

Equine Assisted Therapy - continued

Therapy program is exceptional in the northeast area. Mane Stream's therapists include a Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist (HPCS) and two American Hippotherapy Association Level II trained therapists. Mane Stream's Therapy Coordinator serves on the American Hippotherapy Association Board of Directors and PATH Intl. Health and Education Advisory. Being deeply involved on a national level allows Mane Stream to be on the leading edge of developments and innovations in the field of equine assisted therapy. This level of training and

knowledge contributes to better therapy outcomes. Mane Stream also offers therapy year round, understanding that medical needs don't disappear with the changing of the seasons. An indoor arena allows us to provide therapy year round as well as rain or shine. However, we have many more options than just the indoor arena for treatment. Mane Stream is situated on a lovely twelve acre farm with an outdoor arena and access to Cold Brook Preserve, allowing for a variety of treatment areas around the farm. Mane Stream's location is close to

highways 287, 78 and 22 allowing families from NJ, NY and PA to come for therapy. Finally, our horses are the cornerstone of our equine assisted therapy program. They receive stringent screening and training protocols. Horses are specially screened for movement that is high quality for medical treatment. Many horses that Mane Stream assesses are sound, but may not have the symmetry in their movement to make the cut for the equine assisted therapy program. With these high standards, families can be assured of high quality outcomes in therapy.



Adaptive Horsemanship & Equine Assisted Therapies

Mane Stream

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40 years—From the Rail

By Nichola Redmond

Forty years of service for a nonprofit organization is quite an accomplishment, one of which we at Mane Stream are very proud. Those of you who are our supporters and volunteers should share in that pride. For a small grass roots organization to weather the vicissitude of economic turns and cultural trends for four decades is no mean feat. Unfortunately, there is a trend in charities in general and specifically organizations in our field, that more than one third fail within the first three years. Those grim statistics are not for the faint of heart. Fortunately, Mane Stream's founder, Octavia Brown and the founding

Board of Directors was made of sterner stuff. Mane Stream provides excellent programs for children and adults with special needs because of those courageous pioneers. Pioneers they were, as the then Somerset Hills Handicapped Rider's Club was the first organization of its kind in New Jersey and one of only a few nationwide. Octavia and her small supportive group blazed the trail for Mane Stream as it is today and many other organizations to the great benefit of individuals with physical, developmental, emotional and medical challenges.

Mane Stream received a solid foundation from that

dedicated and hard working hands-on group and as a result the organization flourished and our programs grew exponentially.

It was, and still is, the thousands of volunteers and donors who were responsible for carrying the organization forward to where we are today. In the almost twelve years that I have been with the organization it has been a great pleasure to watch the growth and development of

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Nichola Redmond,
Executive Director

Volunteering at Mane Stream: a Life-changing Experience

By Tina Daigle

Volunteering at Mane Stream for the past two years has completely changed my life. I have loved horses since I was a little girl, but never had the opportunity to be near them. That being said, I had NO horse experience whatsoever when I came to take the volunteer training with Mane Stream, and I

was so excited to be able to groom, tack, and just walk beside these amazing animals.

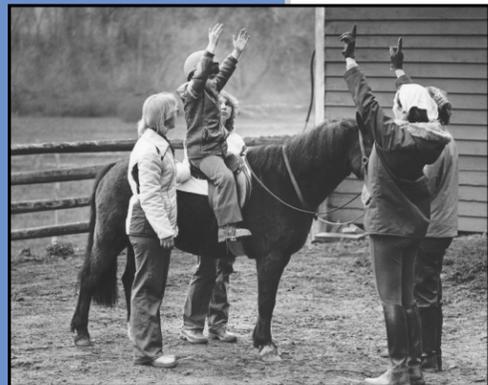
It didn't take long before I learned that Mane Stream was so much more than the horses. I started volunteering with group lessons on Wednesday nights. I have been with that group ever since, and what can I say, I

love my boys! I look forward to working with our Wednesday group every week. They have become like family to me. I cherish the smiles I get as they come in to sit with us and wait for their horses. I enjoy our chit chat as we warm up in the ring or on our walks to the outdoor. It completely

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40 Years of Unbridled Possibilities

Mane Stream, Inc was founded as Somerset Hills Handicapped Riders Club (SHHRC) by Octavia Brown in 1972. It was one of the first centers of its kind in the United States.



