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From the Rail

I was at our recent spring fundraiser, the Food Truck Festival, when a young man approached me. He told me that he thought what Mane Stream did was great. He, along with all those attending the event, had just witnessed an exhibition featuring children who participate in equine assisted occupational and speech therapies, interactive vaulting and adaptive riding lessons. He was very interested because he has a friend who has cerebral palsy and could very much see her participating in a program like Mane Stream and imagined how she might benefit from it.

This happens frequently when someone is introduced to Mane Stream, whether they visit the farm in Oldwick, talk with us when we

have a "booth" at a community event, attend one of our fundraising events and see an exhibition or video or read an article about us in the local newspaper. Mane Stream and our programs have a life-changing impact on the lives of many children and adults with special needs and their families. That, in turn, has an impact on all kinds of people in the local communities. When people "meet" Mane Stream a connection is made. Sometimes the connection is with the horses, sometimes it is a connection with the people that we serve. Some people are compelled to volunteer, others to bring information about our services to someone that would benefit and others to support the work that we do through financial gifts. All of this is

what makes Mane Stream a vibrant, dynamic community of its own.

In a world where communities can be split by political, social, economic and many other tensions, it is encouraging to be a part of something that reaches out to the community and is wholeheartedly embraced. I think you will agree after reading this newsletter that not only does the community support Mane Stream but that those who support it also benefit. I hope that you too will find a connection with Mane Stream.



Nichola Redmond,
Executive Director

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Growing Up at Mane Stream



We often speak of how Mane Stream im-

pacts the lives of our participants. But what may be less understood is the effect Mane Stream has on every-

one else involved. The volunteers, staff, board members and donors are all profoundly influenced by their connection with Mane Stream.

If you have been involved with Mane Stream in the last ten years you have most likely met Melanie Dominko

-Richards. She is the current inhabitant of Mane Stream's on-site apartment and she helps take care of the Mane Stream herd. She is also the assistant counselor at Mane Stream's summer camp, Camp Cold Brook. Interestingly, Mel's introduction to Mane Stream was as a camper, when
cont. on page 7

Reaping the EAT Rewards

By Sarah Sasiak

Our sweet boy came to us 5 weeks early. Tanner was very thin and fragile but appeared to be typical at birth. But when Tanner was about 6 weeks old we started to notice something was not right. He was ultimately diagnosed with Childhood Apraxia of Speech, cognitive and developmental delays, hypotonia (low muscle tone) and ADHD.

Tanner began PT and feeding therapy at the age of nine months and has been in and out of different therapies ever since. At three he became eligible for the preschool program at school. At that point Tanner had no language at all; he could not sit up by himself or even come close to feeding

himself. By the time Tanner was three he went to school every day where specialists would work with him to help him become an independent child. We saw progress, but it wasn't until we tried Equine Assisted Therapy that we felt he truly began to shine.

At first I was skeptical about Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT), not really believing we would experience any better results than we had seen with other therapies. But we were willing to try anything that might help, and if nothing else, we hoped it would help Tanner get over his fear of animals. At the time he would scream and cry at the sight of a ladybug! For the first couple months of therapy Tanner had to be pried off my neck to get him to the pony.

But the progress he was making was undeniable. Not only did he quickly gain core strength, but we could also see a change in his general every day behavior. When he would miss a session, his behavior would be off for the

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Tanner with Mel during speech therapy.



Tanner on Prince at Camp Cold Brook Horse Show Day with volunteer, Zoe.

Ask the Expert: What is a Premier Accredited Center?

Mane Stream staff member Kathy Brennan, who is our Program Director, a PATH Int'l. Registered Riding and Driving Instructor, an Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning, and a PATH Mentor responds:

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) offers centers the opportunity to apply for Premier Accredited Center status through a peer review system in which centers must demonstrate safety, profes-

sionalism and best practices based on standards used by the entire industry. Centers that have met established industry standards are awarded Premier Accredited Center status for a period of 5 years.

Every 5 years centers must complete the rigorous review in order to maintain Premier Accredited Center status. In 2011, 226 out of 792 (approximately 28%) PATH member centers applied for and were granted Premier Accredited Center

status. Centers are scored in the following categories: administration, facility, equine welfare and management, mounted activities, ground activities, equestrian skills and medical/mental health standards. All together each center is scored on 114 standards. The center representative prepares for and works with the PATH Intl. site visitors on the day of the visit as every standard is reviewed and scored. As Mane Stream's center

cont. on page 4

Congratulations go to Mane Stream staff members Kathy Brennan, Jen Dermody and Gina Taylor for successfully completing a PATH International instructor certification practicum test to become part of the elite group of only 300 PATH Certified Advanced Level Instructors world-wide.

