Dear Friend,

We were stunned - then excited and grateful when Larry D. Pence, Command Sergeant Major U.S. Army (Ret.) and Mary Jo Beckman, Commander, US Navy (Ret.) gave their third contribution to EAA research for veterans at a recent HHRF reception. These two, representing the Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Programs (CPEAP), have now initiated the second HHRF grant to fund EAA research for veterans with PTSD/TBI. Their commitment and dedication inspire all of us at HHRF.

The board followed with a leap in faith and made a call for proposals that is presently due May 30th. We feel confident we can raise the remaining $46,500 needed before that date - but not without your help!

The veteran population is so deserving of the best we have to offer - will you consider contributing to the veterans' research fund at this time? You can donate here or send a check to:

P.O. Box 480 Chagrin Falls, OH 44022

Your support is so important to HHRF, EAA practitioners and
to our military heroes. Thank you for your consideration.

Warm Regards,

Lynn Shaw
HHRF Board President

**HHRF Issues Call for Proposals**

$50,000 Available for EAA Research on Military Veterans with PTSD or TBI

HHRF has announced a new call for research proposals to investigate the therapeutic effects of equine-assisted activities (EAA) on military veterans experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This is HHRF’s second call for proposals designated for veterans research. It was made possible through seed funding provided by the Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Programs (CPEAP). The CPEA approached HHRF to designate a call for proposals to address the growing numbers of mental health issues among veterans and the lack of high-quality research into EAA. **Deadline for submission of proposals is May 15, 2014.**

Up to $50,000 in research funding will be offered through a rigorous application and review process. Grants are selected on a competitive basis, taking into account scientific merit, scientific and clinical significance and relevance. Preference will be given to investigators with solid credentials and research experience. All applications undergo a four-tier review process completed by the scientific review committee. The average grant award is $50,000 for up to a 1.5 year period.

"Thanks to the Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Programs, we are able to issue this second call for proposals specific to veterans with PTSD or TBI," said Lynn Shaw, HHRF Board President. "It is because of visionaries like CPEAP that the promise of EAA can be realized and deserving veterans can be helped. We are grateful for their continued support."

"The Department of Veterans Affairs currently recognizes equine assisted activities as valid rehabilitation for veterans
needing physical based rehabilitation, and directs some funds in their annual budget to support these programs," noted CPEAP co-founder Larry Pence, Command Sergeant Major U.S. Army (Ret.) "However, the DVA does not recognize equine assisted activities as valid rehabilitation for our wounded veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury or Post Traumatic Stress. We are grateful that HHRF can lead the way to resolving this through scientific research."

INTERVIEW WITH AN EXPERT:  
Dr. Margaret Bass

HHRF recently talked with Dr. Margaret Bass, principal investigator of the HHRF-funded study, "The Effects of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning of Children with Autism."

The study investigated the impact of 12 weeks of EAA on children on the Autism Spectrum. This is a replication study, in which we used a randomized control trial to further investigate the therapeutic effects of a 12-week equine-assisted intervention on the social and sensory functioning of children with autism. An additional aim of the follow-up study was to evaluate the interrater reliability between parent and teacher report on each of the SRS domains as well as their stability across the three time points (i.e., pre [T1], post [T2], follow-up [T3]).

HHRF: Can you give me an overview of your findings?

Dr. Bass: Parents reported significant improvements in the overall area of sensory functioning, including these specific dimensions: emotionally reactive, low endurance/tone, inattention/distractibility, sensory sensitivity, and sedentary. Further, parents reported that relative to the pre assessment scores, children's functioning improved in a subset of these areas (emotionally reactive, inattention/distractibility, and sensory sensitivity) when assessed 8 weeks after concluding the intervention.

Similarly, teachers also reported significant improvements in registration, seeking, sensitivity, and avoiding. Relative to their pre assessment scores, all of the children showed improvements in each of these domains, with the exception of seeking, 8 weeks after the treatment as well.

Furthermore, both informants reported that children in the experimental group improved in both areas of overall social
and sensory functioning relative to the wait-list control group.

**HHRF: How do you view the role of research?**

**Dr. Bass:** For our industry to be taken seriously, we need quality research. As professionals in the industry we have the opportunity to observe the benefits of EAA/T on a firsthand basis. Unfortunately, without empirical data, our industry is unable to evolve, so it is imperative that we need solid research in all of the EAA/T fields: Equine Assisted Activities, Equine Assisted Therapy & Equine Assisted Psychotherapy/Mental Health. HHRF is going to bring the Equine Assisted industry to the next level by providing the world quality research that backs these beneficial claims.

**HHRF: How does what you've found specifically inform clinicians and instructors teaching EAA? How do your findings improve practices?**

**Dr. Bass:** Obviously, knowledge is power, so the description of how we implemented the intervention will potentially guide other EAA professionals in the development of their lesson content.

We attributed the observed increases in social and sensory functioning to a variety of factors in these studies. First, we purported that exposure to the horse was simply stimulating and that it provided a multisensory experience which served as a rewarding stimulus.

This stimulus was thought to plausibly elicit high levels of social motivation and engagement throughout the equine-assisted treatment. Additionally, the high level of active and physical demands required for interacting with the horse and the structure of the program were also purported to effect areas of sensory functioning such as sedentary, inattention/distractability, and engagement.

