

THE PALS POST

TROT TO TRUST SUMMER CAMP

-Ellen C., PALS Volunteer & Trot-to-Trust Co-leader



The 2007 Trot to Trust campers with instructors Lindsey O'Haver and Jennifer Lung and camp co-leader Ellen Combs.

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The horses were put out to pasture, the tack was put away, and an eerie silence enveloped the PALS barn as another Trot-to-Trust girls' camp came to an end.

On July 21 the nine girls who had participated in the week-long program demonstrated their new skills in front of family, friends, PALS staff, and volunteers. All week they acquainted themselves with their horses and learned the basics of English riding. Saturday was their day to perform, and perform they did! Instructors Lindsey O'Haver and Jennifer Lung looked on with pride, and I could not help but smile each time the girls rounded the arena in front of me. The camp **was** a success!

While the girls come to camp excited to ride a horse, some riding for the first time in their lives, learning how to ride is only one part of this camp. The focus is also about life skills. We focused on three concepts during camp this year, TRUST, TEAMWORK, and LEADERSHIP, and incorporated them into everything we did. Throughout the week, the girls learned how to utilize these skills in their day-to-day lives.

Each day was broken into three sections: riding, barn, and activities. During the barn portion, the girls learned about aspects of the horse, including horse behavior, health care, types of breeds, and the basics of grooming and tacking. Volunteer Allison Tomusk also demonstrated equine massage. A new aspect of the camp this year was the mentor role, which allowed the girls to take turns teaching different sections.

During the activities portion, we played fun and physically challenging games that incorporated our focus words of TRUST, TEAMWORK, and LEADERSHIP. I am still not sure which game was their favorite. Was it racing around the arena looking under buckets for the correct colored ribbon to mark their grooming tools, or was it when they were blindfolded and verbally guided through the obstacle course? Or maybe it was when they got soaking wet trying to fill the water bucket from the horse trough using a jug with holes in it all while running over, through, and under objects.

By far the best validation of the success of our goals and the camp itself was from the girls. In our final round-table discussion, one girl's reflection on what she learned was, "I learned that my horse likes to be a leader just like I do. But some of his behaviors weren't really a good thing all the time. I'm going to try to remember that sometimes you just have to be quiet and part of the group."

So who is really doing the teaching? The lines do get blurred.

Trot-to-Trust: Behind the Scenes...

The PALS Trot-to-Trust summer camp, now in its third year, was developed by PALS instructor Lindsey O'Haver with the assistance of PALS volunteer Ellen Combs. The camp, held in cooperation with Girls Inc., is geared towards at-risk girls in Monroe County. Lindsey, who holds a B.A. in Psychology (Summa Cum Laude) from Arizona State and her M.A. and Ed.S. in Counseling and Counselor Education from Indiana University, developed the camp curriculum from a life skills perspective.

This perspective stems from the idea that the way to combat risk in an adolescent's life is to build up resiliency in the form of life skills. These life skills include the ability to form and sustain positive interpersonal relationships, establish trust, and take responsibility for oneself, one's life, and the consequences of one's actions.

Throughout the week, the girls learned to work in teams both with each other and with their horses. The bonds of trust and affection they built with their horses made the camp an experience they will always remember.

Funding for the "Trot-to-Trust" camp has been provided by the Bay & Paul Foundations of New York.

A special thanks to PALS interns Kara S., Lindsey S., Stephanie T., and Nancy V. for their dedication and hard work, all of the PALS volunteers who make this camp possible, and of course, the beloved PALS horses!



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

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It has been a fun and busy summer for us here at PALS. We have 65 weekly therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, and recreational riders and nine Trot-to-Trust summer camp riders!

The 3rd Annual PALS Wine/Beer Tasting and Silent Auction event on June 28 was an amazing success! We raised over \$10,000 and had over 150 people attend; both of these numbers exceeded our expectations! Thank you to all the volunteers, silent auction donors, musicians, wine/beer participants, and event sponsors who made this event such a wonderful success (read more about this event on page 4).

In June, we took five riders to the Indiana Youth Challenge fun show at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, Indiana. We have many riders preparing for the Equestrian Special Olympics on September 8 in Danville, Indiana and for the 7th Annual PALS Fun Show on October 27! The Fun Show is a

wonderful opportunity to see the PALS riders demonstrate their talents here at home, so please make plans to attend.

