

Resounding Gratitude to Molly Sweeney

Molly Sweeney, HHRF's founder and long time board president is retiring from our board of directors. She has led our team from its first brainstorming meeting (2004) to our present achievements including funding 5 excellent EAA research projects. In Molly's wise way, abiding by sound nonprofit organizational principles, she insisted that no exceptions to board term limits would be waived on her behalf. Fortunately she is not going too far as she has agreed to continue to serve in a leadership role on board committees and task forces – for which we are most grateful!

Molly recognized early that all EAA progress would hinge on learning the facts, not relying on anecdotal input. The field could not move forward without devel-

oping evidence-based practices through the highest levels of published scientific research. She was one of the first to recognize that until rigorous research was established, many things would be held back, including fundraising, third party reimbursement, development of best practices, community acceptance and mainstreaming EAA into its rightful place in society.

When it did not appear that any existing organization was prepared to put the needed focus and funding into research – she stepped forward in

her quiet, resolute, steady, focused manner and established a team to create a publicly funded foundation to guarantee the needed research would be realized.

Molly has a lofty vision of a world where EAA/T programs are available to all who would benefit from them, where medical and rehabilitation practitioners readily prescribe EAA/T, where equines are widely appreciated for their unique and remarkable attributes and where equine assisted activity and therapy programs receive third party reimbursement as well as generous, sustainable support. What is more, she is sincerely committed to turning that vision into reality. In fact, she will not stop until it is so.



HHRF Planning Retreat Underway with Awarded Funding

With funding received from the William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation and The EQUUS Foundation, The Horses and Humans Research Foundation is planning a two-fold strategy planning initiative which is set to take place this upcoming summer in Lexington, KY. A strong team of researchers and EAA professional leaders will be assembled to participate in the evaluation and assessment process that will culminate in an extensive two-day vision

and planning retreat.

All of the leaders in the industry agree that research is critical to the advancement and recognition of our developing programs – but it is not clear exactly how and where our research dollars should be invested to make the largest impact. Resolving this investment query will be the focus of the strategy sessions.

Industry leaders and researchers will be

presenting on the current state of published EAA research and on the views of EAA professionals and leaders. Breakout groups will be convened to address specific issues and goals.

If individuals or organizations are interested in supporting or participating in pre-workshop assessment surveys, or in attending the workshop, more information is available on the HHRF web site at www.horsesandhumans.org

RESEARCH UPDATE

Up To The Minute Reports from HHRF-Funded Research Projects

Changes in Dynamic Trunk/Head Stability and Functional Reach after Hippotherapy. Washington University of Medicine, St. Louis, MO. Principal Investigators: Tim Shurtleff, Dr. Jack Engsborg, Dr. John Standeven. Body movement and control of children with CP, measured through video while astride motorized barrel – then re-measured after hippotherapy sessions. Results showed impressive improvements that continued after hippotherapy sessions ended. Published in *the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*

The Effect of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning in Children with Autism. Good Hope Equestrian Training Center Miami, FL. Principal Investigator: Dr. Margaret Bass. Evaluated effects of therapeutic horseback riding lessons on the social function and attention of children, diagnosed with autism. Measured through Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS) and Sensory Profile. Completed study results at HHRF website. Final study has been submitted for publication.

(continued on back page)

Newly Elected HHRF Board Officers

President - Judith Lightfoot

Vice presidents - Tess Schmalbach and Michael Kaufmann

Secretary - Robert Crump

Treasurer - Cynthia Ruiz

Our newest board member, Alison Zack Darrell, will be introduced in the next newsletter issue. Her bio can be found at the HHRF web site.

President's Perspective

As I leave my position of board president- and reflect upon 2010 as well as the previous 7 years- a number of things occurred to me. Both this foundation and the EAA/T field have grown tremendously. The original vision of needed EAA/T research is constantly challenged by the newer creative EAA/T applications that continue to center on the abilities of the horse to profoundly influence people.

I recently had the opportunity to observe an equine experiential learning and education workshop focusing on team work, leadership and communication for a nonprofit board and key staff members.

I was impressed with the professionalism and competency of the human and equine facilitators, working together, to lead enthusiastic participants into new insights about themselves. And the seamless transition from "What happened in the arena?" to "Does that ever happen in the organization?" opened floodgates for productive discussions around key issues.

All the different varieties of equine-assisted activities demonstrate the interconnectedness of horses and humans which build a broader base for mutual understanding and appreciation for the value of horses in our lives.

Continued research will help us learn more about the dynamics of these horse/human interactions and how to make the most effective use of them for the greater good of both people and horses.

In closing, I would like to add my sincere gratitude to the donors, researchers, board members and stakeholders who have helped this foundation achieve its research mission. We have much to do- and we will continue to need your support. Thank you.

-Molly Sweeney

Horses and Humans

2010 was a BIG year!

