

# The PALs Post

## PALS FUN SHOW—OCTOBER 9, 2004

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You are invited to the Fourth Annual PALS Fun Show, scheduled for October 9, 2004 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PALS students will participate in various classes including trail, walk/trot equitation, walk equitation and dressage throughout the day. In addition to watching fantastic displays of horsemanship, attendees will be able to see the PALS facility, visit with PALS instructors and enjoy an array of treats at our concession area.

If you are interested in assisting with the event or providing items for concessions, please contact Fern Bonchek at [pals@indiana.edu](mailto:pals@indiana.edu) or Fern Bonchek by phone at 812-336-2798.

Don't miss this exciting event. Bring a friend and enjoy a day of fun. See you at the barn!

### DID YOU KNOW?

PALS is a North America Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) Premier Accredited Center.



### 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.

## JUSTIN—ATHLETE, MUSICIAN, PALS RIDER

-CHRIS HOLMES, PALS INSTRUCTOR



At the age of 24, Justin Brown is already an accomplished athlete. He competes in softball, track and bowling, and has gone to the state Special Olympic meets in the first two of those sports. But he has, for some time, also had a strong desire to learn to ride a horse. So it was not a surprise to his instructor how motivated he was from the beginning of his very first lesson, or how quickly he mastered the basics of English Equitation. His first words to his instructor were that he wanted to compete in the Special Olympics on horseback, and indeed he did on September 11, 2004 in Terre Haute.

Justin quickly established an easy rapport with his horses and volunteers. He rides two of PALS most advanced horses, Holly and Gambler. He has learned how to work with each of these horse's very different personalities, and has come to prefer Gambler's laid back approach to life. Justin has said that he enjoys not only the riding itself but also the benefits it brings to his other athletic pursuits, as riding strengthens and stretches his leg muscles and helps his posture.

Justin's interests beyond sports include his job and music; he has said that some day he would really like to work in a recording studio as he enjoys a wide range of music including rock, hip hop, jazz, blues and country.

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Fern Bonchek** is the Founder and Executive Director of People and Animal Learning Services, Inc. (PALS). 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 as the chair of 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 Fall PALS Post.

In this issue you will read about some PALS riders, meet some very dedicated PALS volunteers, and read about the PALS summer interns and upcoming special events.

This summer has been packed full of PALS excitement. We offered our first at-risk youth program at PALS. This pilot program was in partnership with the National Youth Sports Camp (NYSP) at Indiana University. This program will continue this fall in partnership with Harmony School. Thank you to the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation of New York for providing funding for this program; their generosity allowed PALS staff to create a curriculum for using equine assisted activities for at-risk youth to be disseminated on a national level.

We just got back from the Special Olympics where PALS had 12 riders who competed.

The Special Olympics was a great event and PALS riders really shined! Thank you to all of the PALS instructors, volunteers and parents for making the Special Olympics such a great success!!!

With the Special Olympics under our belt the PALS riders, instructors and volunteers are very busy getting ready for the Fourth Annual PALS Fun Show. The Fun Show is a wonderful opportunity for all PALS riders to demonstrate their horsemanship skills. Riders will participate in classes such as Trail/Obstacle, English Equitation and Dressage. I hope that you can come to the Fun Show to cheer for the PALS riders on October 9th!

I would also like to introduce Cindy Hosea who is assisting with events and fundraising activities. Cindy first came to PALS in March when her son started riding at PALS. She has a number of years of event planning and non-profit experience.

I invite you to take a look at PALS new website [www.palstherapy.org](http://www.palstherapy.org), where you can get a lot of useful information about PALS – please make sure to check out the PALS horse and staff pages. Thanks to all those who helped make the new website possible and to Leslie Ems for keeping the website updated.

There are so many special volunteers at PALS that it is difficult to just thank one or two. The PALS volunteer dedication is tremendous and I want to thank all PALS volunteers for their dedication. However, I especially want to thank Amy Ransford Purvis for being the PALS Post Newsletter Editor and to all those who contribute to the newsletter. Amy and her team of volunteers work hard to put together a high quality newsletter.

See you all at the PALS Fun Show on Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>!

*-Fern Bonchek, Executive Director*

## KIRSTYN—A FIRST-CLASS RIDER

*-HOLLY CEDAR, PALS INSTRUCTOR*

Eleven-year old Kirstyn loves to ride at PALS. She began riding last spring and everyone who watches her ride has been amazed by her transformation.

The first time Kirstyn came to ride Patti, her assigned horse, she was apprehensive about getting on. After a few words of encouragement, she mounted from the hydraulic lift. Kirstyn's first lessons focused on increasing her riding skills and independence, by teaching her to hold the reins and tell the horse to "whoa" and "walk-on."

