

Research Publication Updates

Two HHRF-Related Projects to Be Published in Peer Reviewed Journals

The ultimate outcome that we strive for with research funded by HHRF is publication in a peer reviewed professional journal. It is our belief that this is the clearest way to reach the communities that will have greatest impact on the future of equine-assisted activities and therapies. Such publication will affect third party reimbursements, development of best practices, referrals from professionals and families, community awareness and donor investment. It is therefore with great excitement that we congratulate two HHRF grant recipients on their recent publications!

Check out the latest issue of Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, where a study led by Tim Shurtl-

eff (HHRF Scientific Committee), Dr. Jack Engsborg and Dr. John Standeven, and funded by HHRF, has been published. The article is entitled "Changes in Dynamic Trunk/Head Stability and Functional Reach after Hippotherapy" and is featured in the July issue, Volume 90, Issue 7. (www.archives-pmr.org)

Principal Investigator Dr. Margaret Bass also announced recently that the HHRF-funded project entitled 'The Effect of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning in Children with Autism', taking place now at the Good Hope Equestrian Training Center in Miami, FL, will have its pilot study results published in the Journal for Autism & Developmental Disorders.



One of my favorite sayings comes from the book Seabiscuit, when author Laura Hillenbrand observes that "there are moments while riding when the body, mind and spirit of the rider melds with the body, mind and spirit of the horse and something magical occurs that is far greater than the sum of the two."

At Horses and Humans Research Foundation, we acknowledge and respect the magic and at the same time we seek to qualify and quantify the experience. It is our vision that such science will draw ever more people to feel the magic and benefit from the healing abilities of horses.

It only seems fitting that we are packing now to go to Germany for the 13th International FRDI Congress, held once every three years, where the theme will be "Horses for the Mind, Body and Soul". We hope to see you there!

-Molly Sweeney, HHRF Founder and President

Research Award Selection - A Fastidious Process

We once again received eighteen applications for funding for the present cycle. Grants take up to four months to review as they go through a stringent review process. HHRF has recruited a highly qualified pool of scientists and practitioners to review all proposals. The group includes people qualified to consider proposals from all the various disciplines within EAA/T.

Each proposal is received and recorded by an HHRF administrative staff member. It is then reviewed by a general scientist and by an individual who may be familiar with the specific area being researched. Some proposals are

eliminated in the first round if they do not comply with guidelines published at our website. Three reviewers have seen each proposal at this point.

The proposals that move to the next round are reviewed by at least two more reviewers.

The finalists (usually 2- 4 proposals) are sent on to the final review cycle - reviewed by three more reviewers who then meet to discuss the merits of the projects and determine what recommendations they may make to the HHRF Board. We anticipate completing the process and making an announcement by October 2009.

NEXT GRANT DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2010

Q Does HHRF require all proposed projects to be Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved, even if the anticipated risk to participants is nominal?

Any research that requires subjects to provide information – especially health information – that can be linked to them should be approved by an IRB. Patient privacy rules and release of information are very sensitive areas, and the IRB should be aware of this research.

A

From the desk of Kitty Stalsburg:

As the Executive Director of High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc., a NARHA Premier Accredited Center, I know how vital the need for objective, published research is to our field. For those of us immersed in the day to day operation of our programs, we see the changes that take place in our participants; we witness the smiles, the first words the subtle gains that take place over time.

Unfortunately, many of our funders and medical professionals do not have this opportunity. They listen to our stories, they watch our promotional videos, they may even observe a session but it is the dearth of research specific to our field that is limiting our growth and viability.

In order to be a fully endorsed activity, we need to demonstrate success. Valid, published research is the means through which our profession will gain credibility and visibility. For programs struggling with financial resources, this will be an immense help in approaching funders, seeking grants and promoting our programs.

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 Horses and Humans Research Foundation is a fundamental asset to all of us. It is in the spirit of partnership that High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. supports HHRF. By directing a portion of our resources to HHRF we stand behind their mission and are fostering the promotion of research in our field which will ultimately serve to benefit High Hopes.

