



The Riding Centre News

THE RIDING CENTRE • 1117 E. HYDE RD., YELLOW SPRINGS, OH 45387 • WWW.RIDINGCENTRE.ORG • SPRING 2024



Left, Kurtis as a boy: Kurtis back-riding on Honey Pepper with Carolyn. Right, Kurtis today: Kurtis riding in 2023 on Honey Pepper with a little help from his friends PHOTOS: LEFT, JENELLE BACKS; RIGHT, DAVID WILLIAMSON

Spotlight —

Therapeutic Riding Student Kurtis Backs

By Marsha Casdorff

Our therapeutic riding program began in the late 1970s and has flourished under the dedicated leadership of Carolyn Bailey, Master Therapeutic Riding Instructor since the early 1980s. Certified through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int'l), formerly the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), Carolyn has played a pivotal role in the growth and success of our program. In 2024, we're lucky to also have Adriene Kramer, Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, who, like Carolyn, shares a deep connection with The Riding Centre.

Over the years, Carolyn has positively impacted countless lives, teaching hundreds of therapeutic students, including Kurtis Backs. Sixteen years ago, Kurtis, at age six, started riding Honey Pepper, initially "back-riding" with Carolyn, which is when the therapeutic instructor rides along with the student, supporting the student's body weight so they can be fully upright, while a leader guides the horse. Kurtis was only able to back-ride into adulthood.

The pandemic and PATH Int'l rule

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Bobby | Santana |
| A young boy | An old mare |
| Wheelchair bound | Sturdy legs |
| Dull eyes | Mare Stare |
| Nonverbal | Attentive |
| Rolls up his ramp | |
| Presents her back | |
| Lifted into saddle | |
| Adjusts her weight | |
| Sidewalkers ready | |
| Breath held | |
| Wide eyes | |
| Pricked ears | |
| Yells | |
| Raises her head | |
| Settles down | |
| Eyes soften | |
| Eyes brighten | |
| Sighs | |
| Smiles | |
| Steps forward | |
| Laughs | |
| Lowers head | |
| Joy | |
| Focused | |
| Listening | |
| Listening | |
| Talking with his hands | |
| Hearing with her heart | |
| Equestrian | |
| Horse | |
| Soul | |
| Wings | |
| One. | |

Bobby and Santana

A Poem by Haley Kollstedt

changes caused The Riding Centre to no longer offer this therapy, and it was

not clear whether Kurtis would be able to ride mostly unsupported. However, through experimentation and multiple volunteer teams assisting, Kurtis has been able to ride solo. He continues his weekly therapeutic riding in season on his old pal Honey Pepper, with his group of volunteer fans, who look forward to his big smile as they ride down the bike path together.

From Kurtis's mom, Jenelle:

Over the past sixteen years, from age six until now at twenty-three, Kurtis has been riding Honey Pepper for equestrian therapeutic riding to help with his cerebral palsy. The riding has improved his posture, head control, and muscle tone relaxation, and has helped stretch his leg and hip extensions over the years. Kurtis is also assisted by some of the best volunteer side walkers, who help provide him support in sitting. Thanks so much to them for all their time. So much enjoyment and smiles say it all, as Kurtis continues to ride and work on improvements. The next riding season can't come soon enough. Kurtis and Honey Pepper are the perfect dynamic duo! 🐾