In the beginning, volunteers had to provide hand-over-hand assistance to keep Kirstyn's hands on the reins.. If they removed their hands, Kirstyn would immediately drop the reins and not respond to verbal cues to pick the reins back up.

Today, Kirstyn simply picks her reins up after one verbal cue and then holds the reins independently. The progress she has made in attaining independence has been remarkable. She smiles almost the entire time she is on the horse and makes everyone else around her smile as well. She is an example of how beneficial therapeutic riding is for the riders, helping them to gain independence and increase self-esteem. Those around Kirstyn feel fortunate to work with such an amazing rider.

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## SAVE THE DATE!

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### SESSION DATES:

- # **Therapeutic Riding/Able Bodied Lessons (10 weeks): September 20—December 3**
- # **Make-Up Lessons: December 6—10**
- # *Closed: November 22—26*

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- # **Fourth Annual PALS Fun Show: October 9th at Ellington Stables—Bloomington, IN**
  - # **Michael Richardson: October 27th at J.W. Jones Farms—Gosport, IN**
  - # **Holiday Breakfast: December 1st at Christian Student Fellowship—Bloomington, IN**
- 



*PALS is pleased to announce our first*

### **Holiday Fundraising Breakfast**

Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>  
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.



Guests will start the day celebrating the highlights of 2004 and looking forward to the opportunities PALS has in 2005 to impact the lives of children and adults with disabilities. Of course, we couldn't call it breakfast without coffee, tea, fresh fruit, and scones...

This one hour program will include an invitation to pledge financial support to PALS.

For more information about volunteering or attending the event, contact Cindy Hosea 812-336-6701 or cmhosea@yahoo.com

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### **MEET PURINA MILLS EQUINE AMBASSADOR—MICHAEL RICHARDSON**

*October 27, 2004*

*6:00—8:30 p.m.*

J.W. Jones Farms in Gosport, IN (4000 W. St. Rd. 67)

Michael Richardson has been involved with horses since childhood. Then his life changed drastically. After a tragic accident made him a paraplegic, Michael realized that his perspective on horsemanship had to change. The result is a training methodology that focuses on creating a harmonious, balance relationship between the horse and the rider. His approach benefits even the most able-bodied rider.

### **Proceeds from this event will be donated to PALS.**

Tickets are now on sale at the White River Co-Op (1305 W. Bloomfield Road)

For more information, contact the Co-Op at 812-332-4472

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 the day of the show.

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## PALS RIDERS ATTEND SPECIAL OLYMPICS

-DIANA MCGOVERN, PALS VOLUNTEER AND PARENT



Sierra puts Navaar through the paces in Dressage at the Special Olympics

The 2nd Annual Special Olympics Indiana Equestrian Exhibition was held on Saturday September 11, 2004 at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College near Terre Haute. There were forty-eight participants from thirteen different riding programs throughout Indiana in the show. Twelve riders and six horses, the largest group of all programs present, represented PALS with exceptional skill and enthusiasm.

Riders could compete in any of forty-two English and Western classes. PALS riders competed in dressage, English Equitation and working trail. Due to the generosity of many sponsors of classes and awards, all of the riders received medals or ribbons for their accomplishments. Many of these awards are proudly displayed at the PALS barn.

In addition to our riders and horses, a large group of dedicated PALS volunteers, parents and care-givers attended the event to offer support and encouragement.

A big **thank you** to all the riders, instructors, volunteers, and horses who participated in this exciting event, and to Special Olympics Indiana and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods for hosting the show.

## WEBSITE GETS FACE LIFT

-AMY PURVIS, PALS VOLUNTEER

The PALS website has a new look and many exciting new features. In addition to updating program information, the PALS website now includes instructor profiles, horse biographies, archived publications and links to media features. We hope you find this format more user-friendly and informative.

Log onto: [www.palstherapy.org](http://www.palstherapy.org) today for the most up-to-date information and announcements.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

PALS is grateful for our generous supporters and dedicated volunteers. Your involvement in our therapeutic riding program has made the following achievements possible:

- In 2004 PALS will offer 1,200 therapeutic riding lessons to more than 110 children or adults with disabilities and at-risk youth.
- PALS depends on more than 150 volunteers and uses 13 specially trained horses.
- PALS teaches able-bodied riding lessons.
- PALS offers internship programs.
- PALS teaches a 3-credit undergraduate academic class at Indiana University-Bloomington: R317 Introduction to Equine Assisted Activities.

*If you would like to learn more about supporting PALS, contact Fern Bonchek at [pals@indiana.edu](mailto:pals@indiana.edu)*

## PALS VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

We currently utilize about 150 volunteers throughout the year, and each one contributes so much to the program. Each newsletter, the VSC's (Volunteer Service Coordinators) will select a volunteer to highlight from each shift. Thank you to **all volunteers** for their dedication to the PALS program.

