


The PALs Post

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DID YOU KNOW?

 PALs is a premier accredited site by NARHA, the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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

*All donations are tax-deductible.

PALS FEATURED RIDER—MCKAILA

While many ten-year old girls are engaging in traditional extracurricular activities such as band or cheerleading, our featured rider—McKaila— spends her free time putting a strong-willed 1000 pound Arabian horse, Navaar, through the paces at the PALs barn. And, not only does she take on this feat, she excels at it.

McKaila has been riding at PALs for only three sessions, and in that time she has won everyone over with her talent and her infectious attitude. Bruce, a PALs instructor, noted that “McKaila has a smile that makes everything worth it. If you are having a bad day, McKaila smiles and you don’t have a bad day anymore.”

Did I mention her talent? If you think it is only a rumor that she had Navaar on the bit and collected during her first lesson, think again.

McKaila has what it takes to be an excellent rider—soft hands, a quiet yet commanding presence, and an amazing work ethic. Her instructor Bruce summed it up this way: “She [McKaila] has been given a gift to ride.”

We at PALs know that we have been given a gift in working with McKaila.



McKaila’s trademark smile

-Amy R, PALs volunteer

WELCOME TO THE NEW FACILITY

As construction workers toiled away amidst the rainy spring, everyone at PALs was stirring with anticipation. The big move had been on the calendar for months and when the day came PALs was ready. Vans, horse trailers, trucks and cars were loaded up, and when we laid eyes upon the new facility we were not disappointed.

The new facility is a dream location for the PALs program. It offers convenient access for Bloomington residents. In addition, the well-organized stable and arena areas drastically reduce prep time between lessons. The tack room with such features as custom built saddle racks and plenty of shelving makes getting horses ready a snap. And, the PALs program even has office space within the barn—an added bonus for the completion of administrative functions.

THANK YOU to the Ellington’s for welcoming PALs into their stables and to all the PALs volunteers and staff who dedicated uncountable hours. If you have not had the opportunity to visit the new facility at 680 That Road, please come see us soon! (For a map, visit the PALs website)

See pictures of the new barn on page 4.

-Amy R, PALs volunteer

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Fern Bonchek is the Founder and Executive Director of People and Animal Learning Services, Inc. (PALS).

Twenty-eight years old, Fern has a B.A. degree in Psychology with a specialization in Human & Animal Interactions from the Union Institute and is a NARHA Advanced Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor. Fern serves on the Higher Education Committee of NARHA and is an adjunct instructor at Indiana University in the School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER).

Welcome to the third PALS newsletter. In this issue you will meet a special PALS horse and his owner, our fabulous intern from Colorado, learn about hippotherapy, see the new barn and read about one of our wonderful riders.

This has been an amazing few months for PALS. The program is growing by leaps and bounds. In July we moved to a new facility located at 680 West That Rd., Bloomington, IN 47403. The new facility is located in a prime location for PALS riders and PALS volunteers because it is less than one mile from the Bloomington city limits. At the new facility PALS has a lease agreement, stall and tack/office space for the program, a phone line, and a new indoor riding arena with observation and mounting areas. Because of this new facility, we will be able to expand the number of days each week that we can offer lessons and increase the number

of clients we can serve in each session.

I want to thank Jeff and Hope Ellington (and family) for entering in this partnership with PALS. And, a huge thanks goes to my Mom for her help and support through the building process. I also want to thank every-one for their hard work through the hot temperatures and thunderstorms ... please believe me when I say ... there no way that PALS could have moved and got the barn set up without YOU!!!!!! In addition, I want to thank Larry and Donna Ferree for allowing PALS to reside at their barn for two and a half years.

In the fall, PALS plans on increasing our therapeutic riding lesson program to three full days a week, and starting a small, non-disabled lesson program for our volunteers, siblings and community members.

On September 6th five PALS riders, horses and volunteers will be traveling to Saint Mary of the Woods College in Saint Mary of the Woods Indiana to go to compete in the first ever Special Olympics Equestrian Fun Day. The show starts at 9 AM; we hope to see you there.

As you can see PALS is growing very fast. With this growth comes the need for continued support from our wonderful volunteers and donors. Please call me at 812-336-2798 office or at the barn phone 812-824-3000 or e-mail pals@indiana.edu to see when lessons are scheduled! Please come visit us at the barn anytime! Please mark September 20th on your calendars for the second annual PALS Rummage Sale at Harmony School and October 18th on your calendars for the Third Annual PALS Fun Show!