With a Masters of Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a teaching certification from the Cheff

Therapeutic Riding Center in Michigan, Octavia Brown moved to New Jersey and founded SHHRC. "There was no program so I decided to just create something," said Brown. With support from the Somerset Hills Pony Club (SHPC), specifically the use of some ponies, Brown started running the program one day a week on a borrowed piece of property in Bedminster. In 1974, the program became a full time

operation when Octavia moved to Crossroads Farm in Bedminster and began running the program there. She continued to do so for the next twenty years. "I did it because I love doing it," said Brown. "One hopes to have a passion for what one does."

As word about the program got out, more and more interest flooded in. "The community almost immediately embraced what this whole thing was all about," said Brown. Many were looking to become instructors, but as SHHRC was one of the first therapeutic riding centers, there were no formal training facilities around. Octavia took it upon herself to create an instructors' course, which she modeled off of the Cheff Center's training. Prospective teachers gathered around her dining room table for an eight week course. Once certified, many volunteered their time as instructors at SHHRC.

The organization has grown considerably since its inception. In 1994, with a grant

from the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, SHHRC was able to purchase its current location, a twelve acre farm in Oldwick, New Jersey. The organization initiated a capital campaign in 1996 and began construction of the new facility in 1999. The completed 15,000 square foot building, consisting of a fourteen-stall stable, tack room, indoor arena, storage area, offices and education center, became fully operational in September 2000 and the corporate name was changed to Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center. The capital campaign was completed in



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Ask the Expert - What is Adaptive Riding?

Mane Stream staff member Gina Taylor, who is our Therapy Coordinator, staff Occupational Therapist, Hippotherapy Clinical Specialist and PATH Int'l. certified riding instructor responds:

Adaptive riding focuses on gaining skills related

to horses and riding. Certified riding instructors are specialists in adapting their teaching styles to meet the needs of different learners or adapting equipment for those with physical challenges. Riding lessons focus on learning skills, making friends and having an enjoy-

able experience. Riders find that horsemanship is a lifelong process of learning and skill development. Some participants enjoy riding lessons as a social experience and others are more focused on progressing to competition.

Riding lessons focus on learning skills, making friends and having an enjoyable experience.

From the Rail - continued

the Mane Stream programs, our volunteer corps and our support base. One of the wonderful benefits of being the executive director is the many wonderful people that I meet. It has been a delight to get to know many of those of you who give of your time and finances to enable Mane Stream to thrive. I must confess though, my greatest joy has been to watch the progress of our riders and clients. In many cases I have been privileged to watch them grow up. One little boy who makes me smile every time I see him is

Erik. I met him when he was two and his mom was bringing him for equine assisted occupational therapy. Erik looked up solemnly from his stroller. Erik was not able to walk on his own and he did not speak but his interest in all that was going on was very obvious. Today, at age 10, Erik walks in to Mane Stream talking a mile a minute to anyone who will engage him in conversation, his curiosity still evident in the countless questions. As I said, I smile every time I see him and every one of our clients

and riders. How could I not? Their accomplishments, their determination and their joy in being with our horses are definitely something to smile about. There are so many amazing stories at Mane Stream. What we do makes a difference, a life-changing difference. Forty years of improving the quality of life for several thousand children and adults with special needs, that is something to be proud of. Thank you for making it possible.

Equine Assisted Therapy

So, why use the horse for physical, occupational or speech therapy? The horse provides an optimal platform for healing. Children and adults are drawn to interact with the horse. The movement of the horse provides a natural challenge for the clients' balance and posture. The movement of the horse helps the

Many children with autism... have difficulty understanding the information provided by their senses.

nervous system respond to activity requests, thus improving walking, coordination and speaking. Positive effects from the movement of the horse can also be seen in muscle tone, postural alignment, midline orientation, body awareness, stiffness/flexibility and strength.