Our next new volunteer training is on Saturday September 15 at 1:00 PM. Please contact me to RSVP for this training and pass this date along to anyone you know who may be interested in volunteering at PALS.

Please contact Jennifer Lung at 812-327-7457 or jllung@indiana.edu about riding in the fall session, which starts on September 17, or about signing up for a volunteer shift.

Hope to see you at the barn soon!

Fern Bonchek

Executive Director
fbonchek@indiana.edu
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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).

A FOND FAREWELL TO A PALS RIDER

-Jessica S., PALS Intern

Thomas A., a boy of 5, is a beam of light and laughter who has touched the hearts of staff and volunteers at PALS since January 2006. Thomas was diagnosed with autism in October 2005. While receiving services at Children's Therapy Clinic, his mom noticed signs for therapeutic horseback riding and wanted her son to try riding.

Thomas's first lesson looked like many of the first lessons at PALS. Thomas was excited, intrigued, and nervous. He was fascinated by the "elevator"—the name that he gave to the hydraulic mounting lift. When Thomas was first lifted onto Sugar, he shrieked. After about ten minutes of getting off and onto the horse, Thomas told Sugar to "Go now!" When Thomas felt Sugar walk, he was thrilled and his facial expression changed from uncertainty to complete happiness. He loved riding and, like many new PALS riders, did not want his lesson to end.

When Thomas learned that the horse would stop when he said, "Stop," he refused to say the word. In fact, when Jennifer would tell Thomas, "Okay, Thomas, time to say stop," he would look at her and say, "Go!" Watching Thomas trot around the arena at PALS is watching an expression of pure joy.

Thomas's mother, Suzanne, and father, Rob, believe that therapeutic riding lessons are "a unique, inspired and brilliant way to sneak beneficial therapies in while the rider is simply having fun." The lessons offered an extracurricular activity that was fun. PALS lessons provided Thomas the opportunity to take a break from his schedule full of dietary and therapeutic interventions so that he could just be a kid.

Since Thomas's diagnosis, Suzanne and Rob have become autism activists and have passed out countless buttons displaying the month and year of Thomas's diagnosis and his sweet smiling face to friends and loved ones, including Thomas's therapists and friends at PALS. Suzanne quickly learned that she would have to make many more in order to be sure all of Thomas's friends at PALS could proudly wear a button. All of the PALS volunteers who know Thomas just had to have one!



Thomas and friends during his last lesson at PALS.

Thomas's parents are so grateful to PALS head instructor Jennifer Lung, who lovingly put them at ease during the first few lessons. Suzanne and Rob would like to thank all of the volunteers who fell in love with Thomas and fought over his lesson times. In Suzanne's words, "You cannot know how your work touches the heart of a mother of a child with so many differences and challenges. PALS has been a gift and a blessing for Thomas and his parents."

PALS wishes Thomas's family well as they leave the Bloomington area. Rob was offered a job at IUPUI, and the family moved to northeast Indy in June. We will remember this amazing family and continue to wear our Thomas buttons.

TRAIL TALK ... WITH SISTERS ALLISON AND KRISTIN

-Lisa W., PALS Rider

We have a two-for-one special Trail Talk this time! Twin sisters Allison and Kristin W., who are almost 12 now, have been riding at PALS for two years. Lindsey O'Haver instructs both riders. They kindly took some time to answer questions from Lisa of the *PALS Post*.

Lisa: What do you like best about your horse?

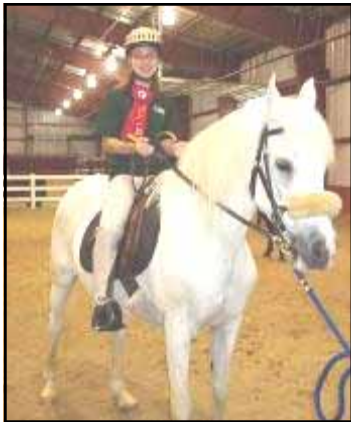
Kristin: My horse [Navaar] always shoots out like he's in the Kentucky Derby after I'm on him!

Allison: I like best how Chico has mood swings; sometimes he's lazy and some weeks he's ready to work.

Lisa: When you're riding a horse, what's your favorite thing to do?