Furthermore, this group asserted that therapeutic horseback riding is an activity that demands motor learning skills, motor control, and social engagement. Therefore, they purported that some, if not most, observed increases within the areas of social and sensory functioning could be attributed to cerebellar stimulation, a structure of the brain that has been implicated in children with ASD (Pierce & Courchesne, 2001).

**References**


HHRF FUNDED RESEARCH:

UPDATES

1. Study: "Improvement in Trunk/Head Stability and Upper Extremity Control after HPOT," Washington University School of Medicine, Program in Occupational Therapy - St. Louis, MO. Funded 2006.

   Status: "Changes in Dynamic Trunk/Head Stability and Functional Reach after Hippotherapy" was published in the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 2009 Jul;90(7):1185-95.


   Status: Submitted for publication (Pilot study results published in the Journal for Autism & Developmental Disorders).

3. Study: "Hippotherapy to Improve Postural Control in Children with Cerebral Palsy," Université de Sherbrooke - Quebec.

HHRF Partners with the Institute for Human-Animal Connection for Conference

In partnership with HHRF, the Institute for Human-Animal Connection is hosting its first annual practitioners' conference May 7-8, 2014 at the University of Denver. "Transforming Trauma: Research Developments and Methods for Trauma-Informed Animal-Assisted Interventions."

International Leader High Hopes TRI Supports Research Resolve at the Visionary Level!

Connecticut-based High Hopes TRI serves 240 people with disabilities weekly. They also offer instructor training to students from around the world as one of only six centers in the country approved by PATH Intl. to certify instructors. This dual perspective makes High Hopes particularly sensitive to the important role research plays.

"I don't believe that any of us would argue with the fact that valid, published research is the means through which our profession will gain credibility and visibility," noted Kitty Stalsburg, Executive Director of High Hopes. "For programs struggling with financial resources research will be an immense help in approaching funders, seeking grants and promoting our programs."
## Touchstone Farm Seminar Supports HHRF - Thank You!

Touchstone Farm of Temple, NH will be offering an intensive weekend seminar on starting or growing a therapeutic horsemanship/equine assisted therapy business. Don’t miss this great learning opportunity in this beautiful setting - and support HHRF. The presenters are donating 15% of the attendees fees directly to HHRF to advance EAA research. The seminar, "Growing a Therapeutic Horsemanship Business" will be held March 14-16, 2014.

## HHRF Featured on Equitrekking.com

HHRF was featured on Equitrekking.com in a wonderful article by Jocelyn Pierce! Equitrekking.com is the companion website to the Emmy-winning PBS TV series and a resource for ranches and horseback riding vacations. You can check out the article here, which was also shared through Equitrekking’s fans through social media. Equitrekking.com has an online guidebook to equestrian vacations, stunning photos, videos and helpful travel discounts, as well as a project to promote great horse trails in all 50 states. Thank you EQUITREKKING!

## Research Resolve 2013 - Thank You!

Exceptional leadership and long-range vision were demonstrated by the following programs and individuals who invested in research in order to:

- Ensure the development of evidence-based practices;
- Influence professional and community perceptions; and
- Rally support for the field.

We especially would like to thank the following:

**VISIONARY SPONSORS of Research Resolve 2013:**
- Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Programs (Fort Belvoir, VA)
- Carlisle Academy Integrative Equine Therapy & Sports (Lyman, ME)
- High Hopes TRI in honor of Judith Lightfoot (Old Lyme, CT)
- Horse Sense of the Carolinas (Marshall, NC)
- Riding Far, LLC (Lovettsville, VA)


COLLABORATING SPONSORS of Research Resolve 2013: Acres for Life (Chisago City, MN) Central Kentucky Riding For Hope (Lexington, KY) Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center (Augusta, MI) Cristi Shanahan (Penngrove, CA) Freedom Farm - A Therapeutic Riding Center (Waverly, MN) Isabella (Boo) Martin (Temple, NH) NESAR - New England Special Activities and Resources (New England) Riding to the Top (Windham, ME) Sarasota Manatee Association for Riding Therapy (Bradenton, FL) Therapeutic Riding at Majoda Stables in honor of Jumping "Jack" Flash therapy horse (Moorestown, NJ)

CONTRIBUTING SPONSORS of Research Resolve 2013: Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center (Chagrin Falls, OH) Human-Animal Solutions (Denver, CO) Ride on St. Louis (Kimmswick, MO) Susan Lasoff (Minneapolis, MN) Susan Miller-Harsin (Omaha, NE) The Right Path Riding Academy (Drumright, OK) Therapeutic Horsemanship (Wentzville, MO) Touchstone Farm (Temple, NH)

Only research can direct efficient and effective change to EAA. It is a huge job. No one person or entity or person can do it, but if we all do our share - even if it is in a small way - EAA's...
progressive future can be assured.

"But how, amidst our day to day operations do we find the time, expertise or money to conduct any sort of research? This is where the Horses and Humans Research Foundation is a fundamental asset to all of us.”

Kitty Stalsburg, Executive Director, High Hopes TRI

Visit the Research Resolve 2013 page on our website if you’d like to know more or wish to contribute!

HHRF strives to move research from the arena to the lab and back to the arena again - where the advancements impact lives. HHRF is not endowed: we can only fund research relative to donor support. With that need in mind, we ask you to join us and become a part of this exciting and meaningful endeavor.

As an active advocate of EAA/T research, you will directly contribute to the development of holistic, effective equine programs that address a host of complex, challenging human needs. Your investment is carefully managed and efficiently utilized, so you can feel confident that you have made a contribution to the wellbeing of our evolving society, now and for generations to come.