Changes are often seen in the respiratory, cognitive, sensory processing, emotional, arousal and speech/language production functions. The equine assisted therapy setting provides a variety of sensory experience as well. The barn is full of new sights, smells and sounds. Many

children with autism spectrum disorders have difficulty understanding the information provided by their senses. Using the sensations of the horse's movement and the unconventional barn setting as a therapy tool provides an excellent chance to improve integration of the senses. In addition, the environment of the barn is a natural one and often the challenges associated with being in a non-clinical setting add additional opportunities to make treatment beneficial for the patient's social participation and community integration. These differences help make physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy even more effective.

Different from adaptive riding, equine assisted therapy is built on the medical model and is bound by state laws and each therapist's licensure. Therapy is focused on meeting a measurable goal within a set amount of time. Clients are

evaluated, participate in treatment and are discharged when goals are



Owen enjoys his time at Mane Stream.

met or progress is no longer being made. The horse is part of the treatment session and the therapists' expertise and training are used to direct the horses' movement and the client in a variety of activities and exercises.

At Mane Stream we are able to offer both Equine Assisted Therapy and Adaptive Horsemanship programs. This offers a wide continuum of options for people with special needs. Mane Stream's Equine Assisted

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Practice Pays Off for Mane Stream Rider

By Kathy Brennan

I recently had the opportunity to chat with Elizabeth Wade, who has been riding at Mane Stream for 19 years. She always loved the pony rides at fairs and was constantly asking



Elizabeth on Waverly

her mother if she could take lessons. Elizabeth admits that she was nervous at her first lesson, but also in-

credibly excited. She progressed to riding independently very quickly.

Elizabeth enjoys the challenges riding can offer. Maintaining the correct posture on the horse is sometimes difficult for her and she works hard on this skill when she rides, especially when transitioning from a faster gait to a slower gait. Elizabeth loves long, peaceful

trail rides, but cantering is by far her favorite thing to do with her equine partner.

Every year Elizabeth competes in the annual Mane Stream Horse Show. She said that it is "fun to show people what you can do." This year Elizabeth rode her way to winning the Abby Clay Rutgers Memorial Award, which is given to the high point independent rider. She won both her walk/trot equitation class and her walk/trot obstacle class riding Waverly, a recent addition to the Mane Stream herd. Elizabeth was thrilled and honored to win this award which she thought was a great tribute to her friend and previous riding partner, Abby. Elizabeth felt like Abby was there "sharing this special experience with her." When asked how it felt to win this prestigious award, Elizabeth smiled broadly and said "it feels great!"

I have been teaching Elizabeth for almost 14 years and I have never seen her ride better

than at the horse show this year. She was concentrating and working so hard on remembering everything we have talked about in lessons. I am really proud of her!

Because cantering is an advanced skill mastered by only a few Mane Stream riders, Elizabeth was asked by the judge to demonstrate cantering to the spectators and younger riders at this year's horse show. As always, Elizabeth was happy to canter and was thrilled to show off her expertise to the crowd.

Elizabeth was recently at the United States Equestrian Foundation Festival of Champions as a spectator. When asked what her goals for the future are she responded that she dreams of being a professional rider like those she saw at USEF. But for now, Elizabeth is happy cantering around the ring at Mane Stream on her new favorite horse, Waverly.

Loyal Supporter - continued

from many different walks of life who can bring a variety of talents to the table." However, not everything has changed since Mane Stream's inception. Sheila noted that the organization's core values of providing quality service to participants and the remarkably dedicated volunteers and staff have remained

steadfast. "Everyone involved has always done it for the right reasons. And that continues to be the case," she said.

In our conversation Sheila emphasized that every contribution to Mane Stream at every level has an impact. Whether an individual chooses to donate precious time to this organization as

a volunteer or a board member, or to give financially at any level, they can make a difference. Mane Stream changes lives, for the participants as well as their supporters. Sheila is proud to have been a part of the growth of this organization and is even more excited to be involved in all that is to come.

Proud to be a part of Mane Stream

By Linda Dietz

Where will I ever find the time?" That was my first thought when my friend, Ralph Tursini, asked me to join him on the Board of Directors at Mane Stream. I was in the middle of renovating our home at that point, as well as trying to get a new business up and running. All that added to standard home and family responsibilities was keeping me pretty busy. But community service and charitable giving has always been very important to our family. And I have long been a believer in this organization.

