



STRATEGIC PLAN 2007 – 2010

Research

"When resources are provided for quality research..."

Validation

...then quality research will result"

Education

This planning process was made possible through a capacity building grant from

The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation

Planning Team & Board of Directors

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* Denotes members of
the HHRF Board of
Directors.

Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) worked with facilitator KC Henry of Transitions Unlimited in 2006-2007 to conduct a strategic planning process.

The overarching objective in undergoing a strategic planning process was to organize the present on the basis of the projections of the desired future, leading to a detailed plan for the coming 3+ years. The process considered the external and internal environment in addition to recent history and challenges. A physical meeting of the planning team, consisting of Board members, industry experts and a facilitator, took place in Florida in January 2007. The five strategic priorities that resulted from the meeting, to be implemented in the coming years, include:

- I. Increase the involvement, commitment and effective impact of the Board of Trustees**
- II. Enhance Fundraising capacities and increase philanthropic support**
- III. Expand initiatives to develop high level scientific research**
- IV. Expand our marketing and education program to increase quality of research and community awareness**
- V. Establish and grow an endowment**

The plan, detailed in the enclosed Implementation Grid, identifies objectives and strategies for achieving each goal. It will serve as HHRF's path into the future. The intricate collaboration of HHRF staff, board and stakeholders is required for each goal to be achieved.

HHRF extends sincere gratitude to the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation, which provided a grant that made the planning process possible.

The time and energy spent by every contributor through this process is duly recognized and appreciated. HHRF now takes the first step on the path into the future--energized, united and prepared for where it will lead.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

June, 2007

Dear Friends,

The Horses and Humans Research Foundation was founded on two primary principles:

- 1) the field of equine assisted activities/therapies (EAA/T) is in extreme need of solid scientific research and*
- 2) if we put the money out there, the research would come.*

We all know how important research is, but I do not think we can even begin to imagine the impact that quality research will have on the future growth and development of the field of EAA/T.

After several years of establishing a Board of Directors, building financial support, constructing a strong administrative base, engaging researchers, and spreading the word, HHRF was able to award it's first grant, for \$50,000, to a team of St. Louis University researchers in 2006.

The bar has been set at a very high level of research competency and we are looking forward to awarding another \$50,000 in 2007.

With the basics of the grant cycle now established, the Board turned to governing for growth. A meeting in January of 2007 shaped the following Strategic Plan to direct that growth in order to more effectively and efficiently promote our vision of the future.

We visualize a time when high level published scientific research will increase international awareness of the unique healing attributes of equine assisted activities, will improve best practices in related therapy and learning programs, and will increase support from insurers, professionals and the general community—including donors. This research will make equine assisted activities more effective, more affordable and more accessible.

We gratefully acknowledge the commitment and involvement of staff, Board members and our many advisors who generously shared their time and expertise throughout this process. It is their critical thinking and thoughtful analysis that have formed our strategy for the future.

In appreciation,

Molly Sweeney

Molly Sweeney

President, Board of Directors

Horses and Humans Research Foundation

INTRODUCTION

History:

In 2002 a group of people, led by Molly Sweeney's vision, gathered with intent to develop a plan to promote research in the field of therapeutic riding/equine assisted activities. Their prevailing philosophy was that when the resources are provided to support quality research, quality research would result.

By 2004 the foundation had attained its 501(c)3 nonprofit status, contracted a project manager and established a central office in Cleveland, Ohio. The Foundation was blessed with a significant pledge of \$500,000, contributed anonymously as a challenge fund, matching dollar for dollar any donor's contribution. By the following year the board was expanded, financial and operational policies and procedures were established, a website, newsletters and brochures were created, an annual fundraising campaign was established, a grant management process was adapted and a call for proposals was announced. A stringent selection process utilizing a highly qualified scientific review committee identified an outstanding research project which the board awarded as its first grant in 2006.

Context:

Programs providing equine assisted activities are expanding in our country and internationally at exceptionally high rates. Thousands of programs exist to serve people with disabilities by providing therapy, enhancing well being, developing life skills and extending educational opportunities—all through partnerships with horses. There are nearly 750 equine assisted activities/therapies (EAA/T) programs in the United States that are affiliated with the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association. This programming accounts for over \$77 million in budgets, 40,000+ participants, 750 programs, and 26,000+ volunteers annually, and represents only a portion of the programs operating nationally and internationally.

