



HOPE'S HIGHLIGHTS

HOPE's Riders Celebrate

On April 26, 2006, HOPE held its second Year-End Awards celebration at Helping Hooves Farm. Participants received medals for their achievements during the 2005-2006 season. Volunteers were recognized for the invaluable assistance they provided during therapy sessions, and the Jordan H. Klausner Memorial Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Megan Rosga by Jordan's mother, Casey Glant.



Derek Akey receives his medal from physical therapist Carol Huegel.

A fresh perspective on this event from Luis Rios, husband of board member Amanda Walnes Rios:

"A couple of weeks ago my wife asked me to accompany her to a picnic/awards ceremony at HOPE, and I was actually looking forward to it. My wife has been a volunteer at HOPE for some time, but due to our conflict in schedules I have only been able to accompany her during two sessions. I'll be the first to admit that I did not know what HOPE was really about. I guess I thought of HOPE as an outdoor doctor's office that utilizes horses in lieu of

machines and computers. Which in part it sort of is, but it took a special day to realize that that was just the beginning of what HOPE really is. See, being able to accompany my wife on only two sessions I was able to see how hippotherapy helped and affected but only one person. Being at the awards ceremony let me see how it affected many people, which was almost overwhelming. I sat down to eat and began to observe everyone including staff, children, parents, friends, and family. It wasn't until that moment, looking into the children's and parents' eyes as they stood up to receive their awards that I could only begin to realize what this organization meant to them. The happiness on the children's faces together with the show of gratitude and pride from their parents is something that I will never forget, and it gave me a better understanding of what HOPE really is."



Katie Ling enjoys the delicious food at the awards ceremony.



Shevon Kaufman with mother and son receives her award.

HOPE - HOorses helping PEople, Inc. is a 501 c-3 not-for-profit organization whose mission is:

- To provide a safe and enjoyable environment where individuals with special needs benefit from developmental, therapeutic, and educational equine-oriented activities.
- To improve the individual's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social skills through equine-assisted therapy.
- To build a cooperative link within the community through educational opportunities.

HOPE Executive Board Members:

- ♦ Carol Huegel, PT, HPCS, President/(352) 331-3966 hippopt@aol.com
- ♦ Cathi Brown, MOT, OTR/L, Treasurer/(386) 961-9479 cathi@wildblue.net
- ♦ Beth-Ann Rau, M.Ed, CCC-SLP Vice-President/(352) 591-9523 bethannrau@yahoo.com
- ♦ Amanda Rios Walnes Secretary/(352) 495-1596 AWalnes@cs.com

HOPE's Inaugural Kentucky Derby Party

On May 6th, Saturday 2006, HOPE held its Inaugural Kentucky Derby Golf Scramble and Party at Haile Plantation Golf & Country Club.

The day started off with an 11:00 AM tee time for the Golf Scramble. The golfers enjoyed the day's beautiful weather as they played 18 holes. I Love NY Pizza provided lunch for golfers and volunteers. All the golfers received a goodie bag filled with treats from our wonderful sponsors. The top three teams were awarded trophies, and the golfers received a variety of prizes presented by WTK's radio personality, Storm Roberts.

Following the Golf Scramble, the Kentucky Derby Party got under way. Before watching the "Run for the Roses," guests had the opportunity to bet on horses in the race by drawing from several race pots, enjoy the delicious appetizers and buffet dinner, peruse the silent auction items, and listen to the bluegrass sounds of "Sweetwater Special," a band of P.K. Yonge students.

The race was thrilling, and everybody enjoyed cheering for their horses! Once the race ended, the casino action heated up; the casino was sponsored by Kelly & Richard Fiorello and MTC Restoration Services, Inc, and was a smash hit! Jaaz Arayasolano and Florida Casino Parties' professional service ensured that everybody had a great time. Some of HOPE's finest friends and family volunteered their services as dealers for the gaming tables, and it seems that everyone had a blast! The atmosphere was exciting! The Roulette wheel was spinning, cards were flying at the Black Jack and Texas Hold 'Em tables, and you could hear the cha-ching of a winning slot machine.