Allison: Trotting on the right diagonal.

Kristin: I like to trot and do obstacle courses.



Kristin, riding Navaar, proudly displays her ribbon at the Indiana Youth Challenge.

Lisa: What do you like best about your teacher and side walkers?

Kristin: My teacher and side walkers always give me tips how to ride my horse.

Allison: I like best how my teachers and walkers try to make riding the horse educational, yet fun.

Lisa: What can you do in riding that makes you feel proudest of yourself?

Allison: I can trot in a 20-meter circle.

Kristin: I feel proud that I could ride and trot some off lead.



Allison and Chico leaving the ring at the Indiana Youth Challenge.

Lisa: How has riding in the PALS Fun Show made you feel?

Kristin: I felt like a horse competitor in real competitions on TV, that's ready to proudly show off.

Allison: It made me feel proud of myself after I was given my awards both times that I participated.

Lisa: Is there anything you'd like to say to children who are thinking about joining PALS?

Allison: PALS is a lot of fun, yet educational, because you get to do a lot of fun activities with your horse, like trotting and running obstacle courses. You also get to learn all about horses and the parts of their bodies, which is also fun to do.

Kristin: Joining PALS has been a great experience. It teaches you horse skills, and you can get exercise at the same time.

Lisa: I couldn't agree more! Thank you, Kristin and Allison!

REPRESENTING PALS AROUND THE STATE

-Diana M., PALS Volunteer and Kara Lasher, PALS Newsletter Editor

For many PALS riders, nothing is more thrilling than the opportunity to show off their riding skills in the arena as their friends and family look on. The annual PALS Fun Show (October 27, 2007), held each autumn at the PALS barn, is a fantastic opportunity for our riders to perform in front of an audience. However, some of our riders have taken their love of showing to the next level by participating in shows in other parts of Indiana and even outside the state.

On Sunday, June 24, five riders from the PALS program participated in the 2007 Indiana Youth Challenge at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, Indiana. The Indiana Youth Challenge offers both English and Western classes for riders in equine-assisted riding programs and for other youth riders, many of whom are 4-H members. Showing in English walk-trot equitation and pleasure classes were Sierra L. riding Holly, Steve M. riding Patti,

Allison W. riding Chico, Kristin W. riding Navaar, and Samantha M. riding Chico. Sierra, Allison, and Samantha received first place in their classes, and Steve and Kristin both earned second-place ribbons. We are very proud of all the PALS riders for their accomplishments at this show!

Steve and Sierra are old hands at traveling to shows with the PALS team. In March, PALS was asked to present a demonstration on equine assisted activities at the Hoosier Horse Fair at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Steve and Sierra eagerly agreed to demonstrate the pattern that they rode when they competed in the UPHA Exceptional Challenge Cup in Kansas City in November 2006.

At the Hoosier Horse Fair, PALS Executive Director Fern Bonchek and instructors Lindsey O'Haver and Barb Bonchek spoke to the audience about the benefits of therapeutic riding and the opportunities it provides for people with disabilities. In addition to promoting therapeutic riding and PALS, the demonstration helped to introduce competition opportunities for people with disabilities. PALS instructors and volunteers were also on hand to answer questions and further promote therapeutic riding at an information table provided by the Equine Assisted Activities Committee of the Indiana Horse Council.



Steve M. and Patti after a successful performance at the Indiana Youth Challenge.



Sierra L., riding Holly, takes first place in her class at the Indiana Youth Challenge on June 24, 2007.

ANNUAL WINE/BEER TASTING AND SILENT AUCTION

-Stephanie T., PALS Intern

On Thursday, June 28, PALS held its 3rd Annual Wine/Beer Tasting and Silent Auction at Terry's Banquets and Catering. Throughout the evening, over 150 individuals attended this amazing event, making this the biggest PALS fundraising event yet. Within the short two hours, guests were able to sip and sample wines and beers from Oliver Winery, Monarch Beverages, Upland Brewing Company, Mallow Run Winery, Miller Brewing Company, and Olinger. A special thanks to Big Red Liquors for helping to secure some of these wineries and breweries.

In addition to tasting, the event also included a silent auction with over 100 packages to bid on. Silent auction packages were donated by many community members and local businesses. Many individuals went home with some amazing packages, including airfare to Florida, Colts tickets, lunch with Mayor Mark Krusan, and much more.

