

Sunnyside Open House

Sunnyside Equestrian Center welcomed over 750 guests to celebrate the 11th anniversary of its therapeutic riding program. A group of hard working volunteers, park employees and SPUR Board members helped make the day enjoyable for all who attended. Their assistance with setting up, directing traffic, serving refreshments, selling tickets, and answering questions about the horses made the day run smoothly.

Visitors enjoyed touring the facility and meeting the remarkable horses that reside there. Outside, visitors enjoyed the smooth sound of the Jazz Gypsies. The younger visitors were able to make a craft, get a horse tattoo, and experience a pony ride. Our artists Bill Hunt, Jude Hazer and Gail Sanderson generously donated their time and talent to create amazing caricatures of the children with a horse and incredible face paintings.

Raffle tickets were sold for 11 baskets, many of which contained gift certificates, donated by the Monmouth County Park System, to participate in various park programs.

The sale of 50/50 tickets began that day and will continue to be sold until the drawing at Thompson Park Day on October 20, 2013.

The proceeds from this event help to support the SPUR scholarship program.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following companies for their donations:

- River Road Books, Fair Haven
- Distinctive Toys, Fair Haven
- Mt. Lebanon Soap Company, Port Murray
- Party Land, Shrewsbury
- Delicious Orchards, Colts Neck
- ShopRite, Middletown
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BOARD MISSION

It is the mission of the Board of Directors of Special People United to Ride to work with the Monmouth County Park System to financially support and to be ambassadors for the Park System's therapeutic horseback riding and associated programs for individuals with disabilities.

PROGRAM MISSION

Working in conjunction with the Monmouth County Park System, Special People United to Ride is a non-profit organization providing individuals with disabilities the opportunity to achieve personal goals through therapeutic horseback riding.



A Message from the President

Dear Friends of SPUR:

It's hard to believe we are halfway through 2013.

The SPUR riding program continues to thrive. The demand for lessons has increased, as have the requests for scholarships and the resulting need for funds. With this in mind, we are planning raffles and events to raise monies that will benefit our program. Look for more information on opportunities to support us in this issue.

This year has been one of transition and of many changes.

Our president, Linda Irving Smith, stepped aside after serving tirelessly for several years. Happily for us, as we move on in her stead, she remains an integral part of the board as past president, providing guidance and creative ideas.

There have been changes in our human and horse personnel at Sunnyside, too. We unfortunately had to say farewell to Halik as he journeyed to greener pastures at the age of 31. His years as a therapy horse helped many students develop their riding skills and confidence and he will be fondly remembered.

A goodbye also has to be said to Cindy Ross, our stable manager. Cindy started with SPUR back at Huber Woods 12 years ago. She is leaving to devote full time to her equine-related businesses, including natural hoof care.

Claire Morris, equestrian program coordinator, has transferred to the Park System's newest venue, the Fort Monmouth Recreation Center, Tinton Falls. Theresa Secks has now joined the Sunnyside team.

New faces and old, we are all dedicated to the SPUR program and the students who benefit from it. We encourage you to visit and see for yourselves the little miracles that happen every day at Sunnyside.

Thank you for your past and continuing support.

Sincerely,

Barbara Carroll and Barbara Duggan,
Co-Presidents, SPUR Board of Directors

Horses Teach Us Lifemanship

by Stephanie Hunt



Kathy Walsh with ShyAnne

What an exhilarating feeling to become a harmonious partner of a horse! How incredible it is to start the journey of self improvement through horsemanship! At Sunnyside Equestrian Center this opportunity presents itself every day through our herd of 17 horses. Each one of them offers up different parts of themselves to teach us how to be better partners, better horsemen and better people. It is quite a joy to see!

*“Riding to Freedom:
Finding Freedom From Your
Fears Through a Horse.”*

Last year I began a program at Sunnyside called, “Riding to Freedom: Finding Freedom From Your Fears Through a Horse”. Not only has this

program been a catalyst for self improvement for my students but for me as well. Witnessing continual transformation is such an honor. In “Riding to Freedom” students meet their equine partners in many different ways: some with excitement, some with fear and hesitation. And when a good match has been made, the horse takes care of its partner.

One of my students, Kathy Walsh, came to me with a great fear of horses that was not due to any bad experiences or known causes. She found it difficult at first to stand near a horse without a physical barrier separating them. Our 4 year old mustang ShyAnne was the perfect match for Kathy. ShyAnne has a special way about her, providing maternal support for adults and children as well as her own daughter Skylark. ShyAnne met Kathy where she was,

without being pushy or intrusive. She knew to give her space as long as she needed. Within our very first lessons, Kathy was able to stand in Shy’s stall, lead her in the arena and groom her. Now, a few sessions later, Kathy and ShyAnne work on natural horsemanship ground skills and have a very strong bond. ShyAnne has inspired Kathy so much that she is

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Local Church Group Raises Money for SPUR

The Social Action Sunday Project, from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Monmouth County in Lincroft, donated \$216.00 to the SPUR scholarship fund in March. This group of fourth through seventh graders regularly carries out projects to act upon their values of caring for the planet and all living beings.