37 applications were received from 19 US states, 7 countries, 27 universities and more than 30 EAA/T programs. Two projects received HHRF funding:

Basic Neurobiological and Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Therapeutic Effects of Equine Assisted Activities - a joint initiative by researchers from Germany, Austria and Sweden. Dr. Andrea Beetz of the University of Rostock, Germany leads this team of investigators who are testing the theoretical basis for the effects of equine assisted activities on youth with social and emotional disorders.

- 1) One trial will investigate if human-horse interactions have a positive effect on difficult mother-child relationships through measurement of oxytocin levels.
- 2) In the second controlled trial, the research team will explore if human-horse interactions facilitate the development of a trustful relationship between an insecurely attached child and his or her therapist which allows the child to open up and talk about emotionally stressful situations.

Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy, is being headed by Debbie Silkwood-Sherer of Central Michigan University and Nancy McGibbon of Therapeutic Riding of Tucson, Inc. The study will test improvement in gait and balance of 30, 3-6 year old children with spastic cerebral palsy, after hippotherapy is added to their regular therapy routine. Outcome measures: Balance and gait measures will be determined by the pediatric balance scale, the standardized walking obstacle course, and the 1-minute walk test. The Activities Scale for Kids (5-6 yr) and the Children's Assessment of Participation and Enjoyment-preschool version (3-4 yr) will measure activities and participation. The Beery Test of Motor Integration will measure visual-motor integration, and the PedsQL-CP will be used to measure health-related quality of life.

Final Research Results from 2008 Autism Study announced:

The HHRF-funded study, "The Effect of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning of Children with Autism" led by Margaret M. Bass, Ph.D. and Maria Llabre, Ph.D. was completed. "The results of this study indicate that EAA activities may be a valuable therapeutic option for children with autism spectrum disorders. Improvement was seen in such critical areas as sensory seeking, emotional reactive, inattention/distractibility and sensory sensitivity.

Education Webinars were developed to guide research teams through the grant application process. The webinar remains available for viewing at the HHRF web site

Three foundations granted significant funds that will drive the mission and vision of HHRF:

- The Dolan Foundation designated \$50,000 to support EAA/T research
- The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation awarded HHRF a \$12,000 research strategy-planning grant
- The EQUUS Foundation designated \$5,000 to support a working panel of EAA leaders to strategize on advancing EAA/T through research initiatives



Our visionary donors make us feel like rolling for joy too! Above is Fieldstone Farm TRC (Ohio) therapy horse "Dodge". Photo taken by FF volunteer Tammie Baker.