Still Involved - and Raising Volunteers

Fourteen years ago Marianne Saladino was reading in the local papers about a new capital campaign for a therapeutic riding center that was being built in Oldwick, New Jersey. The center, then Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center, was simultaneously running their program and finishing up construction on the new facility when Marianne decided to get involved. One day a week she enlisted the help of a babysitter to watch her daughters Kara and Casey who were one and two at the time. On her day to do errands and have a little bit of time to herself, Marianne decided to devote part of that day to the Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center. As a life-long rider Marianne felt this was a perfect place for her. The organization agreed.

next couple of years, but being an active board member along with raising her girls took up a significant amount of time. Marianne also serves as a trustee of her daughters' school, Gill Saint Bernard's, and while she remained a Mane Stream board member for many years, she took a step back from volunteering to focus on her children. Today she is an Emeritus Director of the Mane Stream Board of Directors, which means that she is no longer a voting board member, but she continues to attend the annual meetings and keep up with financial reports and developments. She is also an active member of Mane Stream's Development Committee, which organizes our fundraising events. Marianne is one of the people responsible for setting up for the events and preparing items for our silent and live auctions. She is very excited about our upcoming Annual Fall Gala, Equus XXII, which will be held at the Ryland Inn on November 16th. "Jill Friedland (board member, parent of a client, and chair of the Development Committee) is wonderful! She is really the one who makes these occasions so incredible. Honestly, I don't know how anyone can miss them!" exclaimed Marianne. Marianne loves being a part of the Development Committee and feels a sense of pride and accomplishment when Mane Stream has a successful fundraising event.

Devotion to Mane Stream seems to run in the Saladino family. Currently, Marianne's girls, Kara and Casey, both volunteer at Mane Stream as much as possible between their busy schedules of playing ice hockey, horseback riding, and navigating high school. The girls grew up with Mane Stream as part of their lives. As young children, they helped Marianne set up events and spent a lot of time at the farm watching the lessons and playing on the property. So as soon as the girls turned 14 and became eligible to volunteer they jumped right in. "It was never a question of if they would volunteer at Mane Stream, it was just a matter of when," said Marianne. "The girls do it because they love it! One time Kara and Casey were chatting about one of the clients they work with when Kara beamed and said, "That rider brings me such joy!" I couldn't believe those words just came out of my 15 year old daughter's mouth," recounted Marianne. Kara and Casey have learned so much from their volunteering and continue to look forward to their time at Mane Stream.

As someone who has been involved with the organization for more than a decade, Marianne was able to reflect on how Mane Stream has

cont. on back page

Marianne Saladino, Board of Directors, Emeritus



Tanner's mom observed: "One day, while watching Tanner's therapy, it occurred to me that these people helping him are volunteers! They come here every week to help my child. These individuals could be doing anything with their free time, but they choose to drive to this barn and help my son. I cried. I realized that Tanner is a special child and these volunteers are making a difference in not only my child's life but in our family's life as well. And they do it purely out of the goodness of their hearts."

After only a couple of months of volunteering Marianne was asked to join the committee to help organize the Grand Opening for the Oldwick facility. Soon after the official grand opening Marianne was recruited to be a member of the Board of Directors. She continued to volunteer for the



Never Too Young to Make a Difference

By Tori Dietz



Logan delivered the proceeds from her spring packages to Mane Stream where she was personally thanked by Mane Stream's Executive Director, Nichola Redmond. She is pictured here with one of Mane Stream's equine partners, Beyra.

Nine year old Logan Connolly first heard of Mane Stream at age seven when her mother, Jennifer Connolly, started boarding her horse at Red Tail Farm in Bedminster, New Jersey. Linda Dietz, the current president of Mane Stream's Board of Directors, is the owner of Red Tail Farm. After hearing about Mane Stream from Linda, Logan immediately

asked if she could volunteer with the organization. "Logan loves horses and they love her," said Linda, "All the horses at Red Tail gravitate to her. Even the more high spirited ones seem to calm when they are around her." But Linda had to tell Logan that she was still a long way from the 14 year old requirement for volunteering. Undaunted, Logan set about finding other ways to help the organization.

