



# HANDI-RIDERS

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HANDI-RIDERS of  
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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### BOARD of DIRECTORS

Yves Latouche  
Katherine Thomas  
Sue Kuukka  
Roxana Hodges

### ADVISORY BOARD

## Moving Forward for 2010: Ensuring our future

Danny Cuneo, Executive Director

The last five months have been a roller-coaster experience, but I am happy to say that with a dedicated staff and an energetic new Board, we are ending 2009 with a successful Fall Session, a flat arena and more money in the bank than we usually see this time of year.

The economic crisis has not gone away and will prove to be our greatest challenge of the New Year; our new Board is up to the task. This fall we had more community outreach presentations, and a number of events and fundraisers. Many thanks to our dedicated Board members. As Far Northern Regional Center will not be funding in the spring, we will need additional funds for scholarships and operating costs. We are looking at creating two or three major fundraisers with a target income in excess of \$45,000.

This was the first year that Handi-Riders has made an

appeal to our parents. In the summer, funds were solicited to finish the "new" arena pad. After looking at the pad-efforts of Butte College for over a year, it was time to put the arena to use. Donations came from families, volunteers, staff and community to fund 50% of the cost, which was then matched by the Board. The arena was leveled, graveled, and sanded, and a new gate bought in time for the Fall Session. Horses, volunteers and staff were delighted to work on level ground.

Only a month later, families were told that Far Northern would not be funding tuition for their riders. Program coordinator Sid McBride did some creative financing with parents to establish need and prioritize full and partial scholarships. It was a cooperative effort that told us just how valuable families find our program.

Without funding from Far Northern, Handi-Riders hopes to grow through partnership

with self-funded curriculums such as Behavioral Health, Adult-Ed or Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy. Fundraising will contribute to scholarships.

We have also begun a grant-writing program with the assistance of Chico State alumni Melissa Uppendahl; she is a professional grant writer who has offered to create a letter of inquiry and set us up with five new funders. This fall, we also had seven Chico State interns working on grants, marketing, presentation, booth planning and some invaluable administrative assistance.



Handi-Riders receives check of proceeds from rib-cook-off.

November 8th, 2009 was our first annual Handi-Riders Family Bar-B-Q. Dedicated this year to Tony & Freddie Holochwost as a "thank you," Handi-Riders families united over good food to share the success of fall fundraising and friendship. Expect this event to be on your calendar in the future.

We have the power of staff, volunteers and families; now we need our autonomy. Handi-Riders has been working toward purchasing the property on Flag Creek Road for five years. We need to fund the construction of the covered arena roof (enclosed would be ideal), so that we can qualify for a loan to purchase the facility and the land. So enjoy the holiday season, and come back ready to work in 2010.



## Volunteers: Our “Wildcard” team-members

vol'un-tee'r', n. 1. A person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking. v.t. 2. To offer, give, or perform voluntarily. The volunteers of Handi-Riders take this definition to the next level. Without the tireless efforts of our volunteers, Handi-Riders could not be what it is today.

At Handi-Riders, the volunteer opportunities are many.

Almost all our volunteers begin by working in classes, either as leaders or side-walkers. For some, that is their level of contribution, but for others, there may be additional opportunities for involvement.

Volunteers who have continuously demonstrated their dedication and a certain level of mastery of our techniques and methods, may be invited to participate and aid with special events, fundraisers and community outreach opportunities.

This summer, some of our volunteers tested out their athletic abilities by leading and side-walking for riders in two equestrian play-days. These events challenged our riders and required experienced, athletic leaders, as the horses were extra spunky.

This fall was filled with fundraisers and out-reach opportunities; we recruited multiple volunteers to aid with these ventures. Some volunteers manned informational booths with staff, others helped work the crowds at events to promote awareness of what Handi-Riders offers, and others put in hours behind the scenes contacting participants and coordinating details with event sponsors.



*Volunteers manning an informational booth during an out-reach opportunity*

This Fall Session, we also had a group of Boy Scouts generously donate their time to remove rocks, branches, and debris from our frequently used trails; thanks to their efforts, the footing on trails is smoother and less of an obstacle course.

Volunteers may also be contacted and invited to assist with the unique needs of our private lesson students during the off-sessions.

Volunteers can also contribute their time by distributing event posters and/or bringing awareness to untapped community partners or resources.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to the many volunteers who have contributed their time and efforts to maintain the existence of Handi-Riders and ensure its longevity.



How will you help ensure the future of Handi-Riders?

Get involved today!



*Volunteers aren't paid,  
not because they are  
worthless, but because  
they are priceless.*



## Helping-Hands Make the Difference: Volunteer!

Our Spring Session is just around the corner and with a busy class schedule, we need your help! Our riders need volunteers to help lead or walk beside them to help with balance and assist with activities. Under the direction of a certified instructor, our volunteers provide a safe, secure and greatly enhanced riding experience to children and adults with a variety of disabilities and special needs. Your time spent at Handi-Riders is rewarding and invaluable. Volunteers are the life-blood of our program. Thanks go out to all our dedicated friends who contribute so much time and energy to sustain our mission and vision.