Even with the pressing industry growth, rigorous, comprehensive research to validate the effectiveness of these activities and therapies has not been developed. Horses and Humans Research Foundation is focused on research that will further improve best practices in EAA/T programs and/or will confirm the benefits of EAA/T to health professionals, insurance companies, participants and the general public.

Intent

Horses and Humans Research Foundation was established to fund research into the interaction of horses and humans to: 1) Maximize benefits 2) Promote best practices and 3) Educate the public

The Horses and Humans Research Foundation facilitates universal understanding and appreciation for the significant influence of horses on humans.

The purpose of Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) supported investigations is to scientifically investigate the therapeutic effects between horses and humans. HHRF gives funding priority to projects that have been pilot tested, have evidence of strong foundation or scientific justification, exemplify exceptional scientific quality and show design methodology appropriate to a significant research question.

The broad research agenda includes basic research as well as clinical studies that impact the physical and mental health and quality of life for people with disabilities who are involved with equine assisted activities/therapies. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis taking into account scientific merit, as well as scientific and clinical significance.

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Mission:

The Horses and Humans Research Foundation funds research into the interaction of horses and humans to maximize therapeutic benefits.

Vision:

High level published scientific research has increased international awareness of the unique healing attributes of equine assisted activities, has improved best practices in related therapy and learning programs, and has increased support from insurers, professionals, the general community – including donors. This research has made equine assisted activities more effective, more affordable and more accessible

Core Values:

Excellence

- ▶ **Driven to facilitate and support the highest caliber of competitively selected scientific research**
- ▶ **Striving for creative solutions, originality and innovation**
- ▶ **Unflinching pursuit and transmission of new knowledge through research**
- ▶ **Cooperation, collaboration and teamwork in achieving our goal**

Respect

- ▶ **Guided by the highest possible ethical and professional standards as it relates to humans and equines associated with research we support**
- ▶ **Embracing diversity, integrity and mutual respect as paramount in all activities and personal interactions**

Accountability

- ▶ **Ensuring wise and efficient use of resources**
- ▶ **Committed to consistent, open communications with our stakeholders**

STRATEGIC GOALS, 2007-2010

I. Increase the involvement, commitment and effective impact of the Board of Trustees

Objectives:

- ▶ Add new Board members
 - Increase to 9 – '07
 - Increase to 10-14 – '08
 - Increase to 14 -20 – '09
- ▶ Increase geographical, cultural and skill set diversity
 - Follow board matrix plan in recruitment – ongoing
- ▶ Increase board commitment in fund development
 - Board members submit new names for mailing list semi annually – '07
 - Every board member participates in annual cultivation gathering – '08
 - Members make personal contacts–thank you notes, calls, etc – '07
- ▶ Establish an advisory board fulfilling expertise needs in research, EAA standards, philanthropy, leadership – '07
- ▶ Establish effective committees with annual goals
 - Increase number of people involved with the finance committee – '07
 - Establish a fundraising committee – '07
 - Establish a resource/nominating committee – '07
 - Assign a chair and co-chair of each committee – '08

II. Enhance Fundraising capacities and increase philanthropic support

Objectives:

- ▶ Incorporate new more efficient data base software to track donors – '07
- ▶ Solicit corporate support – ongoing
- ▶ Create cultivation events for donors and potential donors – ongoing
- ▶ Improve professional image through development of new logo, branding initiative and marketing plan – '07
- ▶ Pursue grant making collaborative initiatives – '09
- ▶ Develop a high potential fundraising event – '09-'10

III. Expand initiatives to develop high level scientific research

Objectives:

- ▶ **Develop policy for safety/standards review – '07**
- ▶ **Improve effectiveness and clarity of application (on line) and review process – '07**
- ▶ **Increase dollar amount of grant awards – '08 (change to spring fall granting schedule)**
- ▶ **Facilitate national symposium – '08**
- ▶ **Participate in international symposium – '09**
- ▶ **Further assess possible need to narrow research goals – '09**
- ▶ **Further assess CFP to meet insurance requirements – '09**

IV. Expand our marketing and education program to increase quality of research and community awareness

Objectives:

- ▶ **Increase media coverage more press releases/articles in wide variety of publications – ongoing**
- ▶ **Presentations increase nationally ('07), internationally ('08)**
- ▶ **New database program installed – '07**
- ▶ **Expand database**
 - **1500 – '07**
 - **2500 – '08**
 - **4000 – '09**
- ▶ **Pursue links with related professional web sites – ongoing**

V. Establish and grow an endowment

Objectives:

- ▶ **Establish endowment fund – '07**
- ▶ **Initiate endowment campaign – '09**