



HANDI-RIDERS

Volume 1, Issue 3 July 2009

HANDI-RIDERS of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

P.O. Box 1885
Chico, CA 95927
Phone & Fax: (530) 533-5333
www.handi-riders.org
handiriders@foothill.net

STAFF

Anthony Holochwost Jr.
Executive Director,
Instructor

Sid McBride
Program Coordinator,
Head Instructor

Chris Latouche
Horse Manager
Co-Head Instructor

Catherine Brazil
Instructor & OTR/L

Danny Cuneo
Instructor

Suzanne Bernard
Volunteer Coordinator

BOARD of DIRECTORS

Frederica Holochwost
Danny Cuneo
Yves Latouche
Sid McBride
Jan McKissick
Lyn Dorenzo

ADVISORY BOARD

Tom Nagos
Denny & Patricia Stevens

Horseback Riding: More work than you might think

Those who believe the horse does all the work, have probably never ridden. Our Handi-Riders students will tell you that staying on and controlling a horse is hard work. But physiologically speaking, how strenuous is riding, and what benefits can one expect?

When comparing levels of energy expenditure (metabolic equivalents—METs), riding at each of the different gaits is comparable to various other physical activities. According to Neistadt & Crepeau (1998),

- ◆ Riding at the walk is equivalent to a human walking at 2 mph (2-3 METs)
- ◆ Riding at the sitting trot is equivalent to pulling a bag-cart for golf (3-4 METs)
- ◆ Riding at the posting trot is equivalent to biking at 10 mph (5-6 METs)
- ◆ Riding at the canter is equivalent to mountain-climbing (7-8 METs).

The energy expenditure increases proportionate to the gaits of the horse, which require the rider to adjust the number of muscle groups activated to remain balanced, centered and in control.

While a rider may look passive at the walk, he or she is continuously experiencing alternations between muscles of the chest and back, achieving a balance and allowing the rider to remain up-right, neither slouching nor crotch-sitting.

Therapists in the field of Hippotherapy have documented how the pelvic movements of riding at the walk simulate those of the human pelvis when walking upright. Riding at the walk, experiencing the pelvic and trunk movements provided, has been instrumental in improving the muscle strength and tone of some of our more physically challenged riders.

As riding skills progress and riders learn to



steer their horses, post at the trot, canter or demonstrate two-point, they expand the muscle groups recruited. No longer can the hands and arms rest on the saddle, but must remain up in an activated state, ready to control the horse. Riders also learn to grade the amount of force exerted to communicate with their horse, and thus transition from using strictly gross muscle movements (i.e. entire leg) to more specific and refined movements (lower leg only), demonstrating isolation of specific muscle groups.

Given that riding has so much to offer, and can be so versatile as determined by the needs of the rider, it is no wonder that it is so popular as a physical and recreational activity for individuals with special needs.

Is Handi-Riders Looking for You?

Handi-Riders is seeking individuals who possess the desire, willingness and commitment to serve on Handi-Riders' Board of Directors.

Take our 7 question quiz:

1. Do you have time to offer your services?
2. Are you willing to work? To be a productive member of Handi-Riders Board of Directors?
3. Are you willing to develop and promote ideas to ensure the success of Handi-Riders?
4. Do you have a special talent to share? Do you have expertise in fund-raising?
5. Do you have experience in community involvement?
6. Are you willing to make a substantial commitment to assure Handi-Riders' continuing operation and its longevity for future years?
7. Would you like to serve on the Handi-Riders' Board of Directors?

We welcome you to submit your resume and a brief statement telling us about yourself and why you would like to become involved as a member of Handi-Riders' Board of Directors.

Please mail to:

Handi-Riders Attn. Board of
Directors
P.O. Box 1885
Chico, CA 95927

OR E-mail it to:

handiriders@foothill.net

Volunteering: Help a student learn to ride

Fall 2009 Class Schedule

Mondays:

1:30 3:00 **4:00** 4:30

Tuesdays:

1:30 3:00 4:30

Wednesdays:

1:30 3:00 4:30

Thursdays:

11:30 1:30 3:00 4:30

Fridays:

1:30 3:00 4:30

Saturdays:

9:00 10:30 12:00 1:30 3:00

Classes in **purple** are pending enrollment

Volunteers are also needed to help with several riders who require private (1:1) lessons during the week.

Our Fall session is just around the corner, and with an expanding class schedule, we are looking for volunteers. Volunteers aid our riders by lead-walking or side-walking. Under the direction of a certified instructor, our volunteers provide a safe, secure and a greatly enhanced riding experience to children and adults with a variety of special needs. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our program; many thanks go out to all of our dedicated friends who contribute so much time and energy to our vision and mission.

We offer classes six days a week. The majority of our classes are held in the afternoon, but three of our classes are in the morning.

Contact our new Volunteer Coordinator, Suzanne Bernard at 533-5333 or 877-2749 to sign up today. No horse experience necessary.