Throughout the night, guests enjoyed listening to the wonderful PALS jazz trio featuring Neal Heidler on string bass, Michael Eaton on saxophones, and Danny Deckard on drums. Parents Vicki Loring and Jennie Baugh also shared moving testimonials of how PALS has touched their children's lives.



Guests peruse the wide variety of wines available at the PALS Annual Wine/Beer Tasting and Silent Auction.

PALS would like to thank the guests, volunteers, committee members, silent auction donors, and the following sponsors for this event: Baxter BioPharma Solutions, Tاسus Corporation, Southern Indiana Pediatrics, Bloomington Hospital, Advanced Pain Center, Terry's Banquets and Catering, A Classic Party Rental, Pliant Corporation, Big Red Liquors, and the Trojan Horse. PALS would also like to thank Bloomington Hospital Printing Services for donating their services for our printing. With all your love and support, PALS was able to raise \$10,000 in donations.

Thank you again for making the 3rd Annual Wine/Beer Tasting and Silent Auction such a success! We are looking forward to next year's event!

THANKS TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS!

BioPharma Solutions

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Southern Indiana Pediatrics
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Trojan Horse

Printing donated by Bloomington Hospital Printing Services

Wine and Beer Provided By:

Upland Brewing Company
Miller Brewing Company
Mallow Run Winery
Monarch Beverages
Olinger Winery
Olinger

A NEW FACE AT THE BARN

-Kara Lasher, PALS Newsletter Editor

We are thrilled to introduce our newest addition to the PALS team. Bit-O-Tee, or "Tee" for short, was donated this summer by PALS volunteer Emily Anderson. After a lot of hard work learning how to be a therapy horse, Tee is now enjoying working in lessons at PALS.

This palomino gelding is quickly becoming the PALS resident joker. A former reining show horse champion, Tee loves to be in the spotlight, and the goofy faces he makes keep everyone at PALS laughing. One of Tee's favorite hobbies before coming to PALS was herding cows, and he can be seen out in the pasture trying to continue his hobby by herding the other PALS horses.



Bit-O-Tee, our newest PALS addition.

Tee also has a sweet tooth and loves to eat apples and other sweet treats. He is a very social fellow and loves the attention he is getting from all the volunteers and riders at PALS.

PALS HORSE CLUB

-Vicki L., PALS Parent

PALS is inviting local businesses to join the PALS Horse Club. We are creating an opportunity for local businesses to partner with one of the extraordinary horses that make PALS so successful as a therapeutic riding center. Three levels of sponsorship (\$3,900 per year/\$325 per month, \$2,700 per year/\$225 per month, \$1,200 per year/\$100 per month) are available, allowing each business to choose its contribution level.

Potential sponsors will be invited out to the barn to meet the horses and to witness the great work they do with all our riders. If you know of a business you would like us to contact, please let us know. Our gentle and patient horses deserve to be partnered with some of Bloomington's successful businesses. Help us reach our goal of having all our wonderful horses sponsored.

Contact Vicki Loring at (812) 339-1632, vickiloring@yahoo.com or Jennie Baugh at (812) 323-0919, jennieskridge@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions or ideas about PALS Horse Club sponsorship. To view the PALS Horse Club brochure, please visit:

<http://www.palstherapy.org/donate/docs/sponsorflyer.pdf>

A PALS SHINING STAR

-Kara Lasher, PALS Newsletter Editor

Every week, PALS riders, parents, and volunteers are greeted by a warm smile and cheerful hello as they arrive at the barn. Head instructor Jennifer Lung touches everyone she meets with her sincere, nurturing personality and genuine interest and caring. With her humble and selfless attitude, Jennifer is always focused on others, but today we'd like to focus on Jennifer and her amazing contributions to PALS.

Jennifer has been a PALS instructor since 2001, became a NARHA Certified Instructor in October 2003, and has been serving as the PALS head instructor for the last two years. In addition to teaching therapeutic and recreational riding lessons, she is responsible for scheduling lessons and volunteer shifts, training and maintaining volunteers, mentoring and evaluating interns, health care and exercise for the PALS horses, and show planning.

Jennifer graduated from Indiana University in 1997 with a Bachelor of Science in Outdoor Recreation and a minor in Environmental Interpretation.