-Fern Bonchek, Executive Director

WHAT IS HIPPO THERAPY?

Find out more about Hippotherapy at www.narha.org:

- What is hippotherapy?
- Terminology
- Why the horse?
- General indications for hippotherapy
- Medical conditions
- The American Hippotherapy Association
- Position statement on horse welfare

Derived from the Greek word *hippos*, meaning *horse*, hippotherapy literally means "treatment with the help of the horse." It is a direct medical treatment used by physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists to improve neuromuscular function.

The horse's movement provides the sensorimotor experience of a precise, repetitive pattern of movement that is very similar to the pattern of movement of the human gait. For patients with motor impairments, the

horse provides dynamic, multi-dimensional movement, which can provide opportunities for the patient to develop new posture and movement strategies. In addition, hippotherapy may be used to address impairments of tone, range of motion, timing, attention, arousal, coordination, balance and postural control.

The primary medical conditions that may be most appropriate for the utilization of hippotherapy include cerebral palsy, cerebral vascular accident (stroke), developmental delay, scoliosis, multiple sclerosis, sensory inte-

grative dysfunction and traumatic brain injury.

Currently PALS offers therapeutic riding lessons, but plans to offer hippotherapy in the future.

For more information on hippotherapy, consult the NARHA website at www.narha.org.

-Cathy Wrigley, PALS instructor/OT

UPCOMING EVENTS — MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

FALL SESSION—SEPTEMBER 15TH THRU DECEMBER 5TH

PALS is closed the weeks of November 17th and November 24th

SPECIAL OLYMPICS VOLUNTEER TRAINING—SEPTEMBER 4TH

6:30—8:30 @ Harmony School

SPECIAL OLYMPICS FUN SHOW—SEPTEMBER 6TH

starts @ 9:00 a.m. at St. Mary of the Woods College

PALS RUMMAGE SALE—SEPTEMBER 20TH

8:30—2:30 @ Harmony School

PALS THIRD ANNUAL FUN SHOW—OCTOBER 18TH

check website or call PALS office for details closer to event

Additional Dates To Remember

Volunteers:

- Current volunteers contact Fern to set-up your volunteer schedule for the Fall Session
- New volunteers contact Fern for information regarding training sessions
- All volunteers begin Fall Session the week of September 8, 2003

Riders:

- Parents/Riders/Caregivers contact Fern to discuss Fall Session lesson schedule
- New student assessments begin the week of September 8, 2003
- PALS lessons from September 15th—December 5th (PALS will be closed the weeks of November 17th and November 24th)
- Make-up lessons for Fall Session are the week of December 8th
- For a complete PALS schedule, please log onto the PALS website:
www.palstherapy.org

Non-therapy Riders:

- Lessons begin the week of September 15, 2003
- If you are interested in taking non-therapeutic riding lessons, please contact Holly at 812.339.3189



MEET THE ELLINGTONS!



Left to right: Cathy, Lincoln, Jeff, Lindsey, and Hope

After a childhood of riding horses, Jeff Ellington’s dream was to have a small horse farm. That dream came true eleven years ago when he and his wife, Hope, purchased their current home and property—now called Ellington Stables.

Last winter, Fern approached Jeff with the idea of hosting PALS at their facility. It seemed like the perfect fit because of the facility’s prime location and Ellington’s history with horses. Hope stated that working with PALS is an opportunity to “give back at a larger scale and help more people.”

The impact of their hard work is already being felt as PALS begins to expand its lessons schedule due to the increased availability and support at Ellington Stables.

-Amy R., PALS Volunteer



A view of the new arena.



A horse’s view of the arena from the pasture.



The PALS horses’ new accommodations.



Jeff playing in the dirt!

VOLUNTEER PROFILE — SAYING GOODBYE TO A NEW FRIEND

Along with the usual Hoosier heat and humidity, and an unusually eventful season at PALS, summer brought PALS a very special gift: Rhonda Merrell, PALS' first summer Intern.

A psychology major at Colorado State University, Rhonda discovered PALS on NARHA's internship website as she began to explore options for a summer internship to precede her senior year. "I knew that I wanted to do something that would bring people and animals together," Rhonda explained. She had worked with a therapeutic riding program near CSU in Fort Collins, Colorado--where, she says, "I knew I was hooked!" -- and decided to pursue a similar program for the six internship credits required for her major. On June 1, Rhonda came to Indiana and got right into the saddle as a PALS intern.