As a rider I know firsthand what time spent in the company of a horse can do for a person's well being. I know that I can go to the barn feeling stressed or depressed or just tired, and all those feelings dissipate after just a few minutes with a horse. Even if all I do is groom him. And

for the clients and riders we serve at Mane Stream that special connection with our horses is just the beginning of the benefits. The types of therapies offered here might sound familiar. But physical, occupational and speech therapies using equine assistance are truly special. All one needs to do to understand that is to observe a therapy session. Seeing the delight on the face of a child working with his therapist while sitting astride a horse made me a believer. For the most part, our clients are not really even conscious of any therapy going on. They are just enjoying the empowerment of riding high above everyone around them and feeling the gentle motion of the horse beneath them. All the while they are building a very special bond with a kind and generous animal. Yet the medical, emotional, physical, and developmental benefits

of equine assisted activities are both measurable and undeniable.

So how could I not "find the time" to be a part of all this? Here at Mane Stream we are working toward building a new facility with the goal of bringing our programs to even more individuals. The challenge to make this dream a reality is as exciting as it is daunting. But the opportunity to serve clients and riders who are on our waiting list and to develop more programs to serve even more of our community is truly compelling. We are celebrating forty years of helping people with all kinds of challenges to improve the quality of their lives and I am thrilled to be a part of this next exciting chapter for Mane Stream. It really is going to be a great ride!

Linda Dietz, President, Board of Directors



As a rider I know firsthand what time spent in the company of a horse can do for a person's well being.

Volunteering - continued

fulfills my week and if there is a week that I can't see my group, I miss them completely! Same goes for the clients that come in for the individual therapy sessions that I have been helping with on Tuesdays. You get to know their personalities, how they interact with their horses, and how their horses grow to know and love them. My favorite part is seeing how far they come in one 8 week session; not only physi-

cally, but emotionally as well. Nothing warms my heart more than when I get a big smile from a client who was bashful around me just 8 weeks prior.

Mane Stream is an amazing place. It is my serenity. It has helped so many people who have needed it, and it has helped me become a very happy person. On a side note, this girl (me of course)

who has always loved horses, has learned so much from volunteering at Mane Stream and now rides her own horses every day. Thank you, Mane Stream!!!

Tina accepts an award at the 2011 Volunteer Recognition Ceremony



Loyal Supporter Finds Reward in Service

Looking back at 40 years of Mane Stream it is clear that the organization would not be where it is today without the support of many remarkable individuals. Sheila Tweedie is one such individual. We recently had an opportunity to speak with Sheila about her experiences at Mane Stream and hear her opinions on how the organization has evolved.

Sheila has been involved with Mane Stream in some capacity for the last 38 years, almost as long as Mane Stream has been in existence. She has held just about every role within the organization starting as a volunteer in 1974. That year Sheila's son was volunteering with Mane Stream in order to get community service hours. One day during a lesson, Octavia Brown (founder and instructor) was without a horse leader due to an absent volunteer. She knew that Sheila, who was in the car waiting to pick up

her son, was a horse person. Octavia brought Sheila into the lesson and after that Sheila was hooked. Within a few months she was sitting at Octavia's kitchen table taking the instructor's course. In addition to volunteering and instructing Sheila has been a board member for the last 15 years where she has held many positions including President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Today she remains on the board as a director. Furthermore, Sheila and her husband John have affirmed their commitment to the organization throughout the years through many very generous financial gifts.

Upon reflection on the past 40 years and the evolution of Mane Stream, Sheila was quick to note how the organization has grown. When she began volunteering 38 years ago the program only offered recreational riding. There was a lot of

"winging it" involved, according to Sheila, as one would expect in an emergent program. Now Mane Stream offers not only adaptive riding, but also three equine-assisted therapies, adaptive (carriage) driving, interactive vaulting, an inclusive day camp, and school programs. "Not only are the programs offered much more extensive, but the expertise available has improved dramatically!" Sheila specifically spoke about the detailed orientations and training of Mane Stream volunteers and how it has resulted in more capable and effective volunteers. She also commented on the quality of Mane Stream's horses saying that Mane Stream staff really "takes the time to find the right horses required for such a special job." She was very complimentary of her fellow board members as well. "The expertise of the board is phenomenal," she said, "it is made up of people

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Mane Stream Hosts International Guests

