

## **The Outside of a Horse for the Inside of a Child...**

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BJ underwent an operation 2 years ago resulting in the amputation of his right leg above the knee. When he first started riding he would make excuses and would not put any effort into his lessons. He didn't have the personal self-esteem to enjoy riding.

Therapeutic Riding allowed him to build up his self-confidence so that he could succeed. About a year later, he bought a retired TR horse and now enjoys trail rides with his family every weekend. Lizzie, an 8 year old with Cerebral Palsy, rode every week for three years. She is now able to move around the barn without the use of her braces and crutches. Elaine, a 15 year old girl with Down Syndrome started riding with a side-walker and a leader. She is now an independent rider and competes in Regional Equestrian Special Olympic Events riding her own dressage tests, that she and her instructor composed to music

"At its very core, therapeutic riding uses horses in a specialized way, with the main goal of bringing cognitive, physical, emotional, and social benefits to individuals with disabilities."

(Connect Riding) Horse back riding has been linked with many physical benefits. Horses can be directly used to improve physical

skills more than any other animal.

Therapeutic Riding can be adapted for each student. On a horse, a person with limited walking abilities can actually feel what walking is like without the need for bearing weight through their legs. Skills learned while on horseback can be as simple as reaching out to pet a horse or as complex as advanced dressage tests.

During a lesson a student may be asked to ride over ground poles set in different shapes or patterns, or to go to different stations in the arena to collect letters for spelling words. Some other effects that students gain from riding are balance, being able to hold their head up, sitting up straight in the saddle, fastening buckles, holding the reins, right-left hand discrimination, mounting and dismounting, as well as number, letter, and color recognition. All of these tasks can seem rather elementary but to some of these students just being able to pick up the reins or undoing a buckle can prove to be quite challenging.

Therapeutic riding is not only for the physically disabled but also for the mentally and emotionally disabled. Horses can be used for both physical therapy and psychological therapy, by combining the physical aspects of riding and the cognitive aspects of problem solving.

Unlike humans, horses will accept a rider without pre-judgment. The horse is a social creature that will readily bond with a

human, especially a child. Horses, although they are not typically thought of as a form of therapy, can help exercise the mind and bodies of those with all kinds of disabilities.

The therapeutic horse is just as important and unique as the student. The horses we are fortunate to have are trained so that they are comfortable with instructional equipment (balls, rings, stuffed animals) and equipment used by the students (wheelchairs, crutches). They stand quietly at the mounting ramp and are patient for slow and sometimes difficult mounting procedures. They are comfortable with the number of assistants (leaders and side-walkers) required while the student is riding.

The students who are in the Ride-Like-A-Knight program at Singletary Therapeutic Riding Center come from local elementary, middle, and high schools. SAPC students as well as people with disabilities from the community also ride in the Ride-Like-A-Knight program. The program works with a wide range off disabilities. Riders range form five to fifty-five years in age. Our program exists to prepare SAPC students majoring in Therapeutic Riding for their North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA)

Certification. To become a certified instructor with NARHA you must complete twenty-five hours teaching mounted students, a written exam, and a riding test. SAPC is the first college to offer a four-year degree program in Therapeutic Riding. The directors of the therapeutic riding program

at the Singletary Riding Center are Liz Harris and Pebbles Turbeville.

Liz Harris is the Therapeutic Riding Practicum Director. She is a 2000 graduate from St. Andrews and has her advanced certification with NARHA. Liz is in charge of the scheduling of the classes for TR lessons. She works with the volunteers and the schools to assure that all students will have the assistance that is needed for a safe and successful day at the barn.

Pebbles Turbeville is the Director of Therapeutic Riding. She has a Master's Degree from NC State and also has her advanced certification from NARHA. Pebbles runs the classroom portion of the program, mainly preparing the TR majors at SAPC for their NARHA certification. For perspective TR majors, it is almost guaranteed that you will have the privilege of at least one 8 am class with Professor Turbeville.

Help is always needed whether it is side walking in a mounted lesson, assisting with the horses, or supervising the children during non-mounted actives. Without volunteers the program cannot function efficiently. SAPC offers training session for new volunteers, so that the volunteers know what will take place in the lesson, what their responsibilities are as a leader or side-walker, and what disabilities they may encounter while volunteering. No horse experience needed. If you are interested in helping out at the barn, then please call Singletary Therapeutic Riding Center at 277-7228, to obtain volunteer information.

## **SPORT SCHEDULES**

### **Women's Soccer**

**9/3 LENIOR RYNE**

**9/6 @ Newberry**

**9/10 CATAWBA**

**9/13 ERSKINE**

**9/17 @ Coker**

**9/20 @ Belmont Abby**

**9/24 BARTON**

**9/27 MARS HILL**

### **Women's Volleyball**

**9/3 @ Queens**

**9/5-6 FRANCIS MARON**

**9/9 COKER**

**9/12 @ Limestone**

**9/13 @ Living stone**

**9/16 MOUNT OLIVE**

**9/18 @ Pembroke**

**9/24 @ Coker**

**9/27 LEES McRAE**

**9/29 PFEIFFER**

**10/1 BELMONT ABBEY**

### **Men's Soccer**

**9/17 @ Coker**

**9/20 @ Belmont**

**Abbey**

**9/24 BARTON**

**9/27 MARS HILL**

**10/4 @ Lees-McRae**

**10/6 @ Pfeiffer**

**10/8 FRANCIS MARON**

**10/12 @ Clayton State**

**10/18 @ Anderson**

**10/21 @ Wingate**

**10/25 QUEENS**

**10/28 @ Mount Olive**

**11/1 LIMESTONE**

### **MENS GOLF**

**9/16-17 Old North State hosted by Pfeiffer**

**9/20-22 Top-Flite Invitational hosted by Queens**

**9/28-30 ST.**

### **ANDREWS FALL INVITATIONAL**

**@ Deercroft Country Club**

**10/19-21 North Shore**

**Invitational hosted by Pfeiffer**

### **B-TEAM**

**9/20-22 Top Flite Invitational hosted by Queens**

**9/28-30 ST.**

### **ANDREWS FALL INVITATIONAL**