



## THE "NEIGH"-BORHOOD NEWS

from Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Volume 3, Issue 1 -- February 10, 2009

Here's the latest . . .

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### Two More Receive NARHA Certification

Congratulations to Debbie Hill and Gwen Zimmerman who recently achieved their NARHA Certified Registered Instructor status!

We are proud to say that Debbie and Gwen bring the total to 10 NARHA certified instructors on our staff. It takes an extensive knowledge of horses and disabilities, a commitment to therapeutic riding, perseverance in acquiring the necessary student teaching hours and a high-level of personal drive in performing the necessary riding skills in order to pass the exams. The entire process often takes more than a year, and requires travel to a NARHA Premier Center for a three day workshop and then the two-day exam.

This is a monumental achievement and we are proud of both of them! Way to go, Gwen and Debbie!

### Holiday Horse Camp

by Joanne Owens, age 11 and Tori Conner, age 10



We

attended Dream Catchers Holiday Horse Camp for Junior Volunteers in December. We both liked it because the counselors were helpful and nice and we learned a lot. A counselor named Emma helped us make different horse crafts and she was a really good teacher too. We also really liked the horses that we rode. They were very cooperative and we now understand how to take care of them. We enjoyed a horse named Mr. Darcy. He is thoroughbred, chestnut horse. We know this because our counselor, Emily, helped us learn about the different types of horses and different kinds of riding.

We also learned about the special needs that students at Dream Catchers have to

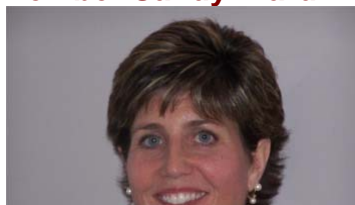
### Save the Date for Bridles & Bow Ties

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center will host *Bridles & Bow Ties 2009*, an annual event held to benefit the Dream Riders Fund. This fundraiser offsets the cost of providing therapeutic riding to children and adults with special needs.



This year's event takes place on **May 30, 2009** at the riding center located at 10120 Fire Tower Road, Toano, VA. Tickets are \$100 per person or \$175 per couple. Corporate and individual sponsorships are available. For further information please contact Sissy Allen at (757) 566-1775. You may also visit our Web site at [www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](http://www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org).

### Dream Catchers Welcomes New Board Member Sandy Ward



Sandy Ward has been a resident of Williamsburg for 20 years. She and her husband, Tom, have two children, Caroline (age 15)

live with. We liked this because we got to experience how they feel when they are on a horse. One time when we rode we had to wear a blind fold to pretend that we are blind, and we got really dizzy. Then we pretended that we were deaf by putting cotton balls in our ears when we rode. We had a great time, learned a lot about horses and what it is like to work at Dream Catchers. We really hope to go to another camp soon!

by Mark Monroe, age 15

At first, I thought, "What are you doing giving up 3 days of your winter break to do a camp at Dream Catchers?"

That question was quickly answered early on day one. I realized that I really like the people at Dream Catchers; they're smart, funny, and interesting. I also noted that I really enjoy being around the horses and the barn; there is always something new going on. Most importantly though, I realized that my participation in the winter training camp, meant I was helping to keep alive the "dream" in Dream Catchers....without volunteers, there's no one to help the kids who ride, and that's just not acceptable.

by Katie Monroe, age 17

I loved helping out with the Holiday Junior Volunteer Camp as a counselor this past December. Everything was so organized and we all worked together so well everything went very smoothly. It was great working with the kids and seeing them laugh and have fun while simultaneously learning. It reminded me of how special the holidays are and how nice it is to be able to help out year round with such an organized and wonderful establishment. All of the volunteers at the end of the camp agreed in that it was more like fun than work.

### Tater Still Brings Smiles to Little Faces



Tater was previously owned by Teresa Kohout of the Laughing Place petting zoo in Chesterfield, Virginia. Tater worked at many children's birthday parties during the

and Patrick (age 12). Sandy is an alumna of the College of William and Mary. She earned her M.Ed. and Ph.D. in School Psychology from the Pennsylvania State University. She worked as a school psychologist in the public schools in central Pennsylvania for two years prior to joining the faculty at the College of William and Mary in 1989. Currently, she is a full professor and director of the School Psychology program at the College of William and Mary.

Sandy first became aware of Dream Catchers through her daughter, Caroline, who is an avid horse enthusiast and rides at Cedar Valley Farm. As a school psychologist Sandy is keenly aware of the educational, social, and emotional needs of children with disabilities and was thoroughly impressed with the resources that Dream Catchers offered to children and families. Sandy's involvement with Dream Catchers began when Nancy Paschall and Wade Johnson requested her assistance on a grant they were working on to study the impact of therapeutic riding on the language development of children with autism. Sandy looks forward to her continued involvement with Dream Catchers through consultation on future research proposals, as well as a contributing member of the Board of Directors.