As a high school student, Jennifer volunteered as an aide in the special needs classroom and discovered a passion for working with people with disabilities. In addition to her work at PALS, Jennifer has worked at Options and Bradford Woods. She has been involved with horses since age 10, when she began taking riding lessons and showing through 4-H. At PALS, Jennifer is able to combine her love of horses with her passion for working with people with disabilities.

"The fact that she has so much experience with both horses and people with disabilities is priceless, and it's unusual to find," says PALS Executive Director Fern Bonchek. "Plus, she's the most patient person I've ever met in my entire life. We are so blessed to have her!"

While Jennifer primarily interacts with her riders during lessons at PALS, she is much beloved by the volunteers, who can't say enough about her.

"She really pays attention to the rider," says volunteer Jay N. "She's always cheery and sweet to the riders and volunteers."

"What's really neat about Jennifer is how the riders really trust her. They love her," says volunteer Elisa D. "The first time I watched her teach, it brought tears to my eyes. Also, she is so appreciative to the volunteers!"

Isabelle K. has been taking therapeutic riding lessons from Jennifer since last summer, and her parents, Jason and Yvonne, are thrilled with the progress Isabelle has made under her instruction.

"Jennifer has helped her not to be so shy. She really brings Isabelle out of her shell," says Yvonne.

"Isabelle has grown so much with Jennifer, she is really growing up with her," says Jason. "Jennifer's real patient with her, brings out a lot of Isabelle's strengths. She is a super, super instructor. I can't say enough about her."

Jennifer works tirelessly at PALS to provide a positive experience for all involved. She says she loves coming to work every day because it's a fun work environment where she's able to be around her riders and horses all day.

"My absolute favorite thing about PALS is my riders, watching them progress, have fun, and become independent," says Jennifer. "It just makes me happy, and it's always a good time. There are really no bad days at PALS."

The riders, staff, volunteers, and all of the PALS family know that Jennifer plays a huge role in creating this positive environment, and we are so lucky to have her. To quote volunteer Ellen C., "Jennifer really puts the P in PALS."



Jennifer out of her barn clothes and having a good time with friends at the PALS Wine/Beer Tasting event.

STAFF DIRECTORY

Executive Director/Instructor

Fern Bonchek
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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

Barn Location:

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Bloomington, IN 47403
812-824-3000 barn

Mailing Address:

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

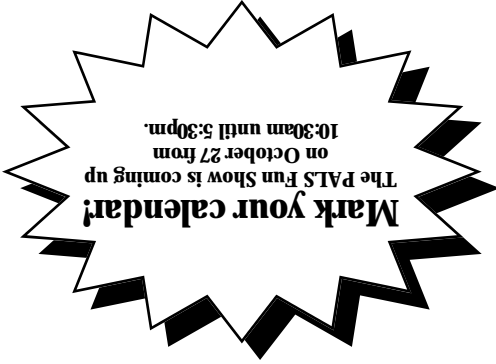
Volunteers: Mark your calendar for the PALS Volunteer Appreciation Banquet on Saturday December 1st at 6 PM. More information coming soon

Volunteers & Riders:

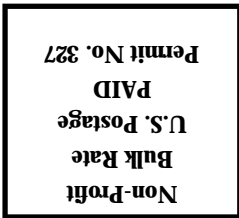
Don't forget to sign up for the fall session, which starts on September 17th!

Please contact Jennifer Lung to sign up today!

jllung@indiana.edu
812-327-7457 cell



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. Donations are tax-deductible.

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

_____ \$3,600—Cost of full board/care for one horse for one year

_____ \$2,400—Cost of board for one horse for one year

_____ \$1,050—Cost of one year of therapeutic riding lessons

_____ \$350—Cost of 10 therapeutic riding lessons

_____ \$175—Cost of one month's board for a therapy horse

_____ \$35—Cost of one therapeutic riding lesson

_____ Other—Your gift will be used where it is needed most

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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 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 surcingle
- Cosequin
- Cordless drill
- Helmets

Larger items:

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

Visit our website at: www.palstherapy.org

PALS would like to disclose that we will not share your contact information with any outside organization. We will publish your name in the annual list of donors & annual report unless we are told that you want to remain anonymous.