For this project, the group was presented with four potential organizations to support, all of which uphold these values. The group then held an election to determine which organization would receive the profits from a bake sale, which they organized and ran.

The group shared that it meant a lot to be able to support an organization that is located so close, and related to



Picture from left to right: Stephanie Hunt, Fiona Pisacreta, Cindy Ross and Liz Huntington

both animals and humans. Knowing people who benefited from the program also influenced their decision; two members are also SPUR

participants.

Thank you to all the members of the Social Action Sunday Project for your support!

A Helping Hand to Make a Difference

Musicians on a Mission donated \$759, the proceeds from their MOAM-A-PALOOZA, a musical event held May 18, to the SPUR Scholarship fund.

Picture from left to right: Barbara Duggan and Barbara Carroll co-presidents of SPUR, Kathy Noblick and Brenda Weir of MOAM and Betty Leong of Monmouth County Park System.



◀ A donation from the Hui family to the Horse Fund enables SPUR to purchase horses for the therapeutic program.

Picture from left to right: Jason Hui, Dakota and Jessica Hui

SPUR 2013 MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

Students as young as four years old come to SPUR to enjoy the many benefits that therapeutic riding has to offer. Students, along with their caregivers, are firm believers that physical and emotional achievements are realized through therapeutic riding.

Your membership in SPUR for 2013 will help us to turn more dreams into realities. Volunteering and supporting SPUR-sponsored fundraising events are other ways

- Annual single membership \$30.
- Annual family membership \$50. \$ _____
- I want to do more. Please accept the following gift toward:
- Student Financial Aid Scholarships \$ _____
 - Instructor Continuing Education \$ _____
 - Susan Hughes Memorial Scholarship \$ _____
 - Horse Fund \$ _____
 - Wherever it is needed most \$ _____
- Total** \$ _____

I do not want to be publicly acknowledged for my donation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Telephone _____

Payment method: ___ Check Payable to SPUR ___ Visa ___ MC ___ Amex

Card No _____ Exp _____

Last 3 Digits in Signature Strip on Back of Card _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

SPUR 
Special People United to Ride

Mailing address:
Special People United to Ride
805 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738



Upcoming Event — Save the Date

Wine and Cheese



EVENT

To benefit SPUR's Scholarship Program
Saturday, October 5, 6:30-8:30 PM
at the

Thompson Park Visitor Center

For more detail, call (732) 842-4000 ext. 4312
or www.spuronline.org

SPUR



2012 Members and Supporters

The SPUR Board of Directors, the Sunnyside staff, and the student riders thank the following individuals and organizations for their generous support over the past year.

Patricia A. Ahlemeyer
Michael & Catherine Aleccio
American Legion Post Memorial #338
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*Susan Hughes Scholarship
Memorial Funds from...*
Carmelite Community of the Word, Inc.
Douglas & Joanne Irwin
Gerald & Arleen Kynaston
James & Susanne Pincus

*To those supporters who may have unintentionally been omitted from this list, we extend our most grateful thanks.
Please contact us so that we may recognize your generosity in our upcoming Fall 2013 newsletter.*

Tree Donation...

In Memory of Susan Liu



A red dogwood tree was planted in front of Sunnyside Equestrian Center. The tree was donated in memory of Susan Liu by the Special People United to Ride (SPUR) Board of Directors and the dedication was made by Karen Jarmusz, liaison of SPUR at the Sunnyside Open House, April 26, 2013.

In Memory of a Great Therapeutic Horse — Halik

It is with sadness that we inform you of the passing of our beloved therapy horse, Halik. He was 31 years old.

For all of us at Sunnyside it feels as though we have lost a friend, co-worker and family member. Halik helped teach many lessons over the years. He carried so many children with a patience, which was truly unbelievable. The world does not seem the same without Halik in it and his memory and legacy here will live on.

Halik was an Arabian donated to SPUR in 1999 by Gail Hoff-Carmona.



We all live our lives hoping to have a positive impact on those around us. We want to make a difference and leave the world a better place. So along the way, we plant seeds with the hope that these seeds will take root and improve each life we have the opportunity to connect with.

One of the seeds Susan Liu planted was with this facility. She worked tirelessly with the SPUR board and staff to make this a reality. Sunnyside Equestrian Center exists because of a shared dream. Many people dreamed of a facility where people with disabilities could shed one more barrier — bad weather. Many worked hard to raise funds to build this year round facility, Susan was among them. She believed in this mission.