### Student Highlight



Mollie Trainum, (age 11) lives in Gloucester, and is one of our very special students at Dream Catchers. Mollie began riding with us in 2005, soon after Dream Catchers opened our doors at our new home on Fire Tower Road.

Since beginning her lessons at Dream Catchers, Mollie has grown by leaps and bounds in her riding ability, her knowledge of horses and horsemanship, her maturity and her desire to serve others. Not only is Mollie one of our riders of whom we are extremely proud, but she is also one of our Junior Volunteers. She works in the barn once a week cleaning tack, mucking pastures, scrubbing out water buckets and doing other barn chores. She tells us that she looks forward to her time at the barn and that she would rather be here than anywhere else in the world.

Mollie is one of ten Dream Catchers' students who traveled with us to Lexington, Virginia last October to take part in the annual TRAV Horse Show (Therapeutic Riding of Virginia). She wowed us, and everyone at the show, with her beautiful equitation, her amazing concentration, and her elegant poise as a show rider. She placed in all of her classes, bringing home an array of beautiful ribbons. She plans to continue to show with us, and we are excited to see what she will accomplish in the future.

We continue to be impressed by Mollie's willingness to face

six years he was there. Tater is a Welsh cross pony and is 11 years old. He came to Dream Catchers in June 2008 and went right to work in our lessons.

Some interesting facts about our smallest equine staff member:

- Tater knows his name and comes when called;
- is very curious and prefers to investigate new things himself;
- loves Ben (barn crew member) and will often whinny when he sees Ben approaching;
- recently figured out how to dismantle the fence at Mr. Seely's. Blackie and Nobie were present, but are pleading the 5<sup>th</sup> to avoid blame in this matter;
- won Best in Show at our Student Horse Show in October 2008.

**We love you Tater! Welcome, welcome little one!**

### **Dream Catchers Instructor Receives Lifetime Achievement Award**



The Peninsula Sports Club of Newport News recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award for Gymnastics Coaching to Skip Mollenhauer. Skip is a NAHRA certified instructor at Dream

Catchers. Skip coached gymnastics for 33 years with a record of 338 wins to 13 losses. She has won many district, regional and state awards over the years.

In addition to her achievements in gymnastics Skip has received recognition from the Arabian Horse Association as Reserve Champion for adult riders in District VI, which includes all of the Hampton Roads area including Dinwiddie and Isle of Wight. Her horse Baron won a perpetual trophy for the most outstanding horse in the state. Dream Catchers academy student Tori Connor, as well as Skip, rode Baron this show season.

Congratulations Skip on your many

any challenge placed before her and to tackle it with confidence and determination. She is the only student who has ridden every horse, in every type of saddle possible, and continues to seek out more challenges. She has come a long way, and inspires us all with her smile and easy-going cheerfulness.

We are privileged to join Mollie on her journey as she grows up, and we look forward to seeing her tackle new obstacles and experience new things along the way.

### **Have a Heart for Merlin**

For those of you not familiar with therapeutic horse Merlin's "side job," Merlin has been part of career day for students at South Morrison Elementary School in Newport News, VA for the past couple of years. A woman veterinarian uses Merlin to demonstrate equine dental procedures. For at least 10 times over a couple of hours Merlin puts up with having a big metal contraption fitted in his mouth to keep his mouth open while the vet shows the girls how she cleans teeth.



"Girls of Excellence" is a 5th grade Citizenship Program of South Morrison Elementary School. This year they chose Merlin as their group community project as a thank you to him for his service. To raise money for Dreamcatchers and Merlin, they've been working on potholders since last September.

It was the relationship with The Junior League of Hampton Roads, with its emphasis on service learning, that moved the girls to do a "Service Learning" project. The girls are giving back to the community, and they are learning compassion and empathy for students with special needs.

The girls sold the potholders at a PTA meeting and in the school foyer. "We already have over \$90! My goal was at least \$100 and now, I know, we will exceed this...I think Dream Catchers is a perfect match.... Girls love horses..." said Ann Robinson, the school's guidance counselor and club overseer.

### **Fabulous Volunteer Pam Miller**



As one of Dream Catcher's longest continuously serving volunteers, Pam Miller has seen our center grow from just a few horses and a few students each week to where we are now – and she can witness first-hand how far we have come! Pam, who works at Jamestown High School, began volunteering with us in

accomplishments including your most recent lifetime achievement award!

