



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: KC Henry, Executive Director
Phone: 440.543.8306
Email: kchenry@horsesandhumans.org
Web: <http://www.horsesandhumans.org>

**WALTER REED MILITARY CENTER'S EQUINE THERAPY PROGRAM
PROVIDES SEED FUNDING TO RESEARCH PTSD/TBI REHABILITATION**

**Research Will Focus on the Therapeutic Effects of Equine Assisted Rehabilitation
for Veterans with PTSD and TBI**

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 the Horses and Humans Research Foundation 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).

"[We are] now in our 6th year of providing equine-assisted activities for veterans at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center," said Larry Pence and Mary Jo Beckman, co-founders of Caisson Platoon Equine Assisted Program. They 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 320,00 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.

"In just a short time, many centers have created programs to help wounded warriors, and really anyone with PTSD, with or without an accompanying TBI," said Paul A. Spiers Ph.D., HHRF Scientific Committee member and founding Chairman of the PATH International Horses for Heroes Task Force. "The positive outcomes have been remarkable but the findings are still just anecdotal. It is specifically the kind of research that HHRF is seeking to fund with this initiative that will establish the validity of equine-assisted activities and therapies for treating these populations. Our wounded warriors deserve the opportunity to find their lives again, and EAA/T may be the most effective, and, for some, may be the only way to help them find their way back."

\$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.

To make a donation and/or learn more about this and other Horses and Humans Research Foundation projects please email info@horsesandhumans.org or visit <http://www.horsesandhumans.org>.

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