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**LATE BREAKING: MOLLY SWEENEY WINS
EQUUS FOUNDATION HUMANITARIAN AWARD**

HHRF is pleased to congratulate Founder Molly Sweeney for winning the EQUUS Foundation Humanitarian Award. In 2009, The United States Equestrian Federation and The EQUUS Foundation joined to establish The EQUUS Foundation Humanitarian Award to celebrate the humanitarian achievements made by a member of the equestrian world. The stated goal of the award is "to spotlight and exalt the selfless dedication one individual or a group of individuals has made, whether on a regional or national scale". Past recipients have included Nancy Koch, Executive Director, CANTER National and Robert E. Caccione, Executive Director, Intercollegiate Horse Show Association. The award includes a \$5,000 grant from The EQUUS Foundation to be awarded to a horse-related charity of the winner's choice. One nominator's observation of Molly's contributions to our field: "She has the ability to see the forest for the trees, and the will and determination to make things happen. I find many people who dream big, but do not have the dedication to follow through. Molly combines both inspiration and perspiration to accomplish great things. The very best example of this is her role in establishing and promoting the Horses and Humans Research Foundation."



HHRF Funded Research:

- **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.
- **The Effect of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning in Children with Autism:** Good Hope Equestrian Training Center - Miami, FL, USA. Funded 2008 Status: Submitted for publication (Pilot study results published in the Journal for Autism & Developmental Disorders).
- **Hippotherapy to Improve Postural Control in Children with Cerebral Palsy:** Université de Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada. Funded 2010. Status: active.
- **Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy:** Central Michigan University, USA. Funded 2010. Status: active.
- **Basic neurobiological and psychological mechanisms underlying therapeutic effects of Equine Assisted Activities (EAA/T):** University of Rostock, Germany. Funded 2010. Status: active.
- **Effects of Hypnotherapy on Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders:** Washington University School of Medicine, Program in Occupational Therapy, St. Louis, MO, USA. Funded 2011. Status: Active

Additional information: www.Horsesandhumans.org

FUNDING STRATEGIES FOR 2012

As a result of the recent stakeholder survey (see pg. 2) and research strategy workshop, HHRF has initiated a focused fundraising effort in three specialty areas:

1. **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury:** The Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Program, which serves the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, donated \$12,500 seed funding to a fund to research EAA/T for this population. \$11,500 is needed before \$25,000 anonymous matching funds will be contributed to make the call for proposals active.
2. **Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):** HHRF has funded \$150,000 to research in this area thus far. ASD diagnoses continue to rise at an alarming rate among children. We need to keep the research momentum advancing!
3. **Cerebral Palsy (CP):** This area has seen the most published EAA/T research to date. Funding the next level of research will create significant impact. Watch for upcoming HHRF webinars on this topic.

HHRF will make each specialty call for proposals active as the funds are put into place. \$70,000 is needed for each fund. We need your help with contacts and donations!

These and other changes may impact future Call for Proposal guidelines/deadlines. All changes will be posted on an ongoing basis at horsesandhumans.org.

\$50,000 Awarded to Study Effects of Hippotherapy on Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) awarded its sixth \$50,000 research grant recently to a team from the Washington University of St. Louis, Missouri. The team will measure outcomes from Occupational and Physical Therapy using horse movement (Hippotherapy) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The proposed project will follow fifteen children with Autism Spectrum Disorder as they participate in 12 weeks of weekly hippotherapy sessions. The project is especially innovative because it will use objective quantitative data collection instead of the qualitative standardized clinical scales that are typically used for such studies.

"Hippotherapy is commonly used for children with ASD," said Principal Investigator Tim L. Shurtleff, OTD, OTR/L. "However, no systematic evidence has been published on the impact of hippotherapy on children with ASD."

Autism Spectrum Disorders affects 1 in 110 children and 80-90% have motor control impairments which impact their ability to participate in activities of childhood affecting their lifelong participation.

"No studies of Hippotherapy have been reported about children with ASD but many children with ASD participate in hippotherapy," continued Shurtleff. "Evidence is needed to support treatment planning, and to support reimbursement for intervention with children with ASD."



Photo at Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Program, which recently donated seed funding for PTSD/TBI research. More on the inside right page of this newsletter. Photo by Suzanne Dortch.

