



Hoofbeats

Newsletter for Special Equestrians, Inc.



Spring, 2005

Thanks Special Equestrians-The Levy Family

Jeremiah's first session at Special Equestrians was in September, 2003, and I remember the day very well. After he was settled on Kaama and began his first circle around the arena, I started to cry. He had finally gotten a break.

We adopted Jeremiah from Haiti at the age of 7 months. He had spent the first part of his life living on the streets of Port-au-Prince with his birth mom and an older sister. When we finally got his visa and received him, he was almost one year old and weighed only 12 lbs.

Due to malnutrition, he suffers from frontal lobe damage and has since been diagnosed with high functioning autism and

Tourette's syndrome. He had multiple problems with receptive and expressive speech and fine motor deficits and had been receiving speech, physical and occupational therapy.

We had just learned from our insurance appeal board that they would no longer cover his therapies because they said that he had little chance to improve. Most people said he was retarded and would have trouble with the simplest of tasks.

Then Special Equestrians entered our lives. Here we have found a group of staff and volunteers that have the special ability to look beyond the difficulties and trials that Jeremiah has faced, and can see his potential and the abilities that



Jeremiah Levy guiding Rainy through the obstacle course with volunteer Steve Somley by his side

he has been blessed with. This group of people has an incredible amount of patience, compassion and endurance, as well as a desire to help all the riders reach their goals and dreams.

Since Jeremiah has started the program, he has been able to develop friendships with the volunteers and the other riders, be independent with instructions for riding and has learned

care and grooming of the horses.

We as a family feel very blessed to be a part of this organization-as parents and as volunteers.

God bless,
Avonda Levy

Steve Somley - Our Favorite Water Boy

Over the past 10 years, volunteer Steve Somley has been there every Wednesday and Saturday for Special Equestrians. His first job is to set up the water for riders, volunteers and visitors. Then he gets out our barrels and sets up the cones course for the day. We don't let him get

off that easily though. He is one of our most dependable sidewalkers who walks beside the riders holding a leg or an ankle to give the riders security. He loves all the riders and is a crowd favorite. In fact, we have heard that Steve is mentioned quite often by our parents in their com-

ments to Dee, always in glowing terms. He just has such a way of making the riders feel good about themselves. But don't ask Steve to toot his own horn because he won't do it. He is totally humble and unaware of how special he is. He does it for all the right reasons. Thanks, Steve!!!

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Junior League Turns up the Volume for Special Equestrians

Remember the days (not too long ago) when we were borrowing PA Systems for fundraisers and special events? We all know how hard it is to hear Dee during classes. Well, the Junior League of Fort Myers has come to our rescue. This wonderful organization of amazing women, has donated an incredible new PA system to us. The system is complete with cordless mikes and a sound that could put on a grand concert! We tested the system at the

Ride-A-thon and it was fabulous.

Dee demonstrated how we run our classes and she able to explain to everyone watching just what we do during our classes. She also was able to ask each rider what they liked about Special Equestrians and we were so proud of each rider's comments.

We want to thank the Junior League from the bottom of our hearts. You have allowed us to be heard loud and clear! We hope to

use the system for all special events and during our classes.



Dee Hollander getting a few words from a rider with our new cordless microphone.

Snapshots from the 2005 Ride-A-Thon



On the left, we see Jacob, Kaama, Bob and Enid enjoying their day at the Ride-A-Thon.

On the right, even the riders and their sisters helped clean up the pavilion at the Babcock Ranch. Lizzie, Alexandra, and Patricia are working hard to leave Babcock Ranch extra clean!



On the left, Michael and Whiskers enjoy their trot with Kelly, Colleen and Lauren trotting along too.

On the right, Emma, Avonda, Kathy and Kaama after the ribbons were handed out. It was a job well done!



Christie Williamson-In Memory of A Very Special Volunteer

Christie Williamson was an avid horseperson since she was a child, and a volunteer for Special Equestrians. Christie died in a traffic accident on December 30, 2004. Her parents, Don and Silvia Williamson and her sister Kelly, asked that donations be made to Special Equestrians in memory of Christie.

We all know that Special Equestrians is a wonderful cause but the large amount of contributions Special Equestrians received shows how very much Christie and this family mean to so many people who gave a donation in her memory. Special Equestrians was overwhelmed with the generosity of this family, their friends and their relatives during this time of great sadness.