Above: Trish Thoburn & Shevon Kaufmann enjoy a game of black jack with Chuck Larson & Gloria Miller.

Below: "Sweetwater Special" entertains guests.



Golfers receive their second place trophies from Storm Roberts.

Guests received "funny money" in lieu of cash to gamble with for the evening. "Funny money" could be used at any game, with attendees purchasing more along the way. Their winnings of chips or tokens were then turned back into "funny money" to purchase chances in a raffle for some fabulous prizes and door prizes, including four one day passes to SeaWorld, a UF football hat autographed by Danny Wuerffel, and a slot machine donated by Florida Casino Parties.

For those who chose not to play the casino games, there was still a lot of action with the silent auction. Guests tried to out bid each other to win incredible items including a soccer ball autographed by Rod Stewart, a CD set autographed by Billy Joel, a Billy Donovan signed basketball, and a football autographed by Urban Meyer.

HOPE is already planning next year's event. Instead of the day of the Kentucky Derby, however, we'll be bringing the Preakness to Gainesville. Save the date May 19th to plan to enjoy a wonderful event.



Carol Deuel & Kelli Ross show off their derby hats as they prepare to watch the race.

Thank You to the many businesses and individuals whose donations helped to make the 2006 HOPE Kentucky Derby Party & Golf Scramble a success!



Experienced players and beginners alike had fun at the casino tables.



Our youngest golfers enjoyed the day.



Kelly Fiorello explains the rules of roulette.

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Volunteer Spotlight

Megan Rosga—HOPE's volunteer of the year

For the past two years I have been volunteering for the amazing therapists and patients that make up HOPE. When I first inquired about the program through an ad in the paper I never knew how dedicated I would become to the therapists, horses, patients, and overall the entire HOPE program.

Although I came to HOPE with years of horse showing experience under my belt, HOPE opened up my eyes to an entirely new aspect of equines. As a UF senior planning to attend UF's physical therapy school next year, HOPE has helped me to reinforce that being a physical therapist is my ultimate goal. The therapists have taught me a lot, but the remarkable patients I have come to know have taught me even more.

My time at HOPE has been spent participating in dozens of sessions, and recently I have become a fellow volunteer coordinator at HOPE. I also enjoy riding Max, Howie, and especially PJ when they are in need of some exercise.

HOPE has become a huge part of my college experience. I am convinced without this incredible program I would not have been able to solidify my future plans for professional school. I hope to remain in Gainesville for physical therapy school (at UF) and to continue my involvement with the HOPE program for years to come.



Volunteer of the Year Megan Rosga (center) enjoys the year-end awards celebration with (from left to right) Stephanie Furness, April Hugar, Megan, Elijah Thomas, Amie Capozzi, & Kathy Thomas.

HOPE's Fabulous Volunteers

Volunteers are crucial to the success of our program. They help with grooming the horses, cleaning the stalls, tacking and untacking, exercising the horses, cleaning the barn, helping with the therapy sessions as horse leaders and sidewalkers, as well as countless other tasks. HOPE could not function without them.



From left to right—Sophia Barufaldi, Amber Brown, Ashley Dull, & Missy Bowers.

We would like to say a huge "Thank You!" to the following people who volunteered during the Spring & Summer semesters: Melissa Adams, Dan Alcorn, Sofia Barufaldi, Alison Behlau, Ainsley Bone, Missy Bowers, Jacquelyn Brenner, Amber Brown, Bea Burrige, Krista Callery, Amie Capozzi, Rachel Clark, Ryan Clary, Michelle Chance, Meghan Connor, Deyanira Corrales, Alisa Corser, Melissa Crease, Samantha Csabai, Claudia Cuadros, Ashley Dull, Michelle Firsching, Stephanie Furness, Kala Gamble, Krystle Anne Gans, Jamie Garner, Sam Goldstein, Emily Hoffman, Brook Holman, Vietnu Huynh, Katie Johnson, Corry Knudsen, Erin McGuin, Ashley Moore, Caitlin Morrow, Susann Nagel, Andrew Norman, Krista Ott, Christina Pitcher, Kimberly Pouk, Megan Rosga, Julie Schlegel, Natalie Slepski, Holly Smith, Sharon Stewart, Brooke Taylor, Patricia Walker, Amanda Walnes, Brittany Ware, Stephanie Willis, Carol Zarzecki, Laura Zoellner.