Throughout the summer, Rhonda was involved in all aspects of the program, blending well with the PALS community even as she took on leadership responsibilities: teaching, administration, fund-raising, working with

volunteers, caring for the horses and the many, gritty, grunt tasks of running a program such as PALS. Of course, as a member of the PALS team during this particular summer, Rhonda was at the center of the move to Ellington Stables, where she was invaluable in setting up PALS' new home. Fern cites Rhonda's work in creating new and innovative programs for PALS, her great job caring for the PALS horses, and her contribution in expanding Fern's knowledge and use of the computer.

The internship confirmed Rhonda's desire to develop her own therapeutic riding center. Asked what she enjoyed most about the experience, Rhonda identified, "working with Fern, getting to know the volunteers, and of course the people I get to teach!" She added, "The volunteers at PALS are the most dedicated volunteers I have ever met."

As her time in Indiana drew to a close, Rhonda said, "The only thing I can say to sum up this internship with PALS is: I have grown as a person. Just as PALS helps

its riders grow, it has helped me grow and see who I am."

Summer brought the inevitable return to school, it took Rhonda back to Colorado State, laden with the gifts of her time at PALS. And in her rear view mirror, Rhonda saw PALS waving good-bye, blessed by the gifts she left behind.

-Julia, PALS Volunteer



Rhonda working with Trevor in the new facility.

HORSE PROFILE — GOODBAR

Goodbar is the only PALS horse who still has a private owner, and their story is very special. Jennifer Lund got Goodbar 17 years ago, when they were both 10, and they grew up together in northern Indiana. At the time, he was chestnut in color, though an Appaloosa by breeding. The two of them did many things, from 4-H to local shows in both hunt seat and Western pleasure, and even costume classes (Jennifer in an Indian costume and Goodbar in war paint). She says that she and her friends "broke him in the hard way", climbing all over him, riding him bareback double through the fields, having fun as only young girls with their horses can. When she went to college, she left him with her father, who took care of him, and she visited him monthly. Then when she moved to Bloomington, she wanted to find a place to bring him along. She got a job as a ser-

vice coordinator at Options for Better Living, and a client of hers was a rider at PALS. She came with him to PALS, talked to Fern about her horse, and decided that joining the program would be a good situation for him.

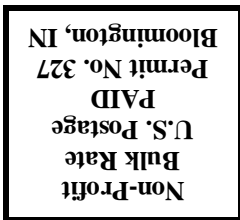
Goodbar started at PALS two summers ago. Jennifer still rides Goodbar sometimes, and enjoys seeing and caring for him when she comes to volunteer at PALS. He is the only horse she has ever had, and she plans to keep him his entire life. He is a very lucky horse to have her, and we are fortunate to have his service at PALS. Goodbar's size makes him a perfect choice for children or small adults, or people who need a narrow-bodied horse because of tightness in their leg muscles. He is a steady, wise old soul who is patient in all circum-

stances. Just one look in his eyes as he works, and you can see that he understands what he is doing, and that he is taking good care of his rider. Truly, he lives up to his name!

-Amy L., PALS Volunteer



Jennifer and Goodbar — what a wonderful pair!



HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT PALS

Financial Donations

People and Animal Learning Services, Inc. (PALs) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high quality, safe, educational, and fun therapeutic animal-assisted activities such as therapeutic horseback riding, hippotherapy, animal care, and pet encounter therapy to children and adults with physical, learning, cognitive, or emotional disabilities.

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 call Fern Bonchek at (812) 336-2798 or email pals@indiana.edu.*

*all donations are tax deductible

In-kind Donations

PALS is still in need of new or gently used items as well as financial support. Please call Fern at 812-336-2798, or email pals@indiana.edu if you would like to make a donation to PALS.

New or gently used items needed:

- Rainbow reins
- Brushes, Currycombs, hoof picks, tail combs
- English bridles
- English saddles
- Girth
- Halters
- Lead ropes
- Plastic water and feed buckets
- Saddle pads both soft and gel

- Snaffle bits
- Therapeutic riding surcingle
- Arthrasooth
- Cordless drill
- Laptop computer(s)

Larger Items:

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