**Our next Volunteer Orientation will be held Saturday, March 6th.**

**Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Suzanne Bernard,  
at 533-5333 or 877-2749 to sign up today.**

## A Diverse Board Brings New Outlook for Handi-Riders

The state of the current economy has dictated that non-profit organizations such as Handi-Riders become especially progressive and creative to “stay-alive” in this difficult time. The timing of the retirement of founders Tony & Freddie Holochwost might have seemed like a devastating blow to the organization, but in fact, it gave Handi-Riders the boost it needed to diversify and unify. The Board has expanded, and responsibilities have been accepted by qualified and passionate people who truly care about the advancement of Handi-Riders. Board President responsibilities currently lie with Yves Latouche, but this month the official board members will be voted into office and rumor has it, a new president will be named. Kath Thomas is acting vice-president and is very involved in helping with administrative projects, and is our representative to the North Valley Community Foundation. Roxanna Hodges has accepted the position of co-treasurer; with her knowledge of computer software, accounting background and organizational skills, she is perfect for the job. Sue Kuukka is a new member who has accepted the job of secretary; she is thorough, accurate and punctual when producing meeting minutes and reports for the Board. Kristina Rogers, another new member, has become our Marketing and Press contact; getting Handi-Riders’ name and mission statement out in the community is key to staying progressive in this time. Shanta Friend, Arturo Coupe, Angela Allen and Shanna Shaw are parents of participating riders, and their contributions are invaluable. They have begun opening parent communication pathways, developing innovative marketing ideas, and participating in the never ending, much needed fundraisers. Jan McKissick and Lyn Dorenzo have been associated with Handi-Riders for several years and their “business savvy” adds an important component to our board. Handi-Riders also has several talented people on committees, and the board is able to draw from this pool when needed. The main goal of this board is fundraising, and with this group unified in the vision of Handi-Riders, we will be serving our riders for years to come.

*Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.* Kenyan Proverb



### Volunteering Changes Lives

After more than 28 years of dedicated service, Handi-Riders continues to change the lives of students and volunteers alike. Some may feel like they are doing this to help the students yet end up improving their own lives in the process. The bond that is created between rider and volunteer is one that can be life changing; the weekly commitment given by our volunteers is extremely important in facilitating this bond. Many students will begin to respond to their volunteers in a very positive way, and a special line of communication will open between them. If for some reason their volunteer can't make a class, it can have a negative impact on that weeks' lesson; some riders have shown open disappointment or “shut-down” in the absence of their regular volunteers.

Some volunteers connect with a particular rider, and will try to coordinate to follow that rider, even when their scheduled riding day or time changes. For some riders, this is invaluable and having a familiar face motivates and encourages them.

Aside from changing a rider's life experience, some volunteers improve their own. Improvements may manifest themselves as increased physical fitness, an increased awareness of others and their needs and triumphs, increased social confidence, and empowerment from knowing that giving of one's self can make a difference.

Whatever your motives, we encourage you to continue volunteering or become one today!

## Save the Date

◆ **January & February 2010**

◆ **March 2010**

Saturday, March 6th

Volunteer Orientation

Monday, March 22

Spring Session starts

◆ **April 2010**

◆ **May 2010**

Saturday, May 15th

Spring Session ends

◆ **June 2010**

Saturday, June 26th

Benefit Golf Tournament

**Call for details: 533-5333**

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at [unsubscribe@handi-riders.org](mailto:unsubscribe@handi-riders.org)

## Wrapping up 2009: Ranch-style hospitality



**Annual Appreciation BBQ:** This November, Handi-Riders hosted its first annual BBQ. Over 100 volunteers, riders and their families and staff gathered to say farewell to Tony and Freddie Holochwost and enjoy some “Handi-Rider style” hospitality. A potluck-style buffet, combined with savory BBQ provided by Yves Latouche, got the event rolling. Non-mounted activities were available for participants of all ages; most popular was the roping arena, where participants could test out their mastery of the lasso. Many thanks to Roger Pavlic for his expertise and resources in hosting this station.

*Darryl (left) and Nicholas (right) try their hand at roping.*



## Generosity Spurs Facility Improvement

Tired of going to retrieve a horse from behind a curtain of dripping water? No more! Through his connections, volunteer Don Saul was able to obtain donated rain gutters for the stall overhangs. Yves Latouche with volunteers Jamie Scharff, Jason Smock and Don Saul offered their time to get them installed and develop a more efficient drainage system to prevent soggy footing in the stalls and keep our equine heroes a little drier for winters to come. Many thanks to Don and his contact for making these materials available to Handi-Riders, and to our installation team; their efforts have gotten Handi-Riders off to a productive 2010!

## Mark Your Calendars: Annual golf tournament to benefit Handi-Riders

Handi-Riders will be hosting its 4th annual golf tournament, Saturday, June 26th at the Table Mountain Golf Course in Oroville. We hope to attract many sponsors and team players from our surrounding communities. We are also looking for raffle items.

The purpose of this event is to support development of our new covered arena, which will enable us to meet our goal of providing year-round services to our riders.



Funds raised from previous years’ tournaments contributed to leveling, applying the footing to the new arena pad and acquiring the roof-structure materials.

Registration fees are \$80.00 per person. To sponsor a hole, donate an item for our raffle, or for more information, contact Yves Latouche at (530)533-5333. We hope to see you there!

## Riders in Action: Capturing the Handi-Riders experience



*Trail rides are one of the many experiences used at Handi-Riders to practice skills learned in the arena.*

*At left, Nicole raises her arm in victory during a trail ride on Shasta. At right, Zachry and Pepe strut their stuff offlead.*

