



THE "NEIGH"-BORHOOD NEWS

from Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Volume 12, Issue 1 -- December 20, 2011

Here's the latest...

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A Year of Giving

by Terry Jacoby



Dream Catchers is a place of extraordinary joy, generosity and healing – for our students, their families, our staff, our Board Members, and our volunteers. In spite of a challenging economy, Dream Catchers was honored to receive many, many donations – some small and some large – but all *priceless*.

Dream Catchers' history is filled with stories of extraordinary giving. We are most fortunate to have a state of the art facility built on 22 beautiful acres – all debt-free – thanks to the generosity of the Sikich Family, Angie

The First Ever Parent Week at Dream Catchers was a success!

by Melissa Conner



We have very dedicated parents who faithfully bring their students out to ride week after week, and who demonstrate great perseverance and patience through all kinds of situations. As a staff, we decided that we should give the parents an opportunity to have a brief ride on a horse in order for them to appreciate what their children experience each week and to help them better understand the therapeutic benefits of riding. Also,

it added a bit of fun to the lesson week as most riders got a big kick out of seeing their mom or dad on their horse! This was a small, simple gift we could give to our parents this season, and we heard nothing but good comments about the experience. Most were amazed at the challenge riding presented to their balance and how much they felt the impact of the movement in their core muscles. We also heard comments like, "There is so much to think about at one time – no wonder this is so good for them!" The whole week was such a hit that we have decided to make it an annual event. So parents, if you missed out this time, be sure to take advantage of the opportunity to ride next time! If you have any questions about any of our programs, please feel free to call Melissa, Operations Manager, at 757-566-1775.

2011 Cori Sikich Award of Excellence

by Nancy Paschall

Harriet Jolly was awarded the Cori Sikich Award of Excellence for 2011. This award is given annually to the employee who has made significant contributions to meeting our mission to provide therapeutic riding and other horse related activities in a caring and safe environment over the last calendar year. Employees of Dream Catchers are polled to determine who they think is most deserving of this award over the past year. Harriet Jolly was the clear winner!



Johnson acting as Trustee for the Roy R. Charles Trust, and several other donors. Through the years, current/former board members, staff, and volunteers have shared our mission and our programs with the local community and throughout the nation. Our donors and our supporters are as diverse as the populations we serve, but all united in the belief that horses and therapeutic riding facilitate miracles for very special children and adults.

Throughout 2011, we hosted events such as Bridles & Bow Ties to support our \$700,000+ annual operating budget. Bridles & Bow Ties raised the most we have ever raised and we appreciate all of the event sponsors and participants. We want to especially recognize our major sponsors for Bridles & Bow Ties 2011 - Land 'Or International, Dominion Virginia Power, and Riverside Regional Medical Center!

Dream Catchers was also the recipient of donations from events such as the 10th Annual The Governor's Land Run for the Brain, The Ford's Colony Ladies Golf Association's Annual President's Charity Tournament, The Historic Triangle's 2011 Rotary Golf Tournament, Design Alternatives Flea Markets, The Williamsburg Winery's Annual Holiday Celebration and many more! Local corporations and civic organizations sponsored fundraisers to support our scholarship programs and answered our "call" for sponsorships! Dominion Virginia Power sponsored a corporate work day and donated the labor and some of the materials to construct the lighting for our outdoor riding arena. Phillips Energy, Inc. donated labor and provided discounts so our generators could be installed just in time for Hurricane Irene's power outage. The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation provided a significant grant for major upgrades to our facilities. The Park Foundation continued its support with yet another very generous donation in 2011. Donors hosted a cocktail party and invited their friends so we could share first-hand the power of our programs. And hundreds of donors are writing checks in support of our Annual Appeal.

Two of our volunteers donated over 100 volunteer hours to create our incredible 2012 Calendar, and Fred and Donna Malvin are this year's presenting sponsor for the calendar. Each month of the calendar has a generous monthly sponsor and several parents and donors bought calendar days to fill our calendar pages.

