

## Summer 2011

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### Wish List:

- ♦ More Instructors or people that would like to learn to become instructors.
- ♦ Volunteers — we are always in need of helping hands, from horse leaders and sidewalkers to barn aides, therapists, and Zoo Mentors.
- ♦ Farm Equipment (we are looking for a baler for square bales and a new tractor.)
- ♦ Horses donated to the program  
*And, of course...*
- ♦ An Indoor Arena



## Summer Picnics at the Ranch

Every year Majestic Hills Ranch hosts picnics for worthy programs, sharing the wonders and beauty of our facilities with others. This year we once again hosted Cornerstone, a program that helps prevent domestic abuse, and HopeKids, which supports families with children that have life-threatening conditions.

The events are filled with fun and games as our wonderful volunteers make sure everyone has a great time with such activities such as creating their own unique cowboy hats, horse rides around the arena (including miniature horse rides, thanks to Chloe and Molly!), hay rides in our wagon around the property, picnic games, prizes that have been donated to the ranch, and (of course) food! For our largest picnic event, HopeKids, Dairy Queen donated Dilly Bars to help keep us all cool and deliciously full!

Our first picnic had perfect weather, good cheer, great help, and was wonderful in every way. With over 70 attendees, we enjoyed their enthusiasm for our horses. Our Percheron draft horse, Apollo, stood for hours hanging over the pasture gate - greeting everyone in hopes for hugs. Our July picnic was hot—but everyone had a great time. With over 150 people in attendance, the wonderful volunteers—including over a dozen

that work at Blue Cross Blue Shield—kept everyone entertained all day.

We love to share the beauty of our facility with others. We hope to be adding the photos of these events to both our website and our Facebook page soon—so please keep an eye out for them!



# Summer Classes

The morning classes have begun and the summer schedules are in full swing! As our wet, cold spring days have turned into wet, hot summer days we have to remind ourselves that we are Minnesotans and we should be used to such eclectic weather.

With almost every class full, it is very important to let your instructor know if your child will be out because of vacation or camps. Majestic Hills will then try to reschedule riders to those openings if we are needing to cancel a class.

I have included below a Heat Index chart below, showing how the humidity will increase how hot the day feels. If it looks like the day will be incredibly hot (over 100° F)—the decision will be made early to cancel class, otherwise the heat will be assessed 2 hours before class time and the decision made then.

I am hoping that everyone is having a fun time riding this year and we are looking forward to the adventures that the rest of the years holds us.

# Heroes on Horseback Clothing Drive

Rather than throwing out your old clothes you no longer wear, have grown out of, or just no longer want ... please consider donating them to Majestic Hills Ranch.

Men’s, women’s, children’s clothes, and household linens (like bedding and blankets.) ... *IT DOESN'T MATTER!*

Clothing can be dropped off at the Ranch in Lakeville or at our administrative office in Bloomington. 24580 Dakota Avenue, Lakeville, MN 55044 or 3001 Metro Drive, #480, Bloomington, MN 55425. In instances of large amounts please call 952-888-6077 and we will arrange a pick up. Contact Larry or CJ. Funds raised will go directly towards our therapeutic riding program for our injured American veterans!

This is a year long drive, so please think of us when cleaning out any clothing or bedding items.



The **Heat Index** below is created by information from the National Climatic Data Center. Classes will be canceled automatically in temperatures with a heat index of 90° F or greater. Class times will be watched throughout of the day, and we will try to have classes that fall outside the dangerous times (ie. cancelling the 4 pm class but holding the 5:30 and 7 pm classes because the heat dropped.) We will try to reschedule riders to open appointments during the week, so please make sure to call or e-mail Kris if you will not be at a class. MHR may need to move or remove riders in prime time positions from the schedule if there is an above average amount of cancellations NOT due to weather. This will ensure that riders that are consistent in their attendance have the least cancellations due to heat.

## Thank you to the Vets for Vets program

The Vets for Vets program has given us a donation to help improve our services towards the military personnel that we are assisting. Their donation will be used towards a hydraulic lift, and a carriage that has a lift so adults that are wheelchair bound can get the benefits of therapeutic driving. Both pieces of equipment will help us expand the amount of people we assist as well as the different limitations that we can overcome to help our riders gain the benefits of working with horses. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

