

CAMPUS EXPERIENCES

The Many Rewards of Ride-Like-A-Knight

Megan Ellis

Director, Ride-Like-A-Knight

On December 3rd, 2010, over 70 students enjoyed lasagna and “Pebbles’ Brownies” that evening, at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner put on by the staff and instructors of Ride-Like-A-Knight (RLAK). RLAK is the Therapeutic Horsemanship (TH) Program at St. Andrews that offers students in the TH major a chance to practice their riding instruction skills while benefiting riders with disabilities from the local community.

RLAK operates on the generosity of volunteers. Up to three volunteers are required for each rider in order to lead the horse and provide “sidewalkers,” or spotters. With over 100 riders taking 30 minute lessons each week, that adds up to a lot of volunteer hours! RLAK’s volunteer base comes primarily from the student body. Many are college riders who want to give back to the SAPC Equestrian Program. RLAK also benefits from the kindness of several local volunteers, which gives us a chance to be the face of SAPC to our community.

Volunteers often find that the experience of giving their time to others comes back to them in unexpected ways. Besides the home-cooked lasagna dinner at the end of the semester, volunteers also find their work rewarding, a good social outlet, and great way to spend time with horses. Many comment that the smile they see on a rider’s face brightens their day and puts their lives in perspective. Those who choose to take an hour out of their busy weeks to make it possible for someone else to ride a horse find that it is one of their best spent hours.

Many volunteers also form special bonds with the riders and horses at the RLAK program. Upperclassmen often choose to volunteer with the same rider year after year. Some volunteers have spent extra time at the barn to give their favorite horse a good grooming or a little treat. Occasionally, RLAK volunteers even get a chance to ride the ponies! Volunteers learn about people with disabilities and become more open-minded and tolerant. They also build relationships among their peers and support each other in the instructor certification process.

RLAK staff and student instructors appreciate the generous donation of time and energy by these invaluable volunteers. However, the real gratitude comes from the riders and horses who may not be able to express it but with a simple smile, a look, or a nuzzle. Thanks, Volunteers!



One of the fun events for TH Volunteers and their riders

Vision

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University working with the Alumni Association and have continued to enjoy it. This opportunity, surprisingly, didn’t particularly stem from classes I took but instead my work study job while at St. Andrews. Dr. Sandy Jones, as well as the other education professors, saw to it that I was comfortable with what I was doing whether it be filing PRAXIS paperwork or directing a call to a perspective Education major. The varying, sometimes tedious, tasks I executed over the years provided me with much of the knowledge I needed in order to function at the level the University requires.

There is not a day that goes by that I am reminded of every professor with whom I came into contact with over my years. Each one was a building block that directed me towards my goals. From Dr. Pam Case to Dr. Doug Glass to Dr. Edna Ann Loftus, all of whom worked tirelessly beside me as I pieced together my classes (and always listened when hounded by my questions), I want to thank you! To all of the professors with whom I’ve ever been in contact with—Professor Pam Bradley, Professor Betsy Dendy, Dr. Ted Wojtasik just to name a few—it’s truly been a pleasure! I feel that it’s also necessary to send a special thank you to Coach Jim Walters who never seemed to lose faith in me throughout my years as an athlete.

St. Andrews provided me with the things I was looking for the most: a small school and people who were willing to put forth an effort to see me succeed. There is a certain kind of charm and warmth that the college has instilled in me and it’ll be there for as long as I live.