

# THE PALS POST

## FUN'S THE WORD

-Martha B., PALS Parent and Volunteer



*Lexy H. receives her ribbon and trophy after riding Cody in Walk/Trot Equitation at the Fun Show.*

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A rainy start to the Seventh Annual PALS Fun Show on Saturday October 27, 2007, did not dampen the spirits of anyone in attendance. PALS staff and a terrific turnout of volunteers were in the barn early, cleaning muddy hooves and drying damp horses, and when show time arrived, everyone was ready for the fun! Nearly 50 riders participated in this year's show, cheered on by the many family members, friends, and community members in attendance.

While we celebrated the achievements of our hard-working riders, we also took time to recognize the contributions of two hard-working volunteers. The PALS Volunteers of the Year for 2007 were Ashley Larason and Dale Knuteson.

Congratulations, Ashley and Dale, and thanks for all you do for PALS!

We are grateful to our four judges, who handed out trophies, ribbons, and words of praise to the riders who performed under their watchful eyes. Thanks to Pam Thrash-Cocalis of the United Way of Monroe County, pediatrician Dr. Richard Malone, veterinarian Dr. Susan Kimmick, and BHSN counselor (and horse enthusiast) Kathy Rillo! We also give special thanks to our announcer, Julie Ramey (Bloomington Parks & Recreation), and trophy coordinator, Kristie Charles (Monroe County Humane Association), who worked hard all day to keep the show moving and the audience informed.

Of course, the show could not go on without the support of our many generous sponsors. This year we were fortunate to receive sponsorships from the Bloomington Bone & Joint Clinic, Orthopedics of Southern Indiana, Rehabilitation Associates of Indiana, Farmstead Veterinary Service, The Awards Center, Tree City Transplanters, South Central Forms, Old National Bank, and Garry's Service Center. Once again, the Trojan Horse sponsored our lunch concessions with hard work as well as fine food (the chicken soup was especially well received on our chilly Fun Show day!), and Bloomington Hospital Printing Services provided our Fun Show printed materials.



*Alex R. rides Navaar at the 2007 Fun Show.*

If the smiles, laughter, high-fives, and cheers were any indication, the 2007 PALS Fun Show was a resounding success. Of course the Fun Show provides a great opportunity for our riders to enjoy some well-earned time in the spotlight, but it also allows our riders, horses, staff, and volunteers to show the community what PALS is all about. Nobody watching the Fun Show could fail to notice that the rewards of equine-assisted activities go far beyond the physical benefits to the riders. We see the riders' confidence, their excitement, and the special bond they have with their horses. And we see that it's not just the riders, but also their families, friends, and helpers in the ring, whose spirits soar with each success!



### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Refer people to PALS
- Volunteer in lessons
- Volunteer in marketing and fundraising efforts
- Make a financial donation \*
- Donate a horse, tack, or equipment \*
- Sponsor a horse and/or rider \*

\*All donations are tax-deductible

## MESSAGES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & HEAD INSTRUCTOR

Although winter winds are still blowing out at the barn, the PALS staff, volunteers, and horses are already preparing for a busy spring session! In 2008 PALS plans to increase our number of therapeutic riding lessons and hippotherapy sessions to over 1,800.

We are excited to welcome many new additions to the PALS family. Along with our new horses, we are pleased to welcome Sandy Zywar, the newest PALS instructor. Sandy is a Riding Master VI graduate of Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre in Waverly, West Virginia, with certification in Teaching and Equine Massage Therapy. Sandy will complete her NARHA Registered certification soon.

The PALS family had a great time at the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet in December. Over 100 PALS volunteers and friends attended the banquet this year at the Hilton Garden Inn. We were pleased to recognize Dale Knuteson and Ashley Larson as the 2007 PALS Volunteers of the Year (see pg. 4).

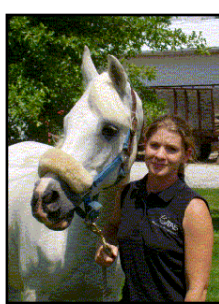
The next event on the PALS calendar is our fundraising evening at Nick's English Hut on Thursday, March 20 (see pg. 5). We look forward to seeing all of our old friends as well as making new ones, so please be sure to invite your family and friends.