### **Monday Afternoon—Susan Anderson:**

*Laura Ruchti noted, "What I love about Susan Anderson is that when she is at the barn for her shift, you know that PALS is the only thing on her mind. She is wonderful with the riders and as a side-walker is supportive and attentive. It's easy to see that she loves the horses and has a natural way with them."*

### **Monday Evening—Leslie Ems:**

*Amy Purvis recognizes Leslie because, "Leslie is an invaluable asset to PALS. Not only does she volunteer weekly as a horse leader in various lessons, but she also maintains the website—no small task. It is great to work with Leslie and the horses appreciate her attentiveness, too."*

### **Tuesday Afternoon—Ron Tate**

*Jan Gavin writes, "Ron comes to PALS with an 'I am ready to work' attitude. He is always willing to do the 'grunt' work as one of the few men on our shift. Ron's enthusiasm and attitude make him a perfect PALS volunteer."*

### **Tuesday Evening—Alicia Foster**

*Fern Bonchek nominated Alicia because, "Alicia is a young and dedicated horse woman. She and her mom have volunteered for quite some time. Alicia can be trusted to handle any horse at PALS and works well with the riders. She is a great volunteer!"*

### **Thursday Afternoon—Ann Haas**

*Peggy Cantrell noted, "Ann Haas is a wonderful, valued volunteer. She is a person that I truly trust to make sound decisions. Additionally, she is a knowledgeable horse person and a hard worker."*

### **Thursday Evening—Bobby Lee Searcy**

*Susie Carter wrote, "Bobby is composed, relaxed and collected, helping the rider have these traits as well. I find her positive attitude refreshing. She is proactive, always the one doing those extra little tasks."*

### **Friday—Robbie Williams**

*Jan Gavin noted, "Robbie is new this session and he immediately started pitching in with chores. He always has a broom or a muck rake in his hand! Robbie truly makes a difference at PALS."*

## INTERNS LEAVE LASTING IMPRESSION

-HOLLY CEDAR,



PALS intern, Nathalie, with Wyatt riding Sugar

PALS was graced by the presence of three interns over the summer. The skills of Lindsey Bollinger, Nathalie Schuler, and Katie Knapp were put to use at the barn and in the arena while they gained experience as therapeutic riding instructors.

The three women come from a variety of backgrounds. Bollinger lives in Bloomington and already had experience at PALS as a volunteer. Schuler came all the way from France and has been riding dressage there for eight years. Knapp came from Wisconsin, and owned horses around her whole life, though never took formal riding lessons. All three are pursuing studies in psychology.

The interns quickly became a part of the PALS community. They began by shadowing NARHA certified instructors during lessons, and gradually started teaching. The interns used their unique gifts to help the riders interact with the horses and volunteers. They also received riding lessons each week.

In addition to teaching and riding, the interns helped PALS in a many ways. Knapp took on the role as Pokey's primary caretaker, faithfully coming to the barn at least once a day to pick out his feet and care for his ailing hoof. The interns gave an enormous amount of time and energy caring for all of the horses and assisting the instructors and director to organize PALS outside of the barn as well.

Bollinger just began an internship at Butler University, and is completing her Masters in counseling. After returning to France, Schuler is attending the Universite Carles-de-Gaulle, Lille 3, and has two more years left to become a counselor. Knapp is finishing her undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Rehabilitation Psychology, hoping to go on to Occupational Therapy.

They all will be missed, but promised to keep in touch.

PALS FUN SHOW—  
OCTOBER 9TH  
INFO INSIDE!

Bloomington, IN 47402

P.O. Box 1033

People & Animal Learning Services, Inc.



Non-Profit  
Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 327  
Bloomington, IN

## HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT PALS

As a United Way Community Services of Monroe County (UWCS) Member Agency, PALS is honored to be a part of the 2004 United Way Campaign. Following are the seven priority areas the United Way strives to address in our community:

- A. Everyone should have sufficient food.
- B. Everyone should have a safe place to live.
- C. Everyone should have access to basic health care.
- D. People in crisis should have access to emergency services.
- E. Children and youth should have an opportunity to grow and prosper.
- F. Everyone should have the skills and support to enter and stay in the workforce.
- G. Seniors should be supported in their efforts to be independent.

*NOTE: The UWCS Board has expressed a special interest in solutions that meet critical, life-saving needs, serve populations that are impoverished or otherwise vulnerable, and help break the cycle of poverty and encourage positive life choices.*



MEMBER AGENCY

### 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:

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

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

#### Larger Items:

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