The facility is only a part of the SPUR mission. Susan also shared the SPUR mission of making sure everyone who wants the opportunity to ride is given the chance. This place will set the standard for other facilities with similar goals. That is the seed we have. That is the seed we will continue to grow. May this beautiful tree stand as a reminder to the seeds Susan sowed in each of us, and inspire us to reach new heights with the SPUR mission.

Horses Teach Us Lifemanship

(Continued from page 3)

even signing up to work in our SPUR volunteer program!

Kathy describes her experience with ShyAnne as transformative. "My fear of her became my love for her. My life is enriched, fuller, more joyous and less fearful now. I imagine her in my mind and she brings a smile to my face and a sense of peace." Kathy now comes to Sunnyside with excitement, and carrots in hand! It is so much fun to watch the connection grow between her and this "wise old soul in a young mustang body."

Another huge component in the quest for self improvement through horsemanship is understanding how horses communicate through energy. The way we use our bodies and energy is often very predatory and quite the opposite from prey animals. Horses can really sense every bit of what we are feeling and communicating, sometimes before we even do ourselves! They are like a beautiful mirror, reflecting back to us our strengths as well as our flaws. Some show us how deeply we can affect them if we hold in any tension or show signs of

emotional incongruence; whilst others are able to take in human stress and release it themselves, offering the human a pathway to relaxation. In the SPUR program we see this quite a bit. Like horses, many children with autism are incapable of dishonesty. Their thoughts and feelings are all out there with no filters. Horses love this! Even when a student may be having a difficult day, I've seen our herd members show a great deal of support and understanding.

One of my SPUR students has recently discovered how amazing this energy work with horses can be. After spending a few years riding in the program he expressed an interest in working with the horses on a more personal level. When we first began working together he was drawn to Blue in many ways. It did not take long before Blue became glued to him during his lessons; so much so that their connection was evident to anyone who witnessed it. Blue and his new partner began to develop their relationship on a very deep level, and he now spends his lessons learning how to communicate with Blue on an energetic basis. He offers healing and relaxation without words,



and without pressure, while Blue reciprocates. The most profound example of their partnership was when Blue decided to lie down for about ten minutes: Blue and his friend locking eyes with an intense level of silent communication. Cindy Ross, our stable manager, was witness to this. She shared that in all his years at Sunnyside, Blue has never once initiated lying down in his stall while someone was near him or touching him. It was simply incredible.

This work never ceases to amaze me, and will never stop impacting those who are open to its message. The power of the horse and the power of the herd have so much to offer us: gifts of confidence, empowerment, humility, wisdom and peace. I encourage you to join us at Sunnyside for a walk down this path. I promise you will find much more than you could imagine. ■

The Newest Member at Sunnyside

A generous donation from Christina & Ralph Notaro, Colts Neck, NJ of their 15 year old, 14 hand, black and white pinto pony, Blaze, to our therapeutic horse-back riding program is greatly appreciated.



50/50

To benefit the
SPUR (Special People United to Ride) Scholarship Fund

Winner will receive half of gross ticket sales

Drawing to be held on

Thompson Park Day
Sunday, October 20th at 4:00 pm

at
Thompson Park
805 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ

Winner need not be present

Ticket: **\$10⁰⁰**



Tickets are on sale now at Sunnyside Equestrian Center
& Thompson Park Visitor Center

Student Continues Family Tradition

Andrew Jarvis is a freshman at Monsignor Donovan High School; he lives in Bricktown and selected SPUR as the beneficiary of his fundraising effort. His hard work and creativity raised \$1,000 to help benefit the therapeutic horse-back riding program and help fund the student scholarships and care of our great team of horses. He is following the footsteps of his sister Danielle, who also raised funds for SPUR scholarships.

Andrew wanted to acknowledge the following people for their donations:

Anderson Family
Paul J. Costa
Fazzari Family
Fekete Family
Geber Family
Doreen M. Gesumaria
Husak Family
Jarvis Family
Kussamaul Family



Picture from left to right: Andrew Jarvis; Barbara Carroll, co-president; Linda Smith, past president; and Barbara Duggan, co-president.

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Mauriello Family
Mooney Family
Morelli Family
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Roberts
Barbara & Ken Snyder
Mrs. Terry Sofield
Stevenson Family

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Advantage Physical Therapy
Jersey Shore Bagel & Deli
Mike's Pizza

SPUR is so grateful to be able to count on Andrew as one of our dedicated supporters!

Our newsletter is published semi-annually. Additional articles and event announcements can be viewed on www.spuronline.org. Our next issue is Fall/Winter 2013.