Please come by and see our new horses. Hope to see you at the barn soon!

*Fern Bonchek*

Executive Director  
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*Fern Bonchek is the Founder and Executive Director of People & Animal Learning Services, Inc. (PALS). Fern has a B.A. in Psychology with a specialization in Human & Animal Interactions from the Union Institute and is a NARHA Advanced Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor. Fern served as the chair of the Higher Education Committee of NARHA from 2004–2006 and now serves as a committee advisor. Fern is a NARHA Registered On-Site Workshop/Certification Associate Evaluator and an adjunct instructor at Indiana University in the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER).*



*Jennifer Lung is the head instructor at People & Animal Learning Services, Inc. (PALS). Jennifer has a B.S. in Outdoor Recreation with a minor in Environmental Interpretation from Indiana University and is a NARHA Registered Therapeutic Riding Instructor. In addition to her work at PALS, Jennifer has worked with people with disabilities at Options and Bradford Woods. She has been a PALS instructor since 2001 and head instructor since 2005.*



PALS has kicked the new year off with its busiest winter session yet! Sixteen therapeutic and nineteen recreational riders are not afraid to brave the cold – or the frisky horses. This is a record number for a PALS winter session.

Of course, we couldn't do it without the sixty-plus volunteers that show up weekly. I want to thank each and every one of you that volunteer in the freezing rain and blistering wind to support our riders and take care of the horses.

We have said "goodbye" to three old friends this year as well. Holly, Navaar, and Pokey have all retired from PALS. These three amazing horses will all be greatly missed and fondly thought of by all the riders and volunteers.

Stop by and meet the new horses that are eager to take their places in lessons. PALS is excited to welcome Lola, Walter, and Eeyore to the family! You can see their pictures and read their biographies at [www.palstherapy.org](http://www.palstherapy.org).

Spring is right around the corner, and the PALS spring session is scheduled to begin on March 17. We will have new student assessments the week of March 3.

Riders and volunteers can sign up with me at the barn, or at [jlung@indiana.edu](mailto:jlung@indiana.edu), or at 812-327-7457.

Stay warm and think spring!

*Jennifer L. Lung*

Head Instructor  
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## THANKS TO OUR 2007 FUN SHOW SPONSORS!



*Farmstead Veterinary Service  
Tree City Transplanters  
Old National Bank*



**BLOOMINGTON  
BONE & JOINT CLINIC  
SPORTS MEDICINE**



**ORTHOPEDICS  
OF SOUTHERN INDIANA**



*The Awards Center  
South Central Farms  
Garry's Service Center*



*Printing donated by Bloomington Hospital Printing Services*

## KYLE'S STORY

-Carrie H., PALS Parent

Our son Kyle faces many challenges in his young life. At birth, Kyle had serious complications. He was cyanotic and experienced brain hemorrhage, seizures, and pneumonia. These injuries caused mental retardation, epilepsy, and low-tone muscles.

As Kyle became older, there were behavior problems. He became aggressive, injuring himself and destroying property. His communication abilities were greatly impaired, and his poor gait caused him to fall on a regular basis. He was unable to be toilet trained and had continuous ear infections and vomiting. At age eight, he was diagnosed with autism, severe mental retardation, speech, occupational, and physical delays. At this time, his behavior was our primary concern. He was out of control, and aggression and self-injurious behavior were major problems. My husband and I were distraught.

I had a friend whose son's behaviors were similar to Kyle's but not as severe. She told me that her son was participating in PALS and that while there, he was much calmer and really enjoyed riding. We were somewhat skeptical about the change in behavior while riding; however, we were eager to try the

program because we knew that Kyle's favorite animal was a horse.

Kyle began riding at PALS three years ago. Although he is still highly distracted, he loves being at PALS and riding Cody Too. He may give us a lot of trouble while driving to and from the sessions, but for that hour of time, he is so happy to be with the horse and staff and tries to do what is asked of him. Frequently, all Kyle can talk about is riding Cody Too. There were several times that he began laughing in his sleep, saying "Cody Too, Cody Too." It was both heart-warming and hilarious.