Age and gender-matched children without disabilities will provide a neurotypical comparison in the study. Assessments will be taken 12 weeks before and 12 weeks after the hippotherapy interventions. The team hypothesizes that static and dynamic postural control will significantly improve over three months and that after 12 weeks, social responsiveness, sensory processing, occupational performance and participation in age-appropriate activities will be significant. The study will take place from January to December of 2012.

Since its founding, HHRF has invested \$300,000 in professional research efforts led by six research teams in the United States, Canada and Germany. This is the second grant award the Washington University team has received from HHRF.

Read more about this and other HHRF-funded research projects at horsesandhumans.org

INSIDE: International Stakeholder Survey Results, Research Strategy Planning Report, Seed Funding Received for PTSD/TBI Research, Board and Advisory Transitions, Letter from the President

"Research is to see what everybody else has seen and to think what nobody else has thought." -Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Dear Friend:

This has been a busy year for HHRF!

Along with a new look to the newsletter, we have new board and advisory members (bios at right), events and grant announcements to report.

HHRF hosted a Research Strategy Workshop, "EAA Research for the Future", held in Lexington, KY in September, and made possible by The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill Foundation, The EQUUS Foundation and The American Quarter Horse Foundation. The workshop goal was to identify key strategies that will both build capacity and direct EAA research development. The workshop was successful, bringing together members of the Scientific Steering Committee, the EAA Steering Committee, HHRF Board members and HHRF Staff and many others (see article below and right).

The HHRF Board was delighted by the response to our 2011 call for proposals and the quality of research the scientific committee is seeing. Thanks to all those who have helped support research to further develop equine-assisted activities and therapies. After deliberation, the Board voted to fund Effects of Hippotherapy on Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (see front page).

Thank you to the HHRF Staff, the Scientific Committee, the Board of Directors and most especially all of you, our supporters and friends, for your commitment to the HHRF mission to facilitate universal understanding and appreciation of the significant influence of horses on humans.

Sincerely,
Judy Lightfoot
President

Thanks to all who participated in the recent EAA/T Stakeholder Survey. This survey was conducted to better understand and prioritize the field's research interests and needs. The results are being utilized by research strategy planning teams who are advising the HHRF board regarding future use of research funds (see article at right). The open Internet survey was conducted via Survey Monkey from July 12 – August 23, 2011. **A total of 459 survey responses were collected**, the majority of which (83%) were from North America. Most of the rest were from Europe (9%) and Australia (4%). The table below is broken down by Stakeholder Group, Number of Respondents and each group's identified Priority Purpose of EAA/T Research. **Full results of the survey are available at horsesandhumans.org.**

Stakeholder	#	Priority
Therapists in physical fields	52	Creating best practices related to EAA/T curriculums
Therapists in psychological fields	56	Creating best practices related to EAA/T curriculum
EAA instructors and horse handlers	131	Creating best practices related to EAA/T curriculums
Volunteers	42	Creating best practices related to EAA/T curriculums
Administrators	56	Providing information and data to potential funders
Professional research associates	34	To better understand EAA/T impact on specific focus areas
Donors	15	Creating best practices related to EAA/T curriculums
Family members / participants	10	Providing information and data to third party reimbursement sources

"Research is four things: brains with which to think, eyes with which to see, machines with which to measure and, fourth, money." -Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Please, make a gift to Horses and Humans Research Foundation. We need your support. HHRF is not endowed and is therefore completely dependent on contributions from people like you. Please join us today so we can fund research that will create knowledge and remove barriers to growth and development.