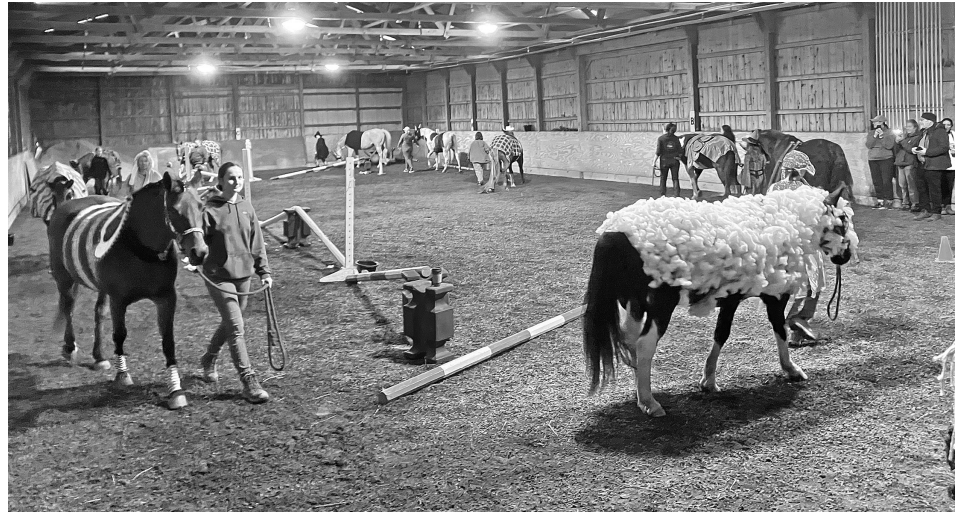
The RC's 'Fun-Raising' 2023 Highlights

By Janetta Lewis

Like to learn? Above and beyond our amazing lesson program, a wide variety of fundraising clinics were offered throughout the year. Whether you wanted to fine-tune your riding skills or your horse skills, it was all covered.

Lori Miller and Jim Nealon each offered clinics to work on riding skills on the flat and over jumps. Adriene Kramer (our very own American Riding Instructor Association [certified level II dressage & jumping] and Centered Riding® [Level II] instructor) offered a series of drill-team classes, teaching coordinated group riding in patterns. Regina Brecha organized Working Equitation, taught by Michelle Lackey and Stephani Kame. She also set up a "scary" obstacle course and assisted participants in navigating the obstacles. Either mounted or on the ground, humans and horses built trust and overcame fears. Through an unmounted horsemanship clinic, Regina focused on the care and understanding of horses. Adriene and Regina teamed up to put on a ride-a-test clinic for those working on their dressage skills.

Whether you train for the show or show for training, we offered three schooling shows: a spring and fall dressage show set up and run by Regina and a fall hunter show run by Carolyn. Marsha Casdorff



Halloween Open House: The ghouls came out for the Halloween Open House parade.

PHOTO: MARSHA CASDORPH

and Susie Nickels provided a stellar "previously loved" tack and horsey stuff sale during the fall shows.

Terry Luzader "ran" the Clip Clop 5K in the spring. Runners, walkers, strollers, dogs, etc., enjoyed this non-horse event. Thank you to all the generous sponsors, especially Wagner Subaru, who helped make this a successful fun-raiser!

Jen Lawson and Regina once again put on a fun-filled Halloween Open House. Free and open to the public, costumes and donations were encouraged, but not required. It was a big success, even though the weather wasn't perfect.

The annual Ride-A-Thon took place in October and was a huge success. In the real world, Carolyn set up a series of ten challenges intended to test and improve balance and control. Students and other riders who wished to participate tested their skills. Many participants solicited sponsors to support their efforts. In the virtual world, David Williamson managed the technical aspects of the online Ride-A-Thon. Any horse and/or person who ever existed (or not) could participate. Donors supported their favorite horse and/or rider through the Ride-A-Thon portal on our website.

Adding to fun-raising in 2023, Cara Hume donated a percentage of her profits from her Touchstone Crystal Jewelry catalogue sale. Dewey's Pizza held a yummy fun-raiser, Give Back, donating a percentage of their profits for one evening, and we

generated the most money raised ever at the Dayton location, thanks to our pizza-loving supporters. Regina put together a beautiful calendar full of pictures of our horses, cats, and scenery. (There are still some available.) Lastly, don't forget that Kroger donates every time you shop. Just register your Kroger card with the Kroger Community Rewards program and choose The Riding Centre Association #AF920 as your charity of choice.

We are always grateful for the masterful grant-writing skills of Cindy Minton-Piatt and her apprentice, Regina Brecha. These organizations generously awarded grants in 2023: the Community Health Foundation; the Dayton Foundation; the Della Sellsor Trust; the Morgan Family Foundation; the Rotary Club of Springfield, Ohio; the Springfield Foundation; and the Yellow Springs Community Foundation. Thanks to these wonderful organizations for their support.