Some donors send us a check each month to support our care of their favorite horse, some

Harriet started working at Dream Catchers on April 18, 2007 after Melissa Conner, her daughter, suggested that she would be a good person to help with administrative duties. Harriet and Melissa shared not only an office but a desk until we moved into the administration building later that year. Harriet is often the first voice of Dream Catchers, and as the saying goes, "you only get one chance to make a first impression"—Harriet always gives a fabulous first impression. She makes sure our print pieces are proofed—as a graduate of the College of William and Mary with a degree in English she makes sure we give a strong first impression. Her patience with people who call and aren't sure exactly who we are or what we do is always appreciated. Harriet is more than just the voice; she is often the first face of people who "drop by". She is adept at giving tours, answering questions, handling all the donations, and selling merchandise.

The candidates who come to Dream Catchers for their PATH Instructor Certification have a tremendous amount of contact with Harriet. She makes sure they have submitted all their paperwork and meet the standards to proceed with testing for their certification. They look forward to meeting her in person since they say she has "held their hands" through the certification process.

Harriet is unflappable, flexible and detail oriented. Quiet and unassuming, she is a key member of the staff and a big part of what makes the Dream Catchers Family so strong!

Harriet's modesty came out when she received this wonderful award. She said "Thank you so very much for this award. It has been an honor and a pleasure to be associated with Dream Catchers for the past four and a half years. I have watched major growth and accomplishments during this time under the leadership of an outstanding staff and Boards. I fully support and believe in our mission statement."

Student Spotlight - Mary Kate Burns

by Melissa Conner

Pictured here is Mary Kate Burns, who has ridden at Dream Catchers for 13 years. She is with Janie, her horse that she is currently riding. Mary Kate received her ornament with Janie's picture on it last week during her lesson, and is excited to take it home to hang on her own Christmas tree.

Mary Kate lives in Mechanicsville, and makes the drive to Toano each Saturday morning for her riding lesson. Mary Kate knows her

routine so well, that one week when lessons were cancelled she woke up her parents early to go to the barn already outfitted in her riding pants and riding shirt and she didn't want to sleep in! She looks forward to her time at the barn, and you can tell because of the big smile on her face as she walks down the breezeway every Saturday.

As with all of our students, we are very proud of what Mary Kate has accomplished in her riding skills. Even though she is soft-spoken and has challenges with her verbal communication, she tells her horse to "walk on" and "whoa" each week. She knows how to use her reins to weave through cones, and she can demonstrate a two point position over ground poles.

We look forward to seeing Mary Kate each Saturday morning, and can't wait to see what she will accomplish next.



send us a special donation when they inherit money, other folks send us checks in honor of or in memory of someone special in their lives.....Each one of these donations overwhelms us when we realize how many families are touched by our mission.

Thank you for being part of our success and for being a part of our family. We are eternally grateful for your generosity and your faith in our work. Dream Catchers has many quiet heroes who together create extraordinary miracles!



"From the Horse's Mouth"
by *Tori Conner*

The Sleigh Horse

Have you ever walked around in Colonial Williamsburg and seen those beautiful horse-drawn

carriages? The carriages are very pretty as they wind through the cobblestone streets, but have you ever looked at the horses pulling them? The carriages that they are pulling behind them are very heavy, so obviously the horse has to be big and strong. Most of the horses that pull these carriages are draft horses.

Draft horses can be used for many things with their big feet and muscular build. Before we had machines for work, the draft horses would work in the fields pulling plows. Many places throughout the world today you will still find these types of horses used in farming. Big draft horses also make fantastic therapy horses because of their kind nature and ability to carry weight easily. The average draft horse weighs approximately 2,000 pounds. Most draft horses are known for their gentleness and ability to tolerate distractions well.

We are lucky to currently have two draft horses at Dream Catchers – Bonnie, a 17 year old Belgian mare who has been hard at work for the past three years working with our riders, and Lydia, a 15 year old Percheron mare who is currently here for a 30 day trial. If you see our beautiful draft horses out in their fields or at work in a lesson, you will be in awe of not only their impressive size, but their willingness to be gentle and help their riders meet their goals.