Visit horsesandhumans.org or mail a check to P.O. Box 480, Chagrin Falls, OH, 44022 USA.

~~~ THANKYOU! ~~~



Horses from the Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Therapy Program, which serves the Walter Reed Medical Center, during a burial service. Caisson Platoon has initiated a fund to research PTSD/TBI (see article at right).

## Outcomes From

The Research Strategy Planning Workshop assembled 24 influential professionals from academic, equine, research, equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAA/T), medical and business backgrounds to participate in a planning process to shape and promote future EAA/T research.

Following several months of extensive assessment and planning, The Symposium took place in Lexington KY September 2-3. The agenda included presentations, brain-storming, breakout work groups, a panel discussion and a facilitated planning session.

### Strategies from workshop proceedings:

1) Develop a specialized call for proposal in ad-

## Walter Reed Military Center's EAA/T Program Provides Seed Funding for PTSD/TBI Research

The Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Program, which serves the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland and the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Washington, DC, donated \$12,500 seed funding to HHRF to help address a serious and growing problem in the United States: Untreated mental health problems among returning troops. The research will focus on equine-assisted rehabilitation for veterans who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Larry Pence and Mary Jo Beckman, co-founders of Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Program, approached HHRF to create this special call for proposals when they recognized both the growing numbers of mental health issues among clients and the lack of high-quality research to validate equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAA/T). "We look forward to equine-assisted activities being recognized as valuable treatment for both TBI and PTSD."

Two of the leading diagnoses among returning troops are PTSD and TBI, with 300,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans suffering from PTSD or major depression, and about 320,000 experiencing at least a mild concussion or TBI in combat, according to a RAND Corp. study. These and other mental health issues are expected to cost the nation up to \$6.2 billion over two years in medical costs, lost productivity, and lives lost to suicide.

\$1,000 was also donated to the fund by the Marilyn & Harry Swimmer Family Foundation, and another \$31,500 is needed to fund the entire grant expense. An anonymous donor has agreed to match up to \$25,000 to ensure this research is achieved.

*"Having witnessed and embraced the mostly subtle and often profound effects of the horse on the human spirit and body for nearly 20 years through my involvement in the field of therapeutic riding, I feel called upon to serve and support the board of an organization, the first of its kind, dedicated to discovering the truths & putting factual data behind the marvelous benefits we see happening from the dynamic relationships between horses & humans."*

-Alison Zack Darrell



Guy Hunter



Alison Zack Darrell



Philip Tedeschi



Leslie L. Williams

## Board/Advisor Transitions

HHRF welcomes Alison Zack Darrell and Leslie L. Williams to the board of directors and Guy Hunter and Philip Tedeschi to the advisory council. We extend sincere gratitude to retired board members Octavia Brown and Michael Kaufmann for their years of work and dedication to this research.

**Alison Zack Darrell** is a Senior Major Gift Officer at Connecticut College. She spent 13 years as Executive Director of High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. and has an advanced degree in Nonprofit Management from the New School University, Milano Graduate School of Management & Urban Policy in New York City, and an undergraduate degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of CA, Santa Barbara.

**Leslie L. Williams, DVM, MPH, DACVA** is Sr. Director of Clinical Operations and Pharmacovigilance at Infinity Pharmaceuticals. She completed her DVM at Oklahoma State University, an anesthesia residency/master's program at the University of Illinois and a Masters in Public Health from Boston University.

**Guy F. Hunter** is Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer for NuTech Energy alliance. He served for 6 years on the Board of SIRE, a therapeutic riding center in which his son Nathaniel has ridden for 23 years and has personally witnessed the dramatic improvements that Nathaniel has experienced through therapeutic riding.

**Philip Tedeschi** is an Animal-Assisted Social Work/Experiential Therapy Specialist and co-founder of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. A Master Therapeutic Riding Instructor, former Outward Bound course director, and wilderness medical technician, he has many years of experience in non-traditional therapeutic approaches as well as program development and intervention in interpersonal violence.

## Research Strategy Planning Workshop

dition to the open call that has been made in the past, (for instance, research on Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome as it relates to military veterans). It could be based on needs within the industry and/or on the interests of funding partners/sponsors.

2) Develop a pilot studies funding category at a smaller scale of \$10,000 to \$15,000 to motivate new researchers as well as innovative ideas, approaches and measurements.

3) Develop a research summit for leading professionals to come together to brainstorm and develop the parameters for research.

4) Focus significant effort in developing basic research that defines what it is about the horse that makes our partnership with him so unique and effective across so many settings. "We do not need to prove physical therapy is effective – we need to show why it is more effective in the equine setting."

5) Focus heavily on developing collaborations and partnerships with organizations and associations that could partner in funding and outreach to support research in specific areas

of interest.

6) Create educational opportunities to advance research impact and development: 1) Lead education and communication in EAA communities; 2) Facilitate investigator communication on future research advancement 3) Provide mentoring opportunities to less experienced researchers

All of these proposed strategies are being considered in the HHRF Board's present strategy planning efforts. Some of these ideas will be implemented immediately – and many will be considered in longer range planning.