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. believes in the benefits of equine-assisted activities and therapies and is proud to partner with Horses and Humans Research Foundation to substantiate that belief.

Board and Advisory Transitions

Cynthia Ruiz and James Smith joined the the board of directors and Paul Haefner, Julie Lipovsky and Tim Shurtleff joined the Scientific Committee. Tess Schmalbach (Board of Directors), Laura Lubbers and Emily Southgate (Scientific Committee) were welcomed to their new positions in the Spring E-Newsletter; visit www.horsesandhumans.org for their full bios.

Cynthia Ruiz, CPA (pictured at right) is a financial manager at Tauber Oil Company and has over 30 years experience in all phases of finance and accounting. Cynthia was a member of the Board of Trustees of NARHA from 2004 – 2008, chairing the Audit Committee, and served on the Board of SIRE from 2002-2008 serving as an Officer and a Chair of the Audit Committee. Cynthia competes internationally in dressage, twice making the US Para Equestrian Team and representing the US at the World Dressage Championships. Cynthia has received incredible benefits from equestrian activities, both physically and spiritually, and has experienced first-hand the lasting benefits that our equine friends provide. Joining the Board of HHRF will provide the opportunity to support these benefits and educate the world about equine assisted activities.



James Smith, DVM (pictured at left) has been an equine practitioner since 1958. His specialties are theriogenology (Ob/Gyn), ophthalmology, and preventive medicine. He has been associated with Hagyard Equine Medical Institute since 1962. He is a consultant to horse farms in many countries. Presently, Dr. Smith is President of the Kentucky Equine Humane Center and on the Executive Committee of the Equine Initiative at the University of Kentucky. The Initiative consists of education, research, and outreach. Dr. Smith is a past president of the Kentucky Equine Practitioners Association and of

Opportunities for Research in

I have been asked several times why I think HHRF has yet to award a grant to an equine facilitated psychotherapy (EFP)-type research project. Coming from a background in epidemiological and public health research, from a country where evidence based practice has become the norm, I have an optimistic view of the opportunities available for those wanting to research

the benefits of EFP and who are looking for suitable funding.

The outstanding research projects of the first three HHRF grant recipients are excellent examples of sound research protocols that will benefit not only hippotherapy and therapeutic riding but the industry of equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAA/T) as a whole. Re-

search projects in EFP can be formulated with equally sound research protocols and with potentially wide-reaching implications. Those looking at starting research projects in EFP, regardless of the size and scope of the project, really need to look at the industry for guidelines into what will be most effective in terms of impact on EFP and EAA as a whole.

The HHRF 2008 Annual Report Has Been Published

Highlights Include:

- Funded two research projects
- Expanded the board of directors, advisory council and scientific committees
- Participated in four national association conferences
- Started an endowment fund
- Enhanced our educational outreach program
- Expanded our budget - and our circles of support

**Thank you for helping to make this possible.
Please visit horsesandhumans.org to view our full annual report - or contact our office to request a printed copy.**

ficer of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. He has been a breeder of Thoroughbreds since the mid-seventies and now spends as much time as possible at workshops on equine assisted learning and psycho-therapy.

Paul T. Haefner received a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Catholic University in 1993 with a specialty in marriage and family interaction. Early in his career he worked as a clinical research consultant, as well as a clinician working with youth in both the juvenile justice and special education settings. He has been in private clinical practice since 1994. In the last decade his practice has focused on both sport psychology consultation with equestrians and equine assisted psychotherapy with individuals, families and groups. He is certified through EAGALA as both a mental health and equine specialist. Dr. Haefner served on the Board of Directors of the Loudoun Therapeutic Riding Foundation from 1998 – 2005 and currently serves as EAGALA's Research Committee Chairperson.