This fun-raising only happens because of our awesome staff and volunteers who do the work so others can enjoy. Thank you so much, and a heartfelt thanks to those who continue to give just for their love of The Riding Centre.

Finally, we are eternally grateful for the beautiful Glen Helen that has been our home for sixty-five years. We appreciate The Glen Helen Association for providing a path to allow the Glen to remain our home for many years to come. 🌍

The Riding Centre

STAFF MEMBERS: Carolyn Bailey (Manager and Head Instructor), Adriene Kramer (Assistant Manager and Instructor), Regina Brecha (Instructor), Rowan Coburn-Griffis, Greg Fry, Jody Garrett, Elise Laskowski, Renee Laskowski, Hannah Lawson, Susie Nickels, Nicole Suzel, Merida Kuder-Wexler.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Jill O'Banion (President), Janetta Lewis-Jennings (Vice President), Marsha Casdorff (Secretary), Sylvia Ellison, Colleen Jungeman, Stephanie Lawson, Susie Nickels, Carol Van Ausdal

NEWSLETTER: Editors: Marsha Casdorff and Jill O'Banion;

CONTRIBUTORS: Carolyn Bailey, Marsha Casdorff, Janetta Lewis-Jennings.

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We Love Our Volunteers!

By Marsha Casdorff

In the heart of our organization beats the mantra “We love our volunteers!” In 2023, the invaluable contributions of our dedicated volunteers amounted to over 1,200 hours, weaving a tapestry of support that enriches the core of our mission. From cleaning stalls to writing grants, our volunteers are integral to ensuring that the joys of good horsemanship are accessible to all, transcending ability and financial constraints. These selfless acts allow us to provide transformative lessons for both able-bodied students and those with disabilities, all while maintaining affordability.

Among these remarkable volunteers is Darlene Skinner, who joined The Riding Centre during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for a short time, Darlene became a steadfast presence every Saturday morning, not only as a dedicated stall cleaner, but also as a helping hand with shows and therapeutic riding lessons. Darlene’s can-do spirit and warm demeanor were always welcome. Although she bid farewell to us in early 2023 as she returned home to Canada, she left behind a heartfelt letter to Carolyn, capturing the essence of her profound experience with us. Join us in extending our deepest gratitude to Darlene and all our cherished volunteers for their unwavering commitment.

Dear Carolyn,

When the pandemic hit in 2020, only eight months after I got to Ohio, Wright-Patterson went into lockdown, and it became difficult for me, since I was alone. In early 2021, I reached out to you, and you welcomed me right away. I looked forward to seeing my friends at the barn. I will never forget the kindness I received from The Riding Centre staff. Their caring attitudes raised my spirits when I was down. The welcoming environment helped me tremendously.

I have to give a big shout out to you, Carolyn, for welcoming me and checking in on me when you knew I was having physical issues. There are a few others who have made me feel welcome: Rowan (with whom I’ve had many chats), Adriene (one of the first people I met and who



Darlene and Doc. PHOTO: REGINA BRECHA

guided me on the first day), Regina, and Annette (who was always so kind and let me groom and give treats to her horses).

Volunteering at The Riding Centre has been one of the best experiences I’ve had while in Dayton, Ohio, and I will cherish the memories. It was something that helped me through hard times. It was therapy for me. Even if I didn’t ride the horses, being at the barn was what I needed. Again, I can’t express my appreciation! Thanks so much for the past 2 ½ years... You became part of my family while I was here.

—Darlene

Did You Re-Member?