In addition to horses, Logan

has a love of gardening. With the help of her tutor, she came up with the idea to do a vegetable stand at Red Tail Farm and to donate all the money made from her sales to Mane Stream. She made up posters and picked and washed the fresh produce each day. Some other boarders at Red Tail even started bringing in their own produce to add to the stand. "People loved the produce and were very generous in supporting her efforts," commented Jennifer. Logan, who was eight at the time, then proceeded to write a thank you note to each and everyone at Red Tail Farm thanking them for their contributions.

Logan did not stop there. Her next fundraising plan was to create a Valentine's Day treat package for horses that she would sell at Coach Stop in Bedminster Township, New Jersey. With the help of another Red Tail boarder, Karen Detmering,

she designed and sewed together little Valentine themed bags. Tierney Sullivan, the owner of Coach Stop, donated the treats that filled the bags and then sold all the packages in her store. The packages were so successful that Logan went on to make an Easter egg treat package as well and did the same thing with those. All the proceeds from both packages were donated to Mane Stream. Logan also donated a box of items to be used at Mane Stream's summer camp, Camp Cold Brook. The box of goodies contained horse related art supplies, stickers, pencils, and books among other things. In total Logan raised about \$500 for Mane Stream!

Logan's mother, Jennifer, said Logan's philanthropic endeavors began early. "I started talking to Logan about generosity of spirit from a young age. We would go out Christmas shopping *cont. on page 6*

Ask the Expert, continued

representative I am proud to say that our program attained 100% compliance in 2008 and again in February of 2013.

Premier Accredited Center status assures participants, volunteers, donors and other professionals in the field that Mane Stream

meets or exceeds industry standards and demonstrates excellence in providing quality equine assisted activities and therapies. This prestigious achievement establishes Mane Stream as a leader in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies. Mane Stream's Premier Ac-

credited Center status allows us to not only provide the highest quality services to our participants but also to mentor potential instructors and other professionals in the industry as well as offer workshops and trainings to the equine assisted activities and therapies community.

I am proud to say that our program attained 100% compliance in . . . 2013.

Reaping the Rewards, continued

rest of the week. He would hit more, cry more and tantrums were much more frequent.

Needless to say Tanner overcame his fear of horses. In fact, he loved riding so much we decided to enroll him in Mane Stream's summer riding camp, Camp Cold Brook, where he learned about horsemanship and riding skills. Not only has riding and therapy helped develop his strength, language and improve his overall behavior, but he has gained such a sense of pride in his accomplishments. He loves to talk about "Prince" and the other ponies. EAT has helped his self esteem and has even sparked an interest in his little

sister's desire to learn how to ride like her big brother.

Tanner just celebrated his 7th birthday in May. In the last year, my boy who had no words at all for the first several years of his life, has started speaking in short, simple sentences. He is a very social, energetic child who can now express himself in ways he was never able to before coming to Mane Stream. Tanner looks forward to his Speech Therapy session with Prince every week. He walks in as if he owns the place, and immediately asks the volunteers, "Please help. Belt on, hat on." We are overjoyed with the experiences we have had and the progress that we have

seen over the three years that Tanner has been at Mane Stream. We know that the beginning of his breakthrough was the start of his Equine Assisted Therapy.

Tanner continues to thrive at school and progress. I often think about what he will do when he "graduates" from the program and how it will affect him and us. Although he will eventually have to move on, he will forever reap the benefits of EAT in his everyday life. Our hope is that children who are eligible for these therapies will have the same opportunities that Tanner was offered because the reward is far greater than we ever could have imagined.

Hank's Hope Found at Mane Stream

Mane Stream first met Hank's Hope in April of 2012. Hank was a casualty of financial distress and as a result he was underweight and his coat was lifeless and dull. Although Hank looked like a horse

that was at the end of his life, Mane Stream staff members were able to look beyond Hank's condition and see a horse with a kind eye and gentle temperament. We

knew immediately that we had to help this horse for his sake and as part of the greater equestrian community. What we didn't know at the time was that he would turn out to be not only a great addition to the Mane Stream herd but the quintessential therapy horse.



Hank's Hope
(Hank)

When Hank finally arrived at Mane Stream in June, we were dismayed to find that his condition had deteriorated. When he was put into a stall, he huddled in the back corner looking worried and depressed. The staff went to work immediately to help him become a healthier, happier horse. The vet came to check Hank for any physical problems that may have contributed to his poor condition. When nothing out of the ordinary was found, a feeding and conditioning program was agreed upon. Over time we started to see changes in Hank, not just in his physical appearance but in his attitude as well. Hank's kind and fun personality began to shine through. In the barn with the volunteers and while working in therapy sessions and lessons he was an animated and willing part of the team. He entertained everyone by grabbing puzzle pieces during therapy sessions. He also became

By Jen Dermody and Holland Kochanski

a favorite for jousting day during Mane Stream's summer camp, Camp Cold Brook. Hank would stand perfectly still while the campers enthusiastically swung their foam swords through a paper ring.