Research Foundation 2010 Annual Report

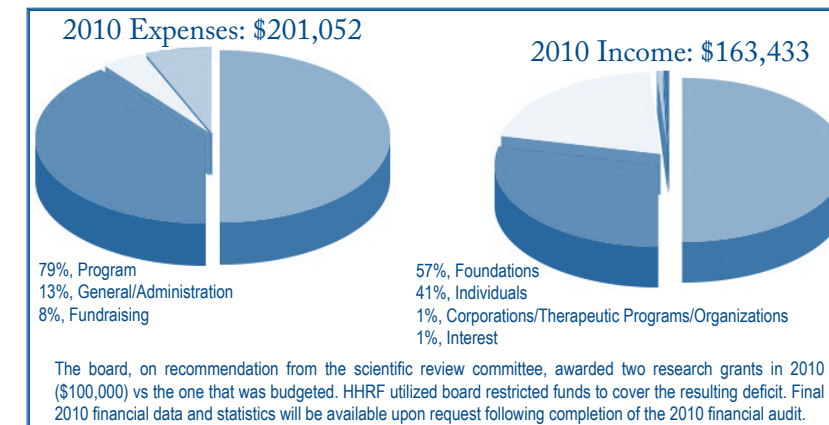
All 2010 Contributors

Barbara Abrams	Patti and Christopher Coyle	Chris Gruendeman	Marion May	the Outdoor Radio Show
Adventures in Awareness	Robert and Ann Crump	Betz Haartz & Walter Davis	Bryan McQueeney & Gloria Hamblin	Paul Spiers
Ann Alden	Ms. Stuart Daly	Paul Haefner	Kevin and Kelly McShane	Richard and Lynnette Stuart
Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games	Alison Zack Darrell	Susan Harding	Merck Partnership For Giving	Molly Sweeney
Anonymous	Peter Dedon & Tess Schmalbach	Susanne and David Haseman	Misty Meadows Mitey Riders	Brian and Debbie Sweeney
Anonymous	Dolan Childrens Foundation	Loral Haus	Jeff and Teresa Morris	Mark and Meg Sweeney
Anonymous	Dottie Donahey	Cheryl Heffernan	Diane Morrow	Jean Tebay
Diane Auger	Anne Driscoll	Helping Hands	Mark R. Mosley, MD & Kristan T. Mosley, OTR/L	The Alan J. Young Family Fund
Robin and Bruce Augustadt	Martha and Richard Dubensky	KC Henry	Toshihiko and Sarah Niwa	The Grace Jones Richardson Trust
Barbara and Robert Ballard	Daniel and Kathleen Dunn	Henry Luce Foundation	North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA)	The Marilyn & Harry Swimmer Family Foundation
Margaret Bass	Jack & Susan Engsborg	H.T. Mead Foundation	Louise Patno	The O'Grady & Fletcher Family Foundation
Julie Bender	Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association (EAGALA)	Indiana Gump Foundation	Ray Paulick	The Right Path Riding Academy
Janet Bergman	EQUUS Foundation	Elizabeth Juliano	Agnes Peace	The WRG Foundation
Milt & Terry Boggs	John Evans	Michael Kaufmann & Richard Graham	Debi Peloso	Mona Thelle
Breana Bornhorst	Federation of Riding for the Disabled International (FRDI)	Alicia Kershaw & Clifton Rose	Beth Racine	Clare Thomas
Octavia Brown	Kaylon Fenner	Yurai Kim	Earl & Marilyn Rose	University of Denver
Luis and Carol Cardenas	Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center	Evan Krichevsky	Cynthia Ruiz	Sandy Webster
Leanne Carroll	Jane and Robert Fitzpatrick	Judith & Ronald Kruse	Sentinel Trust Company	Chris Whitney
Renee Casady	William and Betty Foulk	John Kundtz	Lynn Shaw	William J. & Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation
Central Kentucky Riding For Hope	Freedomfarm	Mr. and Mrs. J. Andrew Kundtz	SIRE, Houston's Therapeutic Equestrian Centers	Edith Wislocki and Alfred Darby
Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA)	Lori Garkovich	Linda Lee-Picazio	James Smith, DVM	Alan & Evana Young
Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center	Elise Grant Lauinger & Byron Grant	Brad Lewis	Carey Smith-Wilson	Autumn Zick
Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center	Kay Green	Judith and Richard Lightfoot	Polli Soholt	
Joan Cox Danzansky		Julie Lipovsky	Jim and Patti Solomon of Xplor	
		Laura Sue Lubbers		
		Mrs. Richard Lubbers		
		Deidre Lyons		
		Lisa May		

Honor and Memorial Contributions

- In memory of "Fire & Smoke"; Octavia Brown
- In honor of Laura Gorretta; Carey Smith-Wilson
- In memory of Barb Heine; Anonymous
- In honor of KC Henry; Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center
- In honor of KC Henry; Judith & Ronald Kruse
- In memory of Michael Kaufmann's father; Peter Dedon & Tess Schmalbach
- In memory of Michael Kaufmann's father; KC Henry
- In honor of Judith Lightfoot; Linda Lee-Picazio
- In honor of Nancy McGibbon; Lynn Shaw
- In honor of their Mitey Riders; Misty Meadows Mitey Riders
- In memory of Hugh O'Neill; John Kundtz
- In honor of Linda Parsons; Lisa May
- In memory of John Peace; Agnes Peace
- In honor of Bill & Lucille Pringle's Anniversary; Milt & Terry Boggs
- In honor of Riders at Friends for Tomorrow; Diane Auger
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Breana Bornhorst
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Daniel and Kathleen Dunn
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; William J. & Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Louise Patno
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Sentinel Trust Company
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; SIRE, Houston's Therapeutic Equestrian Centers
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Sandy Webster
- In honor of Molly Sweeney; Alison Zack Darrell
- In memory of Fola Dawn Van Buren; Leanne Carroll
- In memory of Fola Dawn Van Buren; Polli Soholt
- In honor of Janet & Freddie Wilkinson's marriage; KC Henry

A gift arrived recently that touched our hearts: Folded cash totaling 15 dollars. No note. A sweet Rockwell image of children and a dog adhered to the envelope. The donation was a warm affirmation that another person quietly believes in our research. Sincere gratitude to our anonymous friend in San Diego.



Will you join your colleagues and friends in supporting high-level competitive research? HHRF is not an endowed foundation; we cannot do this work without your support.

Please donate at www.horsesandhumans.org

Donor options include bequests, charitable gift annuities, employee workplace giving programs, sponsorship, matching challenge funds, honor and memorial contributions and more. Please help us to continue this important work.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Horses & Humans Research Foundation
P.O. Box 480
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022

www.horsesandhumans.org

info@horsesandhumans.org
(440)543-8306

**Next Grant
Application
Deadline:**

**May 15
2011**

Tips on grant applica-
tions, informational
webinars and more:
horsesandhumans.org

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Leslie Williams, DVM, MPH

Research Updates

(continued from front page)

Hippotherapy to Improve Postural Control in Children with Cerebral Palsy. Université de Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Université du Québec, Trois-Rivières, Canada. Principal Investigators: Dr. Helene Corriveau, Dr. Claude Dugas, Danielle Champagne. Measuring control of head and trunk movement for children with cerebral palsy through telemetry recording, accelerometers. Active project.

Basic neurobiological and psychological mechanisms underlying therapeutic effects of Equine Assisted Activities. See details in annual report inside this news letter issue.

Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy. See details in annual report inside this news letter issue.

Details related to all HHRF funded grants can be found at the horsesandhumans.org

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NOW AVAILABLE: HHRF application assistance webinars can now be custom scheduled for you!

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