Since Kyle began riding at PALS, I do not believe that we have expressed the gratitude that we feel. The professional and personal attention given to Kyle is incredible. The instructor, staff, and volunteers always make us feel welcomed, informed, and involved. The volunteers who assist Kyle as he is riding offer praise, confidence, and laughter, and he certainly enjoys all of the positive attention. It is because of these special people that we are smiling every time Kyle goes around the arena. They truly touch our hearts.

In August of 2006, Kyle had an accident in which his femoral bone was broken from his hip socket. He had to have surgery and is now experiencing uncontrollable body

movements and is unable to walk alone. We watch now as Kyle must use a wheelchair, has more seizures and involuntary body movements, and some loss of using his hands. As fearful and saddened as we are, we are doing everything we can to help slow the deterioration and enjoy all the time we have with him, as well as help him to continue doing the thing that he most enjoys: riding Cody Too at PALS.

Gary and I can never thank you enough for the wonderful pleasure that Kyle has when riding and the care and genuine kindness of your staff. Thank you to all the PALS donors and volunteers who help provide this wonderful program to our community.



*Kyle and Cody Too go on a trail ride.*

## RECENT RETIREES

-Kara Lasher, PALS Newsletter Editor

This winter, the PALS family said goodbye to three wonderful horses. While we will miss Navaar, Holly, and Pokey very much, we know these amazing animals deserve to enjoy their hard-earned retirements.

Pokey, who was on loan to the PALS program from Melinda & Sterling Doster, is now enjoying feasting on the grass in the pasture at Windhaven Stables. He is having lots of fun running and playing with his new pasture-mates, Beans and Billy. Pokey especially enjoys occasional visits from PALS Head Instructor Jennifer Lung.

Our Holiday Charm, better known to all at PALS as Holly, moved up to Franklin, Indiana, in December. She loves the brand new barn her "mom and dad," PALS instructor Lindsey O'Haver and her husband Matt O'Haver, have built for her and her new buddy Laci. Lindsey and Matt are thrilled to have their girls with

them, and Holly and Laci have become inseparable. It is a beautiful sight to see the girls running together along the pasture fence, manes and tails flowing in the wind.

And of course, there's Navaar—the horse who started it all. After serving nearly eight years at PALS, this special gray Arabian who was honored as the 2005 Indiana Therapy Horse of the Year is enjoying some well-earned time off. Currently, Navaar is relaxing in volunteer Elisa's barn and pastures. When he isn't enjoying the grass and peaceful, wide-open spaces, Navaar enjoys hanging out with Elisa's shaggy little pony, Miss Piggy. This spring, Navaar will be moving out to Barb Bonchek's house to reunite with the family who has generously loaned him to PALS from the beginning.

While we will miss having Navaar, Holly, and Pokey at the barn, we are excited to be training their replacements, Lola, Walter, and Eyore.

Lola is a four-year-old Halflinger whose flowing, luxurious mane and tail and big eyes have made everyone at the barn fall in love with her. Not surprisingly, her birthday is Valentine's Day!

Bodacious Martini, or Walter, is happy to join his mom, Cookie, at PALS. Though a mere baby by PALS standards, at three years old, Walter has an old soul, and his calm personality makes him the perfect quarter horse for PALS.

Eyore belongs to the newest PALS instructor, Sandy Zywar. His small size makes him perfect for the smaller riders at PALS, but don't be fooled. This little pony has a huge heart! Sandy has shown him in hunters, dressage, and jumping.

These three new horses have some pretty big hoofprints to fill, but everyone at PALS knows they are up to the challenge!

Read the new PALS horses' biographies at [www.palstherapy.org](http://www.palstherapy.org)

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION BANQUET

-Peggy C., PALS Volunteer

On December 1, more than 100 PALS volunteers and friends gathered for the 2007 Volunteer Appreciation Banquet. With over 150 volunteers and only a handful of paid staff positions, PALS truly would not exist without the selfless contributions of the many volunteers who make the program possible. While we appreciate our volunteers each and every day, the annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet is a special time for us to show our volunteers how important they are to the program and how grateful we are for their help.