Volunteer Spotlight - Amberley and Grayson Mills

by *Gwen Zimmerman*



Amberley is 17 years old and a senior in high school. She is homeschooled and is looking forward to going to college next year. Since she has a flexible schedule, Amberley has been able to volunteer many hours with us at Dream Catchers over the past three years. You will see her horse leading, sidwaling and she has worked as a camp counselor. She says, "Dream Catchers has taught

me so much and I have been inspired to major in psychology in college because of my experiences here." In addition to enjoying her time in the barn, Amberley is involved in the gifted program at William & Mary for theater.

When Amberley noticed that we always had a need for extra volunteers, she recruited her brother, Grayson, to start coming out to Dream Catchers with her. He is 15 years old and is also homeschooled, which means he also has a flexible schedule during the day. Even though his sister was the one who first encouraged him to come, Grayson admits that he loves coming out to work at the barn. "One of my favorite things is seeing the smiles on the students' faces," he says. Grayson is working towards his Eagle Scout badge for Boy Scouts and has earned many of his service hours here at Dream Catchers.

We are always looking for committed volunteers. For more information, please visit our website at www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org or call Gwen at the barn at 757-566-1775.

Year-End Giving

by *Fred Malvin, CPA and Board Treasurer & Terry Jacoby*



Are you interested in saving taxes for Tax Year 2011? Dream Catchers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your donation of cash, by check or credit card will be acknowledged with a tax letter. We fundraise all of our annual operating revenue (over \$700,000!) through donations, events, fundraisers and program fees. (Grants fund only specific

projects on a limited basis.) • Please don't delay – December 31, 2011 is the final day to ensure that your donation to Dream Catchers will receive a 2011 tax benefit. Check with your employer – your donation may have even greater impact if your employer has a matching gifts program! • Charitable IRA Rollover Provision Expires 12/31/11 - Individuals who meet eligibility guidelines can benefit from a provision to make gifts from their IRAs. Donors must be over age 70 ½ and may donate up to \$100,000 as a direct transfer from their IRA to Dream Catchers. Dream Catchers wants to make you aware of these limited time opportunities. Dream Catchers cannot provide tax advice and we encourage you to consult with your tax advisor.

Tater's Christmas Shopping List

Tater is shopping for Dream Catchers merchandise for his barn friends.....

He is going to fill one of our new coffee cups with cocoa and peppermints for his girlfriend Lark....



Even though there are all types and sizes of horses in the world, and we have quite a variety here in our barn at Dream Catchers, it is hard not to be in awe of the big, beautiful draft horses.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 18, 2011 - Jan 6, 2010 • NO LESSONS
Dec 27, 2011 • No Board Meeting
Dec 27, 2011 • Jr Volunteer Horse Camp - Dec 27th - 30th
Jan 07, 2012 • First Day of Winter/Spring Session 2012
Jan 30, 2012 • All Annual Updates Due (Physician's & Participant)
Mar 24, 2012 • NO LESSONS due to Region 3 Conference
Apr 02, 2012 • NO LESSONS - Spring Break - Apr. 2 - 7
May 18, 2012 • NO LESSONS - May 18-19
May 19, 2012 • BRIDLES & BOW TIES 2012
Jun 16, 2012 • Last Day of Winter/Spring Session
Jun 19, 2012 • Make Up Lessons Only - June 19-22

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. Our riders pay only a portion of the actual cost of lessons. The balance is generated through fundraising. Your gift enables Dream Catchers to maintain a safe and thriving equine facility -- happy, healthy horses; knowledgeable, nurturing instructors; and well-trained, conscientious volunteers. We depend on your financial gifts as well as your precious gift of time! We are always looking for volunteers of all ages to support the dreams that our humble organization helps come true!

If you would like to sponsor a horse, sponsor a scholarship, make a donation in honor of a loved one or friend, or would just like to give, please send your donation to:

Dream Catchers
P.O.Box 1261
Williamsburg, VA 23187

Call 757.566.1775 or donate online at www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org

Thank you for your continued support.

Dream Catchers on FACEBOOK!

Tater thinks Nobie needs a 2012 calendar to keep him where he needs to be since he's easily distracted....

Bob really likes Tater's black Dream Catchers baseball cap and has asked Santa for a brown baseball cap....

And Tater is going to give one of Deb DeLong's reprints of Jake's portrait to Sassy for Christmas!