We asked Don, Silvia and Kelly how they would like for the money to be used. They asked us to make up a wish list of items that would help us in running our program. We made up

our list and presented it to the family. Because of the huge response from people who extend from Florida to Colorado to New York, over \$9,500



from over 120 contributions has been received at this time. That total will enable us to get everything on our

list, and the family did approve all of the items that we presented to them. Here is our wish list which will be granted through Christie's Memorial.

Wish List Items

1. Limousine Golf Cart
2. Sports Saddle
3. Skito Saddle Pad
4. Therapeutic Riding Bareback Pad
5. New Special Equestrians Sign at entrance to stable
6. Laube 723 Micro Mini Clippers
7. Laptop Computer
8. Projector for showing Power-Point Presentations
9. Display board for presentations

Don, Silvia and Kelly have also established a scholarship fund for riders who cannot afford our service fee. They have donated \$5,000 toward this scholarship fund, which will be called the Christie Williamson Rider Scholarship.

Two City Girls - For Max and Max

Two city girls, Jan and SuSu, met in the mountains of North Carolina. They walked and talked, picked berries, made jams, shopped, and became great friends. Each had a grandson named "Max." Two year old Max was a perfect typical child. Six-year old Max was a darling autistic child. The friends wanted to do something special to help him. So they designed, made and sold holiday aprons and have donated the proceeds to provide special therapy sessions for Max and also for Special Equestrians. The aprons include those for Jewish holidays and Christian holidays. Autism know no boundaries! We hope that this small donation will let you know how much we appreciate the Special Equestrian program which Max enjoys!

Suzanne Galloway (Grandmother of Max Memoli)
and

Jan Cohen (Friend of Max Memoli and
Grandmother of Max Silver)



*Max Memoli demonstrating his riding skills
At the Babcock Ranch during the Ride-A-Thon.*

Retirement is The Life for Mitzi & Savannah

This fall we made a decision that brought mixed emotions. Mitzi and Savannah, two of our most beloved program horses, were retired from the program. We could always count on Mitzi to give our riders her best and she taught many of them to ride independently. Savannah was only in our program for a couple of years, but she was a sweetheart and she gave that nice smooth trot that the riders loved so much.

Savannah is living the high life with Gwen Zimmerman these days. According to Gwen, Savannah is the queen of the herd, and she thinks she is a young filly. She never misses a meal and she never forgets when the dinner bell should ring. Gwen says that she has never seen a sweeter horse, and the neighbors have fallen in love with her, as well. She lives with an assortment of miniature horses and donkeys who have great respect for Savannah with her large size.

In fact, because of Savannah, Gwen has purchased 11 acres in North Fort Myers so that she will have room to give Savannah her own field to play and graze in. Gwen has also bought 6 more horses, so I think Savannah will have some friends her own size. Gwen is a wonderful lady and we are thrilled for Savannah. She deserves all the good things that are coming to her in retirement.



Oh, What A Beautiful Day For Riding!!



Special Equestrians hosted their 14th Annual Ride-A-Thon Saturday March 5th at Babcock Ranch. 108 riders turned out for a great ride through Babcock land which has an abundance of wildlife, pretty scenery and lots of cows!!

Special Equestrians riders very proudly showed off their riding skills and earned ribbons. All riders received a free breakfast, lunch and ice cream which were provided by Publix, Sweet Bay, Sun Harvest, Rib City, and Sweet Things. Hay-loft Western Wear donated two silver buckles for the most pledges collected by an adult and child. Janet Simmons, with \$1,100.00 won the adult buckle, second place went to Carolyn Davis \$856.82, third place to Jack Cardillo. Hannah Quinn with \$2,130 won the child's buckle,

second place went to Tanner Malbon with \$1,845, third place to Jeremiah Levy with \$1,560 and fourth place to Lizzie Camarillo with \$1,000. Special Equestrians raised over \$20,000 to benefit their program. Thanks so much to all those who worked hard to get pledges.

There were so many raffle prizes donated and the 50/50 pot was \$600.00, which was divided into two drawings.

A special thanks to Arnie Sarlo and David Milburn of Babcock Ranch, Gary Graef, Rex Shevitiski, and all the volunteers and merchants who made this great ride possible. A good time was had by all!! We hope to see you again next year.

Our Hats are Off To The Legends Red Hat Society!