On August 14-17, Mane Stream was honored to host the American Hippotherapy Association International Level I workshop. This workshop was a chance for Korean physical therapists to see how therapists include hippotherapy in their practice in the United States. The AHA faculty for this workshop were Bonnie

Cunningham, MA PT HPCS and our own Gina Taylor MS OT HPCS. Fourteen doctoral level physical therapists came to Mane Stream from South Korea for this learning opportunity. They received education about horse handling and training, including the horse in physical therapy treatments and

starting a hippotherapy organization in South Korea. On the last day of the course our own physical therapist, Ruth Nortje, PT gave two demonstrations. The Korean students found Mane Stream to be a wonderful learning facility and hope to return to the United States for a Level II workshop in the coming years.



Sheila Tweedie,
Board Member

The Korean students found Mane Stream to be a wonderful learning facility.

Unbridled Possibilities - continued

2001 when SHHRC was able to satisfy the final portion of the construction loan, providing the organization with a twelve acre farm and state of the art equestrian facility free of encumbrances.

Initially, the organization offered one program, adaptive horseback riding. In the spring of 1995, Mane Stream expanded its services to include equine assisted physical ther-

apy, followed by equine assisted speech therapy and equine assisted occupational therapy. In 2008, Mane Stream added an equine assisted psychotherapy program to their medical treatment programs that was funded in full by the Elizabeth and Baretts O. Benjamin Foundation. Today, clients have access to diversified programs which include: adaptive riding, three equine-assisted therapies: physical therapy,

occupational therapy and speech therapy, adaptive (carriage) driving, interactive vaulting, an inclusive day camp, and school programs. When asked how she felt about where Mane Stream is today Brown enthused, "I couldn't be more thrilled that it (Mane Stream) has developed into what it is and that it's got future plans which will take it even further to much wider pastures even than it has right now."

Mane Stream's "Little Bit of Luck"

By Tori Dietz

Mane Stream horses and ponies are unique and special animals



Gina Spilatro
on Lily

that make what we do here not only possible but also life-changing. Many ask us where do our horses come from? The fact is that they can come from just about anywhere. We have gotten horses from as far north as Nova Scotia and as far south as Virginia. The Mane Stream herd is not just a collection of retired old animals as some people think. It is true that many of our horses are in their second or even third careers, but by no means are they washed up old horses. The job required of a Mane Stream horse is not one that your average equine can perform. Not only does the horse have to be sound and have a very good quality of

movement, but the animal must also have a quiet and calm temperament. Anyone familiar with horses knows that this combination is extremely rare. That is why when Little Bit of Luck (or as most of us here at Mane Stream know her, Lily) was donated to Mane Stream by Nanci Urban of Fairwin Farms in 2007 we were ecstatic!

Lily is a calm and sound 13 hand gray Welsh pony mare who was born on April 2, 1990. Lily's "princess" good looks make her a real favorite with the little girls here at Mane Stream. Lily is used for both therapy and adaptive riding lessons and performs both jobs brilliantly.

Before her time at Mane Stream, Lily showed in the pony hunters and even won ribbons at the Zone 2 Finals! Gina Spilatro, now in her mid twenties, was the first to show Lily when she was around nine years old. While Lily is primarily a good natured pony, she can have a bit of an attitude. When she first began showing her Gina said Lily's "go-to move" was to stand by the rail and not budge. During Lily's showing debut Gina could barely make it through the opening circle before they got stuck on

the rail. Gina retreated from the show ring for a while and eventually, with the help of her trainer, Nanci Urban, they overcame this problem with Lily. From then on Lily and Gina went on to show almost every weekend and they usually came out with top ribbons. The two even qualified for the Children's Hunter Zone II Finals at Harrisburg, which was a tremendous feat! Gina eventually outgrew Lily and Lily stayed at Fairwin Farms for a while as a lesson pony before making her move to Mane Stream.

"In those early stages of my riding career Lily taught me a lot!" said Gina. "She was calm, and trustworthy. When aboard Lily, I was never scared. I had a wonderful connection with her." Since her move to Mane Stream many others have felt that strong connection with Lily. She keeps her riders safe and secure and she continues to be one of our most effective and reliable ponies.

If anyone has a horse or pony they think would be appropriate for our program, please contact Jen Dermody at Jen@manestreaminc.org