Horse Show Week and Chili Cook Off

by Melissa Conner

Since our usual Annual Student Horse Show was cancelled in late August due to Hurricane Irene, we decided to celebrate our students' accomplishments in a different way this year. During the last week of October, we celebrated "Horse Show Week" where each student had the opportunity to participate in a "class" during their usual lesson time and to win a ribbon based upon a skill that they had been working on recently. Parents, volunteers, staff and the riders all got excited about this week, and many even dressed in their show attire!

We had an official show judge (one of the instructors) for each lesson hour, and we made a point of encouraging spectators to come out and watch. It made for a fun, festive feel to the barn and indoor arena, and the riders could sense the excitement as we got to celebrate them during this special week.

In addition to Horse Show Week, we made it our fall "Volunteer Appreciation Week" as well which culminated in the Fall Festival and Chili Cook Off on Saturday, October 29th. Not only were there goodies in the Volunteer Office all week long, compliments of both the Volunteer Committee and the Staff members, but volunteers received red tote bags at the Chili Cook Off as a small "thank you" for all that they do. Chris Addotta was our winner again this year with her spectacular beef and bean chili.



The Chili Cook Off was also the time for us to recognize our Volunteers of the Year. The 2010-2011 Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Judy Vitale for her outstanding service and many hours of volunteering; the Jr. Volunteer Award was given to both Michael and Meagan Williams for their commitment to our riders and horses, and the Exceptional

Volunteer Award was presented to Shelby Crosby for being both an outstanding volunteer and student. We are blessed to have such an outstanding group of volunteers who make what we do possible, and we want them all to know how much we love and appreciate what they do to help make dreams come true. For more information on our programs and volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org

The Director's Corner

by Nancy Paschall

Holiday Thankfulness

This Holiday season makes me acutely aware of the many things I have for which to be thankful. Let me rephrase that—there are “no things” that I am more thankful for than those intangibles – the laughter of our students and the smiles of their families, the passion and dedication of the staff, and the patience and abilities of our horses. This year has brought so many successes—presenting the research on autism and therapeutic riding at the PATH international conference in Lexington Kentucky; an art show pulled together in ten days for Deb DeLong, Melissa Conner receiving her Advanced Instructor certification, Kim

We want you!

Click the Link and [BECOME A FAN](#)

Show your support for Dream Catchers with your purchase of t-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, travel mugs, tote bags, caps, coffee mugs, calendars and more. Stop by the Admin. building to say hello and do a little shopping.

Please send comments or questions about this newsletter to dcadmin@dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org

Need a printed copy? We will be happy to oblige!

Wendell, Deb Hill, Melissa Conner all receiving their certification as PATH site visitors—new students who trusted us to put them on a horse safely including our oldest student to date- at 80 years old. I am thankful our friend Joan is on the mend, her generosity and spirit are too big for her heart to handle, our volunteer Joan who is mending from a broken hip, our volunteers of the year—Judy Vitale, Meagan and Michael Williams, and Shelby Crosby....

I am thank FULL for each of you. Our students who trust us and the horses, their families who make sacrifices of time and money to come out each week, for each horse who has kept the riders safe and yet challenge them to learn new skills, or at least not lose ground. I am blessed to be part of an

organization that helps dreams come true through the best Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Junior Board an executive director could ever hope to have. The people who volunteer their time and talents are essential to what we do. I am blessed, beyond words, to have each and every member of the Dream Catchers staff all working toward accomplishing the mission. Regardless of whether they are full-time or part time, their dedication to providing therapeutic riding and other horse related activities in a safe and caring environment is phenomenal. To each and every donor- thank you. EVERY success experienced through Dream Catchers is because of you. You have a choice to support any organization you wish, I am truly thankful for every single dollar you donate – you are making Dreams Come True.



***From the Dream Catchers' family to yours - may you have a Happy and Safe Holiday!!!!
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!!!***

This Issue of The "Neigh"-Borhood News Sponsored By:

Matthew Meyer and the Williamsburg Winery



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<http://www.williamsburgwinery.com/>

Thank you for supporting Dream Catchers!

Dream Catchers

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