## Stop and Shop

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

## Benefit Schooling Horse Show March 1, 2009

Entry fees benefit Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center. We invite the local horse community to participate. A few of Dream Catcher's students will have the opportunity to participate in special classes as well.

Formal attire not required

Indoor arena

Hunter/Western/Gaited/Saddle Seat

Judge Laura Stopper

Concession

Used Tack Sale

Registration 9:00 a.m.

Show starts 10:00 a.m.

Location: Dream Catchers, 10120 Fire Tower Rd., Toano, VA 23168  
(757) 566-1775

This Issue of The "Neigh"-Borhood News sponsored by:

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Please send comments or questions about this newsletter to Sissy Allen  
[sallen@dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](mailto:sallen@dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org).

June of 2003 when Dream Catchers was located off Old Stage Road on rented property at the Holt's Farm. With a leaky roof, muddy paddocks and virtually no parking areas, the small staff and a few volunteers like Pam held the program together and continued to serve students from Williamsburg and the surrounding areas while we waited for a new home. Pam Miller was an integral part of the Dream Catchers family then, and continues to be today, through all of the growth and changes.

Just like in the old days, Pam continues after all these years to dedicate herself to the care and keeping of our very special therapists – our horses. Believe it or not, she claims that she would rather clean a stall than her own house! She is at the barn every weekend as part of our weekend barn crew, feeding, mucking, grooming, blanketing, picking muddy hooves, bringing in horses from bad weather and turning them out to pasture in good weather. No matter what the conditions outside through every season year in and year out, Pam is there. She is a rock, and never fails to show up and give her all, even on days when most people would rather stay in bed and sleep late.

We owe a lot to Pam, as she has been with us through thick and thin, enabling our horses to continue to serve therapeutic students day in and day out. She is at every Dream Catchers event, fundraiser, horse show, yard sale, volunteer event, etc. to support us in every way she can. She was recognized in 2005 as the "Volunteer of the Year" but her commitment didn't stop there as she has continually gone above and beyond simple volunteerism in her dedication to the mission of Dream Catchers.

Thank you, Pam, for your heart, your courage, your commitment, and for sharing yourself with us, our students, and our horses. You are very special to us!

For more information on volunteering, please visit our Web site a [www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](http://www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org).

## Junior Volunteer Spotlight

For Adam Woodson, volunteering is a family affair. He, along with his older sister, Sarah, and his mom, Pam, have been regular volunteers with Dream Catchers for almost four years. They are the usual barn crew for early Saturday mornings, and since they live so close to the barn, are usually the first call when we need a volunteer in a pinch. Since Adam is homeschooled, he has a flexible schedule and is always willing to help out at all hours of the day as needed. Not many weeks have gone by when Adam has not been at the barn 2, 3, or even 4 times per week. He earned his Advanced



Volunteer status over a year ago and was the youngest volunteer to do so at the time.

Adam, age 15, was an integral part of our Junior Volunteer camps last summer, and served as a counselor for the Holiday Camp in December. He has performed many roles at Dream Catchers – anything from barn crew to being an official "Equine Environmental Engineer" at parades, to horse leading, sidewalking, and doing odd jobs around the barn -- and does them all with a willing heart and a gracious spirit. He is dedicated to the mission of Dream Catchers, and serves our students well week in and week out, always with a smile on his face.

Other than volunteering at Dream Catchers, Adam plays baseball for a homeschool team in Richmond. Two years ago they went to the Little League World Series. He is also active in his church, goes to the Ukraine on an annual mission trip each August with his family, and also serves as a Buddy with special needs teenagers through Capernaum.

We are fortunate to have Adam as a leader among volunteers, and we are grateful for all that he has done for Dream Catchers over the years. We look forward to a few more years with Adam before he heads off to college!

### **Horse Sense**

Did You Know?

Horses have gallbladders.

The horse's brain occupies less space in his head than his teeth.

Horses are not color blind.

Horses have better memories than elephants.

The oldest horse lived until he was 62. (His name was Old Dave, 1760-1822.)

The stocking is the leg marking that covers most of the horse's leg.

Thrush is a disease of the hoof.

Adult female horses have fewer teeth than a male.

When a horse is lame it is still cool to hang out with him!

### **How You Can Help**

On behalf of the children and families benefiting from your generosity, we send a heartfelt thanks to those who responded to our annual appeal and made a financial gift to Dream Catchers.

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Our riders pay only a portion of the real cost of lessons. The balance of our operating costs 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.

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

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

or donate online at [www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](http://www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org)

Thank you for your continued support.

Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center, 10120 Fire Tower Road, Toano, VA  
23168 [www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org](http://www.dreamcatcherswilliamsburg.org)