	100% Humidity	90% Humidity	80% Humidity	70% Humidity	60% Humidity	50% Humidity	40% Humidity
70° F	<i>feels like 72°</i>	<i>feels like 71°</i>	<i>feels like 71°</i>	<i>feels like 70°</i>	<i>feels like 70°</i>	<i>feels like 69°</i>	<i>feels like 68°</i>
75° F	<i>feels like 80°</i>	<i>feels like 79°</i>	<i>feels like 78°</i>	<i>feels like 77°</i>	<i>feels like 76°</i>	<i>feels like 75°</i>	<i>feels like 74°</i>
80° F	<i>feels like 91°</i>	<i>feels like 88°</i>	<i>feels like 86°</i>	<i>feels like 85°</i>	<i>feels like 82°</i>	<i>feels like 81°</i>	<i>feels like 79°</i>
85° F	<i>feels like 108°</i>	<i>feels like 102°</i>	<i>feels like 97°</i>	<i>feels like 93°</i>	<i>feels like 90°</i>	<i>feels like 88°</i>	<i>feels like 86°</i>
90° F		<i>feels like 122°</i>	<i>feels like 113°</i>	<i>feels like 106°</i>	<i>feels like 100°</i>	<i>feels like 96°</i>	<i>feels like 93°</i>
95° F			<i>feels like 136°</i>	<i>feels like 124°</i>	<i>feels like 114°</i>	<i>feels like 107°</i>	<i>feels like 101°</i>
100° F				<i>feels like 144°</i>	<i>feels like 132°</i>	<i>feels like 120°</i>	<i>feels like 110°</i>

## Heroes On Horseback

*By Craig Swanson, Heroes On Horseback Instructor*

Horses have a long history of being used in programs aimed at rehabilitating individuals suffering from emotional, physical and mental health wounds.

Our own Heroes On Horseback program is gaining momentum and has, in fact, gained popularity and recognition as an alternative therapy for service-members suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries (TBI) as well as other wounds sustained in and out of combat.

One of the many goals of our program is to reintegrate the service member into a calm, peaceful social environment. This goal is accomplished by enabling the service member to work on an individual basis with a horse, instructor and volunteer(s). Over time, the service member's confidence and ability to trust increases, as well as muscle tone, movement, balance and coordination.

In a VA news release, Dr. Cynthia Dunn, a psychologist at the Lexington, Kentucky VA Medical Center said: "We are predicting that the veteran's sense of hope will increase, which would mean that their level of depression will decrease through this activity. Once that decreases, he or she is more likely to truly engage in the physical aspect of their therapy."

All but one of our injured veterans who started with us in May continue to ride with us. One of our riders has returned to his home in New Jersey after being discharged from the VA Medical Center. A new rider started this past week and we expect others to begin soon.

Each of our riders has his or her success story, but we are capable of serving many more. I simply won't consider HOH a real success until we are serving a greater number of veterans and active-duty military personnel with disabilities. All the ingredients are in place to do this, if only we can get the word out to them.

There are seven components to a successful veterans' therapeutic riding program:

1. Injured and/or disabled veterans or active-duty military personnel
2. Specially trained horses – Apollo, Dixon, O'Conner, Sahara, Silver, and Toby
3. An instructor who understands the needs of injured riders
4. Willing volunteers – Beth, Chad, Joe, and Rogo have been wonderful. They have been willing to do whatever it takes to help our disabled veterans enjoy the benefits of therapeutic riding.
5. A way to get information out, about the program, and its advantages, to those who could benefit from it
6. Funding from generous individuals, companies, and more as we offer our services free of charge to veterans and active-duty military personnel with disabilities.
7. Facilities – although we would love to have an indoor arena, our current facilities are satisfactory and look to be improving soon with the help of the Veterans For Veterans Foundation.

The horses we have are working out well, our facilities are adequate and, although I may be slightly prejudiced, it seems our instructor is capable as well. However, we need help in four other areas.

### Wish list

- A greater number of disabled veterans who will benefit from the wonders of equine-assisted rehabilitation
- A better way to get information out about the program and its advantages, to those who could benefit from it
- Additional volunteers – Veteran volunteers can be especially instrumental in helping injured/disabled veterans open up and talk about their experiences and their struggles. The veteran to veteran bond makes it possible for participants to share thoughts and feelings.
- There will always be a need for continued support.

If you'd like to help, please contact Craig Swanson at 612-759-1040

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# Upcoming Events in 2011

<b>August</b>	Volunteer picnic	(August 13th)
<b>September</b>	Summer Classes End	(September 2nd)
	<b><i>Labor Day—Ranch CLOSED for the WEEK</i></b>	<b>(Sept 5-9)</b>
<b>October</b>	Pig Roast / Year End Gala	(October 1st)
	Classes End	(October 28th)



## **Board of Directors 2011**

### **Executives**

CJ Pierson, Board President  
Larry Johnson, Vice President  
Carol Meagher, Secretary / Treasurer

### **Members**

Mary Lee Enfield, Ph.D.  
Heather Harden  
Kim Howard  
Virginia Latocki  
Wayne Mertz

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