Lifetime Members

- Andi Adkins
- Carly Bailey
- Carolyn & Chris Bailey
- Rosemary & Jim Bailey
- Bob Baldwin, Jr.
- Myra Banion
- Adrian Edwards
- Joysan Edwards
- Stephanie Fitzgerald
- Laura Funderburg
- Sara Garing
- Yana & Dave Garing
- Vikki & Dale Hazelbaker
- Adriene Kramer
- Jill O’Banion
- Cindy Minton-Piatt
- Nina Myatt
- Jean McCally Tebay
- Jessica L. Andrews & Timothy W. Toothman
- Anna Williamson
- Marsha Casdorff & David Williamson

Family Members

- Nora Kaulk & Patty Erhardt
- Jen Lawson & Connor Howe

- Lauren Miller & Hans Jacobson
- Lisbeth & Hal Johnson
- Hannah, Sophia & Stephanie Lawson
- Lilly Woods & Sarah Maxwell
- Robin & Larry Weinstein

Individual Members

- Katherine Berg
- Lizzie Bergh
- Annette Biehler
- Regina Brecha
- Lynn Caldwell
- Steve Dunham
- Janetta Lewis-Jennings
- Terry Luzader
- Margaret Mattox
- Zoey McKinley
- Liz Mersky
- Lynn Mishler
- Darcy Mortimer
- Jim Nealon
- Cindy Oleynik
- Susie Nickels
- Alma Shipley
- Maggie Stack
- Nicole Suzel
- Yvonne Vadeboncoeur
- Carol Van Ausdal

Our List of Contributors...

...and how you can join it!

- Adopt a Horse (yearly).....\$1,200
- Donate towards: Endowment, Buildings, Special Projects, General Fund.....(Any amount)
- Become a Member (yearly)
- Family.....\$100
- Individual.....\$75

Special thanks to: Dr. Brett Ellis of Veterinary Associates Animal Hospital, Dr. Sue Parkinson of OSU Marysville, and Dr. Ashley Appelhans for keeping our horses healthy and sound; Cedarville University for providing students for the hundreds of hours of volunteering for our therapeutic program; Diane Dubose, Sean Oberschlake, and Chad Wilt for the wonderful hay they provide (our horses thank you too!).

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

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- AC Service
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- Brian Clem Farm, LLC
- David Williamson Productions, Inc.
- Dunphy Real Estate, Inc.
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- Young’s Jersey Dairy

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- Cathy Allinikov
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- Zachary Arnold
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- Valerie Gomez

LIST CONTINUES ON PAGE FOUR



We love our volunteers! PHOTO: CAROLYN BAILEY

Volunteering, Fundraising Go Hand in Hand

by Carolyn Bailey

There's been a lot of talk about fundraising and volunteering in our newsletter, and the truth is The Riding Centre thrives because of the generous support

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 24	Adriene Kramer Clinic
April 6	Riding Centre 5K Clip-Clop Fundraiser
21	Lori Miller Jumping Clinic
May 5	Dressage Ride-A-Test with Adriene Kramer and Regina Brecha
11	Spring Dressage Show
June 29-30	Working Equitation Clinic with Michelle Lackey and Stephani Kame
July 7	Annual Members' Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation
Aug. 10	Jim Nealon Clinic
Sept. 7	Fall Hunter Show
8	Fall Dressage Show
Oct. 1-31	Annual Ride-A-Thon
26	Halloween Open House

For more information, check ridingcentre.org and our Facebook page.

Fundraising and volunteerism are crucial for us to fulfill our goals

from individuals who contribute both time and money toward our mission of providing quality horsemanship and riding education to everyone, regardless of their abilities. As a nonprofit organization, fundraising and volunteerism are crucial for us to fulfill our goals, especially with limited hours, a finite number of school horses, and our commitment to maintaining small class sizes.

This year, our annual Ride-A-Thon, along with other annual fundraisers like the hunter show, two dressage shows, local trainer clinics, and the Halloween Open House, garnered enthusiastic support from riders, families, and our online community. These events successfully raised essential funds, and we are so grateful to the participants and donors. Of course, these fundraisers and our programs wouldn't be possible without the dedication of many volunteers who contributed over 1,200 hours. To all of these dedicated people—remember, you are just as important to our continued success as our staff and beloved horses are!

OUR CONTRIBUTORS (From Page Three)

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