Hank now basks in all the attention he gets from everyone at Mane Stream. You can always find him hanging his head out of his stall looking for a pat from passersby. His good quality movement and calm demeanor have made him a favorite among participants, therapists, volunteers and instructors. Many of the Mane Stream horses are working on second "careers." Along with a second career, Hank also got a second chance. Everyone at Mane Stream is thankful for such a wonderful horse. He has exceeded all of our expectations and is now a priceless member of the Mane Stream team.

Triumph in Every Stride

By Michelle Gounaud

Often our greatest source of encouragement comes from parents of Mane Stream participants.

Our daughter Devan has been participating in the therapy program at Mane Stream with Gina (her amazing Occupational therapist) since she

was about 2 yrs. old. She is now 8 and has made incredible progress over the years, far surpassing anything we could have imagined. Because of Devan's diagnosis of

Aicardi Syndrome, including life-threatening seizures early in her life, she lost almost all the use of her right side eg. raising her hand, walking and crawling as well as eating regular foods. To summarize briefly: Devan is legally blind, *non-verbal* (more words every day now), ambulatory (with assistance), has various medical issues, she is developmentally & physically delayed, and has significant motor function impairments.

With the unfailing guidance of her therapist, assistants AND various 'ponies' Devan gradually and miraculously began using her right side again. We are 100% confident that without the amaz-

ing program at Mane Stream, Devan would not have gained these almost "out of reach" successes. Mane Stream's program is a 'gift' to our very special daughter who is a happy, smiley, snugly, sometimes 'opinionated' and beautiful 8 year old girl.

This child wakes up every day with a smile, and a determination to live her life to the fullest. With all the obstacles she faces on a daily basis she meets her challenges with enthusiasm and courage. Ensuring Devan has the happiest and most fulfilling life for HER is our goal. The wonderful people at Mane Stream have been a huge part of her life and her triumphs.



Devan when she began therapy at Mane Stream, with Gina and Kathy.

I also wanted her to see that people come in all shapes and sizes and come from all kinds of different backgrounds.

Never Too Young to Make a Difference, continued

for children who's families might not be able to afford presents. She would walk down all the aisles and pick out a shopping cart full of gifts she thought children of various ages would like. She started doing this at about two. I was so proud of her because not once did she try to buy a gift for herself. She seemed to really grasp that these were for other children and she got a big charge out of doing it. We wanted her to understand that not everyone had what she might have. I also wanted her to see that people come in all shapes and

sizes and come from all kinds of different backgrounds. Little did I know how hugely valuable this lesson would become. When Logan was in first grade she was diagnosed with some sensory and learning differences. Because we had spent so much time talking about how people have different abilities and talents and special gifts and that we have to accept and celebrate them for who they are (not what we think they should be) she was better able to accept and put her own challenges into a more positive light. I also

think that because she had experienced the feeling of being able to help others and make a real positive difference in people's lives she felt empowered and gained confidence."

Logan is a remarkable young girl who has proven that you are never too young to help others. "I like helping people because it is plain fun. It is fun because it makes a difference in the world," said Logan. Logan Connolly's generosity and enthusiasm is truly inspiring and Mane Stream is lucky to have such a dedicated supporter.

Growing Up at Mane Stream, continued

she was 8 years old, at the very camp she now helps to run. Mel fell in love with Mane Stream and was eager to continue her association with the organization by becoming a vol-

unteer. She ended up volunteering after school every day; Mane Stream became her second home.

"My

mom worked at the General Store (located down the street from the Mane Stream farm) and every day after school I would walk up Route 517 to volunteer," commented Mel. Today when asked what role at Mane Stream gave her the most satisfaction Mel stated that volunteering was by far the most rewarding.

She formed special bonds with the staff and the participants and grew up with an intimate understanding of people with disabilities. "Because I had been involved with Mane Stream as a camper at quite a young age and because I was there on such a regular basis, I never really thought of people with disabilities as being any different from myself. They were just my friends." Mel's enthusiasm and dedication resulted in her receiving the President's Award for Volunteer Service from the Bush Administration in 2004. This prestigious award requires the recipient to perform over 100 hours of volunteering in a 12 month period. Mel was also the recipient of the Distinguished Student of Hunterdon County Award in 2005.

