities that interaction with the horses provides.

I've had the chance to work with old friends and riders as well as meeting a new group of volunteers and staff that I know will take the center through the next steps into a bright future. With a full heart I want to thank everyone for the time I've had here this autumn.



Emily and George

INTRODUCING GEORGE

By Instructor -Emily Eschner

George joined the center this fall from Oakendale Farm. An 18-year-old Quarter Horse/Draft cross, it's a funny thing, but George was owned by me over 10 years ago! We evented together, and rode in USEA recognized horse trials throughout New England. George then moved to Oakendale Farm where he was privately leased, participated in pony club rallies, dressage shows, and show jumping.

Over the past years he has taught dozens of riders as a lesson horse. He is a good boy, who is now committed to a new career as a therapy horse. So, he's not only experienced, and talented, but charming too.

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

- » Volunteer, rider and Veteran Kaitlyn Palance coordinated the fall fundraiser, selling pies in time for Thanksgiving. Under her guidance the center raised nearly \$700. Thanks Kaitlyn!
- » *Main Street Community Foundation Awards Center \$1,800 from the Women and Girls Foundation:* The grant will support two six week unmounted programs for Women and Girls in the Bristol community who might otherwise be unable to attend. The programs are set to take place the spring and summer of 2019, and will focus on improving the positive self-concept of women and girls by engaging them in unique youth activities with the opportunity to develop new skills, and strengthen existing ones.

DID YOU KNOW?

SMTRC is a Premier Center!

SMTRC renewed its certification as a Premier Center by PATH this year. Accreditation is a voluntary process that recognizes PATH Intl. Centers that have met established industry standards.

The accreditation process involves an on-site visit, where designees review centers in accordance with PATH Intl. standards. A center must meet the accreditation requirements based on the administrative, facility, program, and applicable special interest standards.

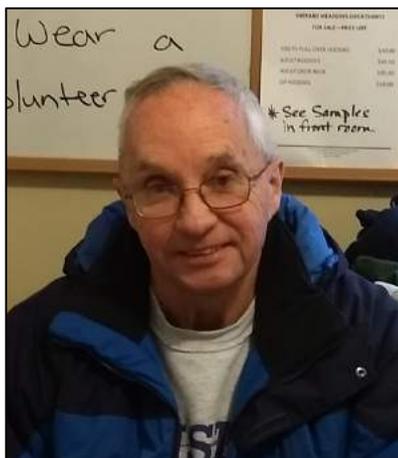
OUR FEATURED VOLUNTEER OF THE SEASON: MEET PETE FORREST

Interview by Chloe Beach

For this newsletter, we decided to interview one of our wonderful volunteers, Pete. Anyone who works with Pete can say so many great things about him, as he is an extremely helpful person who is great to work with!

Chloe: What did you retire from before starting volunteering at the barn?

Pete: I was in charge of the survey department for the city of Bristol.



Chloe: How did you find Shepard Meadows?

Pete: I live nearby, and then I saw a flyer saying that they needed help.

Chloe: When did you start volunteering?

Pete: I started about four years ago, a little bit after I retired.

Chloe: What about the place made you want to start volunteering?

Pete: I enjoy working outside and I like animals, although I was new to horses.

Chloe: How often a week are you here?

Pete: I'm here a couple of times a week, two or three. Maybe 5-10 hours a week.

Chloe: What is your favorite thing about volunteering here?

Pete: Getting to work with all the different people.

Chloe: Do you have a favorite horse?

Pete: Yeah, I'd have to say Frodo.

TROOP 15 GIRL SCOUTS VISIT THE FARM

In November, Girl Scouts from Harwinton visited the farm for a field trip to learn about how horses help humans.

Working on their animal friends badges, the workshop included how horses have helped humans through history, about the growing Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) industry, non-verbal communication and horses as sentient beings.

The workshop also included hands-on basic horsemanship skills.

DID YOU KNOW?

We offer riding lessons to our volunteers and to other members of the community!

Please contact us for further information.





Molly

SHEPARD MEADOWS HOSTS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS' FIELD EXPERIENCE

This fall session we had the pleasure of having two students with us from the Goodwin College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program: Angelica Randall from Torrington, CT and Renée Frost from Poughquag, NY.

The students were here at Shepard Meadows for a 40-hour non-traditional clinical setting, meaning there is no Occupational Therapist present.

Shepard Meadows is an excellent setting to see the benefits of therapeutic horseback riding for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities.

We are thankful for their help and expertise in assisting the staff in ways that can be beneficial to the riders and the instructors and they are grateful for the experience!

2019 PROGRAM SCHEDULE RELEASED

The 2019 program schedule has been set. In both January and February, we will hold a 4-week, unmounted Horsemanship program.

Participants will be placed in small groups and meet for one hour once a week to learn about caring for horses.

Our mounted 8 week spring program runs (3/25-5/18/19) and two 4-week summers sessions held on (6/3-6/29/19 and 7/8-8/3/19).

We will also host a one week – 5 half-day summer camp the week of 8/19/19.

The 8 week mounted fall program will run from 9/9 – 11/2/19.

Follow us on Facebook for program updates and further information.

You can also find calendar updates on our website: shepardmeadows.org.

CENTER APPOINTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shelly Whitlock-Pope, Ed.D., was appointed the center's new Executive Director in late August.

Shelly has a background in healthcare, finance, education and programming. Having worked at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, The NYC Department of Education, Pegasus Therapeutic Riding and Manhattanville College, she plans to lead SMTRC to a renewed level.

A PATH certified therapeutic riding instructor, equine specialist in mental health and learning, mentor and site evaluator, she is also EAGLA Certified as an Equine Specialist, and Special Olympics Equestrian Coach.

With degrees in health administration, elementary education, and educational leadership, administration and policy she looks forward to bringing all her experience and skills together here at SMTRC.

If you haven't met her yet, please be sure to introduce yourself the next time you're at the farm.

She was trained and rode English for years, and even patrolled NYC's Central Park with the Mounted Auxiliary, but her true loves are riding the trails Western and her two American Quarter Horses!

Welcome to Shepard Meadows, Shelly!