*"We make a living
by what we get; we
make a life by what
we give."*

—Winston Churchill



Volunteering: Helping Others, Helped Me

“When you become detached mentally from yourself and concentrate on helping other people with their difficulties, you will be able to cope with your own more effectively. Somehow, the act of self-giving is a personal power-releasing factor.” — Norman Vincent Peale

Volunteering at Handi-Riders the last two years has given me contentment in my life. The therapeutic effects of the horses, the connection with the instructors, other volunteers and students has allowed me to thrive.

I suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. I came from a non-functioning situation and was at the point where I didn't think I could trust people enough to interact. Being a volunteer, receiving understanding from the instructors, and interacting with others, has allowed me to overcome many of my own issues. I have received “therapy” that would have cost me a lot of money otherwise. Handi-Riders lets you be yourself, and progress at your own pace, to do what you are capable of doing. With volunteers, they find the right place for each person, so that each can contribute to the program. I'm now able to function at a social level, where before people were a negative in my mind. I always return home from Handi-Riders feeling better than when I left; it's a safe, healing environment, both mentally and physically.

Handi-Riders has provided me education in handling horses, feeding, all types of ground work, and how to help the riders. Doing ground work has made me feel much more empowered and comfortable with the horses; I've learned to read the horses, and understand the riders, and become much more sure of myself. Contributing to the riders' wellbeing and progress has given me a new existence. I'm now able to take a leadership role, helping to orient new volunteers to the tack room and familiarize them with the horses.

There are good people in this world; I enjoy the feeling of being needed and appreciated. Handi-Riders has helped me re-build my sense of well-being and added years back to my life.

Laura Bruns,
Volunteer

NARHA & Congressional Action Potentially Impacting EAAT

According to NARHA's CEO Carol Nickell, a congressional bill (Personal Health Investment Act 2009) has been drafted that would “increase amounts paid for physical fitness activities as medical care as an incentive to make people more active... This bill comes in an effort to decrease medical expenses resulting from preventative illness related to obesity.”

The proposed bill does not currently include any facilities

offering riding activities. NARHA officials are pushing to get Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) included in the proposed bill, as such inclusion could impact insurance and funding coverage for EAAT programs such as Handi-Riders.

“Contributing to the riders' wellbeing and progress has given me a new existence... Handi-Riders has helped me re-build my sense of wellbeing and added years back to my life.”

Save The Date

July 2009– October 2009

- ◆ **July 2009**
Summer Session Continues
- ◆ **August 2009**
Participating in Annie B's
Community Drive
- ◆ **September 2009**
Saturday, September 12
New Volunteer Orientation
Monday, September 14th
Fall Session Starts
- ◆ **October 2009**
Fall Session continues
- ◆ **November 2009**
Saturday, November 7th
Fall Session Ends

Implementing What They've Learned: Quincy Equestrian Play-Day

Five riders, three horses, some valued volunteers, and lots of smiles and ribbons. June 21st, a few of our riders had the chance to demonstrate their riding skills, and compete against participants from another northern therapeutic riding program, and other local youth from Quincy. Each rider was entered in a total of six events, including pole bending, barrels, keyhole, a water-relay, a baton relay, and a ribbon race. All events were timed, giving our riders an opportunity to test out their skills with the added challenge of speed. Of our five attending riders, each brought home at least three ribbons and a smile at having participated.

For Andrew, it was an opportunity to showcase his skill and compete, something which has been predominantly his sister's role. He earned many ribbons upon his mount, Jenna.

Michael, a returning competitor, experienced the canter, as his exuberant horse Jenna raced toward the finish line. Kelly too experienced the canter for the first time, but demonstrated beautiful composure and a tall posture as she approached the finish line and slowed her horse Patriot, to the walk.



Cheyenne and Cody were our strategists; mounted on Peanut, they carefully planned their approaches to each event, determining when and where speed would be most advantageous, and when a slower pace was more appropriate.

Our riders demonstrated wonderful adaptability and team spirit at having to quickly switch horses to allow a fellow team member to use the same horse or waiting their turn for the next event. Riders were able to earn ribbons for first through sixth place for both individual and team events.

Many thanks to our volunteers, Michelle & Dani Boyd, and Sarah and Bonnie Teal for their hard work in and out of the arena. These ladies braved the dust, early morning hours and speed of our horses to provide our riders a safe and enjoyable experience. Special thanks to Laura Bruns who helped prep the horses for the big day and kept things going smoothly on the ground. Thank you!

Sponsor a Handi-Rider Horse or Rider

Can't make a time commitment to volunteer, but want to help? Help support our program by sponsoring a horse or rider.

Many of our horses are older mounts, and require supplements or veterinary care to aid them with the aging process and ensure the highest quality care for the dedicated services they provide our riders.

Currently, all of our horses are available for sponsorship, including Jenna, Penny, Beamer, Connor, Snickers, Pepe, Chett, Patriot, Peanut, and Tank.

Sponsor a horse for a year (\$2500) or for 6 months (\$1250). Donations of any amount are appreciated, and help to ensure the quality of care for our horses.

Another option, is to provide a scholarship for one of our riders. Sponsor a rider for two 8-week sessions (\$500) or sponsor a rider for one 8-week session (\$250). Donations of any amount can also be put toward a partial scholarship. Your donation will provide a rider with a unique opportunity.

We greatly appreciate your support!