The women of Legend's Red Hat Society hosted a fundraiser to benefit Special Equestrians on February 24th. Following a luncheon, a representative from the therapeutic riding program, Freda Jones, spoke about Special Equestrians and its many benefits for mentally and physically challenged people. Many posters of the special riders were made available to bring a more personal touch.

Special Equestrians volunteer, Jean Nadeau, with her committee, put on a silent auction and raffle of articles donated by area businesses. Thanks to the generosity of all of the Red Hat ladies, we raised \$1,345.00 for Special Equestrians. It was a wonderful day, enjoyed by all! Thank-you Jean for all of your hard work.

SWFL Community Foundation gives SE a Grant for Our Most Valuable Piece of Equipment - HORSES!

SWFL Community Foundation has come through again for us. When Jan Youngling wrote the grant application for the fall grants for the SWFL Community Foundation, she asked for our most valuable piece of equipment. If you guessed horses, you are correct. We had just successfully retired Mitzi and Savannah, and now we needed to add 2 new horses to our stable. Jan was interviewed by a committee from the SWFL Community Foundation and she explained our need for our most precious piece of equipment-horses. We received a grant to purchase the two new program horses

and the search was on.

Our search has been interesting and at times frustrating. We traveled across the state to try a horse. We brought horses to our farm on trial. We talked to many people who felt they had a horse to offer us. Finally, a lead came to us about a horse in LaBelle. He was reported to be the right size, great temperament, well trained and in good health. All of these things are vital to our choosing a horse. Well, this time everything fell into place and Whiskey, whose name seems to be changing to Whiskers, was agreed

upon by all to be the first horse purchased with our grant money. We took him to the Ride-A-Thon and he was amazing!

He was a calm, sweet gentleman. Whiskers really seemed to enjoy just hanging out with us after the classes were over.

Now, on to the search for the second horse!!



Whiskers and volunteer Jack Cardillo at the Ride-A-Thon

2005 Taste Of Love -A Wine, Cheese & Chocolate Tasting Turns Out to Be a Sweet Treat For Special Equestrians



Hannah, our speaker, riding Sweetums

Special Equestrians was honored to have the "Taste of Love II" hosted by two very special people in our Fort Myers Community, NBC Channel 2 News Anchor Jessica Stilwell and Meteorologist Robert Van Winkle. Our speaker was Hannah Quinn, who was on her third speaking engagement for Special Equestrians. She did another beautiful job. Emma Ravish, another special rider, also made an appearance at the event. We thank both riders for lending your support to us. You are terrific!

The event was held on Sunday, February 13, 2005, at The Blue Pepper Gourmet Foods and Bakery. An assortment of chocolate, cheese, and delicious appetizers were enjoyed by our large crowd of close to 200 people. Various wines were sampled which included whites, reds, champagnes and some delicious desert wines.

We want to thank all of our event sponsors for your wonderful support. The sponsors included: Todd Holman, A Clear Title, Associates in Urology, The Marazzi Family, Brett Raskin, Raymond Building Supply, Richardson Homes, Inc., Michael and Stephanie Rosen, Stroemer Tuscan & Company, and Val Ward Cadillac.

The event was a great success, earning around \$14,000 for our program that day. When you are running a program that involves taking care of horses and purchasing special equipment for our riding program, there is a lot of fundraising that must be done. We could not make it without this help from our community, and we really appreciate their support.

Special Equestrians Riding Schedule for 2005 (date is for starting week of each 6 week session)

1st Session	Week of January 10	5th Session	Week of July 18
2nd Session	Week of February 21	NO CLASSES	MONTH OF AUGUST
3rd Session	Week of April 11	6th Session	Week of October 3rd
NO CLASSES	MAY 23 - May 29	7th Session	Week of November 14
4th Session	Week of May 30	NO CLASSES	Dec. 19 - NEW YEARS
NO CLASSES	JUNE 27 - JULY 3		

S.E. Thanks Our Generous Contributors (since the last newsletter)

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In Memory of Brooke Miller Steve & Wendy Abbott

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We have listed as many contributors as we could, but we did not have room to thank everyone. If you are a contributor and your name is not listed, please accept our gratitude for your donation.

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Horse Sponsorships
Prizes for Fundraisers
Fly Spray for Horses
Legacy Joint Supplement
Sponsors for Newsletter Printing
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Toner Cartridges for HP Color LaserJet 3550
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Special Equestrians, Inc.

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