Julie A. Lipovsky, Ph.D., ABPP, a licensed psychologist (clinical), is Professor of Psychology at The Citadel in Charleston, SC. A graduate of the University of Florida, Dr. Lipovsky completed a post-doctoral fellowship in sexual assault research at the Medical University of South Carolina and was on the faculty at MUSC's National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center from 1988 - 1993. Dr. Lipovsky directed The Citadel's Masters program in Clinical Counseling from 1993 – 2003. She has authored or co-authored more than 20 publications and has made over 100 presentations at conferences on a variety of topics. Dr. Lipovsky has received several teaching awards, including The Citadel's James C. Self Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching in 1997. She is board certified in Clinical Psychology and in Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology. She is Co-founder and Clinical Director of Lowcountry Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (LEAP) in South Carolina.

Shurtleff, Timothy, MA, OTD, OTR/L, received his BA and his MA at Brigham Young University. For 27 years he worked as a consultant in the field of organizational effectiveness and development. In 1990 he assisted his wife to found a therapeutic horseback riding program on their farm in Washington, MO. He became certified with NARHA as a riding instructor in 1996 and as a carriage driving instructor in 2001, and worked in a hippotherapy program in Wentzville, MO, which led him to complete a Doctor of Occupational therapy degree in 2006. Dr. Shurtleff teaches in the Program in Occupational Therapy and received a faculty appointment in 2008. He consults with three local therapeutic riding centers in the greater St. Louis Area who also participate in the research projects. He continues to work on a part time basis as an occupational therapist with children with disabilities using the movement of horses to build stability and motor control along with improvements in psychosocial dimensions and occupational performance.

Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy By Clare Thomas, HHRF Scientific Committee

It is imperative that any research proposal have a clear replicable design, with highly validated and reliable outcome measures.

ensure that the design includes sufficient research subjects to provide generalizable results. Most grant funding bodies,

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A pilot study should have been carried out prior to the final research proposal being submitted, and a power analysis completed, ideally by a trained statistician, to

including HHRF, have very clear guidelines outlining their expectations for submission of research proposals. It is imperative that all researchers follow these guidelines for the specific grant for which they apply, these guidelines can be easily followed by all those within the EAA/T industry.

To summarize, EFP researchers need to ensure that their research design is really capable of answering their research question. Once they have achieved this, I believe EFP research will begin to be funded by many different grant funding bodies. The Horses and Humans Research Foundation is committed to funding only the best research into EAA/T, the research that will have the widest impact on the EAA/T industry and the research that will ensure that EAA are seen as legitimate alternatives to conventional therapies.

Email info@horsesandhumans.org to learn more about contributing to the HHRF newsletter.

Please consider making a donation to support this critically needed research. We depend on contributions from individuals, businesses and foundations in order to operate. Enclosed is my donation of: \$50__ \$100__ \$300__ \$500__ \$1,000__ Other: \$__

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*Facilitating universal understanding and appreciation of the significant influence of horses on humans. **The primary goal of HHRF** is to support, promote and fund scientific research that explores the claimed, yet unsubstantiated benefits of equine-assisted activities and therapies, leading to the discovery of the most effective methods and techniques for conducting thousands of existing and future programs. **The secondary goal** is to educate the public (including parents, donors, insurance companies and physicians) on research findings so that equine-assisted activities become more accessible to those in need.*

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We are out and about this summer:

- Octavia Brown of the HHRF Board and KC Henry, HHRF ED, will be in Germany for the FRDI International Congress, August 12-15
- Molly Sweeney and Cindy Ruiz of the HHRF Board were in Ireland networking for HHRF at the Dublin Horse Show, August 5-9
- Our recent reception tour in California included Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Ride On and the California State University in Northridge Dept. of Physical Therapy, hosted by Ride On (special thanks to these hosts for their generosity!)



Email info@horsesandhumans.org or call 440.543.8306 to arrange a meeting in Germany, or to learn more about hosting an outreach reception at your program in the US!

After giving a presentation at the US Park Police Rock Creek Stables in Washington, DC, Molly Sweeney, HHRF Founder and President, gets a warm reception from Jack, a 9-year-old quarterhorse and U.S. Park Police "Equine Officer" who decided to visit the office and learn more about Horses and Humans Research Foundation!

Check us out online:

www.horsesandhumans.org

Blog, application guidelines, copies of awarded proposals, archived newsletters, Q&A Section and much much more!