This year's banquet, held at the Hilton Garden Inn, was an opportunity for the volunteers to mix and mingle in a setting devoid of wind, flies, tack, or muck buckets. It is always fun for volunteers who usually spend time together only once a week at the barn to see each other dressed up and enjoying themselves. It's also a great opportunity for people who volunteer on different days to meet one another and form new friendships.

Executive Director Fern Bonchek and Head Instructor Jennifer Lung began the evening by thanking the volunteers for their hard work throughout the year. Fern introduced the 2007 PALS Volunteers of the Year, Dale Knuteson and Ashley Larason. All of the volunteers were happy to recognize Dale and Ashley as our Volunteers of the Year. Congratulations and thanks for all your hard work at PALS!

## 2007 PALS VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

-Becky E., PALS Volunteer

While each and every PALS volunteer is a valued member of the team, each year two volunteers are recognized for their selfless willingness to help and their outstanding devotion. This year PALS is pleased to recognize Dale Knuteson and Ashley Larason as the 2007 PALS Volunteers of the Year.

Dale Knuteson has been a PALS volunteer for seven years. At six-foot-four, Dale is always in demand as a sidewalker, assisting the riders who need extra trunk support and those who ride the "taller" horses. Many riders request Dale's help because they enjoy his sense of humor and the encouragement he offers. One of Dale's riders, Justin B., always looks forward to his weekly riding lesson, not just because of the horses but because of the time he gets to spend with Dale.

Dale is also a role model for the other volunteers and attends many PALS activities outside of lessons. During the last 20 years of Dale's employment life, he served as a chaplain at Wishard Hospital in Indianapolis. When Dale retired in 2000, he was the director of the chaplains program. Dale has a unique insight into people, and he is a gracious, caring person. Dale and his wife, Becky, live in Monrovia, and both have been a valuable part of PALS volunteering since the program's inception.

Ashley Larason has been a PALS volunteer for four and a half years and is a senior at Bloomington High School South. Ashley carries a grade-point average above 4.0 in honors classes and plans on getting her bachelor's degree in nursing at Purdue. She would like to specialize in obstetrics and pediatric care. Ashley is a Eucharistic minister at St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church and is very involved in youth ministry.



*Dale and Ashley display their Volunteer of the Year awards at the 2007 PALS Volunteer Appreciation Banquet.*

Ashley has been employed by Chick-Fil-A at the College Mall for three years. Along with numerous activities at school, Ashley plays saxophone in the marching band, concert band, and jazz band and has been named a Young Achiever through the 4-H Horse and Pony Club. She was also chosen as Leader of Tomorrow for Monroe County in 2007, and Monroe County Youth of the Month. Ashley highly regards Fern Bonchek and Jennifer Lung for their direction of the PALS program.

## THURSDAY NIGHT COMEDY

-Kara Lasber, PALS Newsletter Editor

If you need a good laugh, come out to the barn when Lindsey Stutler is teaching lessons!

Lindsey has been a PALS instructor since August but has been involved with the program as a volunteer since 2004. She first learned about PALS through Fern Bonchek's class (R250, Introduction to Equine Assisted Activities) at HPER at IU, and thought it would be a perfect combination of two of her passions—riding and working with people with disabilities.

Lindsey, who will receive her bachelor's degree in psychology this May, has always enjoyed working with people with disabilities, especially the hearing impaired.

"I'm looking forward to getting a graduate degree in deaf education," Lindsey said. "I've really enjoyed the opportunities I've gotten here at PALS to teach hearing-impaired riders."

"It is so great to have someone on staff who can communicate fluently with our deaf riders," said PALS Head Instructor Jennifer Lung.

In addition to the therapeutic riding lessons Lindsey teaches, she also has a great time working with her recreational riders.

Recreational rider Grace H. has been taking lessons for about a year and has had Lindsey for an instructor since the fall session.

"She's so funny!" Grace said of Lindsey. "She has a good sense of humor, but we also work hard, especially lots of work on my sitting trot."

