

For Immediate Release

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Research to investigate equine based therapies for challenged children

\$100,000 awarded to US and German research teams for equine based studies

(CHAGRIN FALLS, OHIO) September 28, 2010 – Equine-assisted healing techniques for children experiencing trauma and children diagnosed with cerebral palsy will be scientifically tested in 2011 through \$100,000 in awarded grant funding.

The Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) recently announced two \$50,000 research awards, as part of its mission to support rigorous scientific research that substantiates the impact of horses on humans. HHRF received research proposals from 7 different countries, with 27 universities and over 30 equine assisted programs represented.

The first award was given to Central Michigan University lead by principal investigators Debbie Silkwood-Sherer and Nancy McGibbon; *Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy*. The purpose of this randomized, multi site controlled clinical trial is to determine if young children with CP, will improve their balance and gait more when participating in hippotherapy (equine based therapy program) as compared to their usual therapy alone. The investigating team will also evaluate the children's visual motor integration, activities, participation and quality of life before and after hippotherapy.

The second award was presented to University of Rostock, Germany lead by principal investigators Dr. Andrea Beetz, Dr. Henri Julius, Dr. Kurt Kotrschal, and Dr. Kerstin Uvnas-Moberg; *Basic neurobiological and psychological mechanisms underlying therapeutic effects of Equine Assisted Activities (EAA/T)*. This will be a joint effort by researchers from Germany, Austria and Sweden. They will conduct two randomized trials investigating the benefit of EAA with young children, compared to conventional therapy with regard to the reduction of stress and the facilitation of trust and connection to others.

"Insecure or disorganized attachment representations are found in 60-70% of persons with mental health problems and represent a major risk factor in the development of behavioral and emotional disorders during childhood and adolescence." according to KC Henry, executive director of HHRF. "This research will move towards a deeper understanding of what makes the assistance of a horse so valuable in the related interventions. Twelve months feels like a long time to wait for these momentous research results!"

Horses and Humans Research Foundation was established in 2002 with the mission to facilitate universal understanding and appreciation of the significant influence of horses on humans. HHRF funds and promotes research that will 1)Benefit special program participants by improving equine assisted activity best practices; 2)Educate the public, including professional affiliates, regarding the value and benefits of horses and of equine assisted activities.

HHRF is a non-endowed foundation which relies solely on donations. To view the findings and reports of previously funded research, additional foundation information or to make a donation visit www.horsesandhumans.org. For questions contact KC Henry, executive director at (440) 543.8306 or at info@horsesandhumans.org.

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