Volunteering at Mane Stream was actually Mel's favorite hobby and it served as a springboard to other worthwhile activities. After high school, Mel attended Seton Hall University. When it was time to pick a major for college, Mel's decision came easily. Largely based on her experiences at Mane Stream, she decided that she wanted to

pursue a career as a special education teacher. Mel graduated in 2011 with a B.S. in Education. Mel continued her education with graduate school and graduated in May with her M.S. in Speech and Language Pathology.

Mel also added to her credentials in February 2013 by becoming a PATH International Registered Instructor. Mel's relationship with Mane Stream has played a significant role in shaping who she is today. In high school Mel's free time was either spent at Mane Stream or helping people with disabilities in other capacities. Her studies and career choices thus far have been heavily influenced by her long time involvement with Mane Stream. "I feel as though I would not have become the person that I am today without the experiences that Mane Stream has given me over the years. The unbridled possibilities that Mane Stream offers their clients has given me unbridled passion to help those with disabilities and to realize how much can be accomplished when caring, empathetic, and passionate people work together to create something great. I am honored to be a part of such a wonderful organization!"



The old Mel with a previous member of the herd, another Dart

Calendar of Events

- Mane Stream's summer camp, **Camp Cold Brook**, runs weekly from June 24 through August 16 at 83 Old Turnpike Rd., Oldwick, NJ 08858. Camp runs Monday-Friday from 9am-2pm.
- Sunday, October 6: **Mane Stream 5k**, Mountain Park, Bernards Township, NJ 07920.
- Saturday, November 16: **Equus XXII**, The Ryland Inn, 111 Old Route 28, Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889.

How You Can Help

- If anyone has a horse or pony they think would be appropriate for our program, please contact Jen Dermody at Jen@manestreaminc.org
- Did you know that you can donate your American Express points to Mane Stream? All those points sitting there collecting dust can be put to a good use! They will translate into cash that can help Mane Stream in its mission and you receive the full tax deduction. Go to our website Donations page and follow the directions there.
- 17,000 companies match charitable gifts - does yours? Check with your HR department for a Matching Gift form and double your donation. Watch our website for a helpful link coming soon.

Mane Stream On Trend With Spring Event



Jacob and Luc on Beyra With Gina

Mane Stream hitched a ride on the au courant gourmet food truck craze with our spring event on June 1, 2013, held in Whitehouse Station. The event committee led by Jill Friedland and Melissa Tassé put together a tour of delight for the senses at the Food Truck Festival: a moving culinary event. The evening included offerings from seven gourmet food trucks and a dozen different microbrews courtesy of New Jersey Craft Beer. Attendees worked off some



The festivities after dark

of the calories on the dance floor and were treated to an exhibition of equine assisted therapy, interactive vaulting and adaptive riding from Mane Stream participants. We are grateful for the hard work of all those involved in organizing and supporting this event which raised \$45,000 for Mane Stream programs.

Still Involved - and Raising Volunteers, continued

evolved over the years. "The organization has grown in so many ways and I credit Nichola (Nichola Redmond, Executive Director) with a lot of that growth," commented Marianne. She also spoke highly of the current board of directors as well as the Mane Stream staff, "The board and staff are all full of wonderful ideas and are really passionate about Mane Stream." Marianne went on to talk about fundraising for Mane Stream and the constant financial struggle to keep running our current programs as well as developing and expanding our

offerings. "Program expenses are increasing and we need the community's support now more than ever," said Marianne. Mane Stream's program income only covers about 20% of the annual budget. We must raise \$700,000 this year through donations and grants in order to keep providing our services.

"As a rider myself I always knew that riding was good for the soul, but now the movement of the horse and its impact on the body is recognized by the medical community as having significant benefits, particularly to

individuals with disabilities," noted Marianne. At Mane Stream we witness first-hand the impact the horse has on our riders and therapy clients and you can't help but be inspired by each individual story. "Even after 14 years I am still brought to tears when I hear parents of therapy clients and riders talk about how Mane Stream has changed their families' lives," said Marianne, "Mane Stream is truly an amazing place and I feel so fortunate to be a part of it! Mane Stream is a part of who I am now."



Mane Stream

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Providing *Unbridled Possibilities* for Children and Adults with Special Needs

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Thank you for your gift. Please know you have truly made a difference.

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