Grace's mom, Erika, who is a PALS volunteer and also takes riding lessons, said, "Grace just loves Lindsey—I think partly because she's so funny."

Lindsey feels combining humor with riding instruction ensures the riders always have a good time, even when they may feel frustrated as they work on advanced skills.

"It's a good feeling to be able to laugh and have a smile on your face, even if you're having difficulty with a certain skill," she said.

As the most recently certified PALS instructor, Lindsey says she has learned a lot from the other instructors.

"The biggest thing is the connection you make with each rider," she said. "That way they really feel like they can trust you, and it goes a long way in making the experience a good one."

Lindsey credits her riders with teaching her valuable skills as well, including patience, persistence, and the ability to adapt to various situations.

"I know that my experiences at PALS will be a big help as I pursue a career in deaf education."



Lindsey S. instructs Grace on using her reins.

## STAFF DIRECTORY

### Executive Director/Instructor

Fern Bonchek  
fbonchek@indiana.edu  
812-325-5102 cell

### Head Instructor

Jennifer Lung  
jllung@indiana.edu  
812-327-7457 cell

### Part-Time Staff

Angie Bailey, Physical Therapist  
Barb Bonchek, Vol. Instructor  
Lindsey O'Haver, Instructor  
Cathy Wrigley, Occupational  
Therapist  
Sandy Zywar, Instructor and  
Horse Trainer

### Barn Location:

680 W. That Rd.  
Bloomington, IN 47403  
812-824-3000 barn

### Mailing Address:

PO Box 1033  
Bloomington, IN 47402  
812-336-2798 office/fax  
www.palstherapy.org

## Volunteers & Riders:

Don't forget to sign up for the spring session that starts on March 17!

Please contact Jennifer Lung to sign up today!

jllung@indiana.edu  
812-327-7457 cell

Come meet your PALS at Nick's!

Thursday, March 20,  
from 5:00 to 8:00 pm

in the Back Room of Nick's English Hut

423 E. Kirkwood Avenue, Bloomington, IN  
www.nicksenglishhut.com

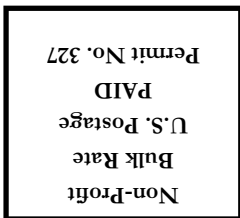
100% of all tips and 20% of all food sales go to benefit PALS!

We appreciate your support

and look forward to seeing you at Nick's!

Persons under 21 years of age  
must be accompanied by an adult.

Return Service Requested



## HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT PALS

### FINANCIAL DONATIONS

In order for PALS to continue this good work, your financial support is needed. If you are interested in improving the lives of PALS participants through a financial donation, please fill out the form below and mail to PALS, call Fern Bonchek at 812-336-2798, or email [pals@indiana.edu](mailto:pals@indiana.edu). Donations are tax-deductible.

Yes, I want to support PALS with a tax-deductible donation of:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$3,900 ~ Full board and care for one therapy horse for one year
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$2,700 ~ Full board for one therapy horse for one year
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,050 ~ One whole year of therapeutic riding lessons
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$350 ~ Ten weeks of therapeutic riding lessons
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 ~ One month board and feed for one therapy horse
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 ~ Three therapeutic riding lessons
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other ~ Your gift will be used where it is needed most

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I want my gift to remain anonymous

### IN-KIND DONATIONS

PALS is in need of the following new or gently used items. Please call Fern at 812-336-2798 or email [pals@indiana.edu](mailto:pals@indiana.edu) if you would like to make a donation.

#### New/gently used items needed:

- Brushes, currycombs, hoof picks, tail combs
- Rainbow Reins
- English bridles
- English saddles
- Girths
- Halters
- Lead ropes
- Plastic water and feed buckets
- Saddle pads (soft and gel)

- Snaffle bits
- Therapeutic riding surcingles
- Cosequin/Arthogen
- Cordless drill
- Helmets

#### Larger items:

- Truck
- Horse trailer
- Sponsorship of horses
- Sponsorship of riders
- Reliable horses

Visit our website at: [www.palstherapy.org](http://www.palstherapy.org)