Rider Spotlight

Nick Thoburn

Something special has taken place for my son Nicholas (and me) every Wednesday afternoon for the past two school years. Wednesdays are different than other days for Nick. His younger brother stays at school to participate in chess club or some other after school offering. Wednesdays are just for Nick. We don't head straight home and we don't get right to that homework. We take a wonderful detour.

On Wednesdays we head toward Williston. While it might not seem like a really long drive, in some ways it feels like a million miles away. Any tension or stress left over from a long and exhausting day at school just seems to melt away as we make the drive to Helping Hooves Farm or "The Barn" as we call it. Nick and I don't talk a lot on the way; we just seem to soak in the peaceful surroundings as we head out of town.

Wednesdays are reserved for one of Nick's favorite friends, Carol Huegel, or "Miss Carol" as he calls her. Carol is a wonderful physical therapist of course, but we think she is much more. Carol has known Nick since he was a preschooler and she has a special way with him. Physical therapy can be hard work and at times it is very demanding for a kid such as Nick, but Carol seems to know just how hard she can push Nick and has lots of tricks for motivating him.



Nick feeds PJ a well-earned treat after his riding session.



Nick gets a ride from his new friend PJ.

Among the highlights on Wednesday, is seeing the horses. Nick has ridden J.J. for several years but started working with P.J. recently. That has been a fun change for him and P.J. is a great therapy horse. Nick is especially happy if I remember to bring treats so he can feed the horses before he leaves.

Practicing social skills and building relationships are other important aspects of Wednesday afternoons. Nick enjoys the interaction with the volunteers, especially those who are able to talk about video games while he rides! Nick also looks forward to seeing two special people at the end of his sessions. Brandy has ridden in the slot after Nick for the past two years, and he enjoys visiting with Brandy, her dad Bill and their dog, Amber. Amber gives great dog kisses! This has become a rewarding part of his routine.

One day last winter as we were preparing to leave at the end of Nick's session, two visitors who had been observing Nick's session thanked us for letting them watch and told me what a smart, great kid Nick was. As we drove home all happy from another productive session with Carol, I realized that is one of the aspects of hippotherapy that I love for my son. Besides getting the physical therapy he needs, he really has a chance to shine on Wednesday afternoons. Folks at the barn understand his limitations and try to build on his strengths. If he is not having a great day, they go with the flow and work with him. Many children with special needs can be a challenge to work with, but on Wednesdays, Nick just feels like the great kid that he is!

Thanks to everyone who has made those Wednesdays possible.

—Trish Thoburn

New Additions to HOPE's Board of Directors

This spring, Andrea Trombini resigned her position as secretary on the Board of Directors because of increasing demands on her time at work and while planning her wedding. Although the board lost a member, at almost the same time, it gained two new members. Beth-Ann Rau joined the board as Vice-President and Amanda Walnes Rios replaced Andrea as Secretary.

Beth-Ann Rau is a Speech-Language Pathologist in the Marion County schools in Ocala, FL. She received her B.S. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Auburn University in June 1999. She received her Master of Education degree in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Georgia in May 2003 and her Certificate of Clinical Competence from the American Speech Language Hearing Association in July 2004. She is currently completing the necessary requirements to be a registered therapist with the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association.



Beth-Ann with Brandon Ling and Howie during a therapy session.

Outside of her life as a clinician, Beth-Ann is a fun-loving southern girl, having grown up in Atlanta, GA. She is happily married, and has an ever-expanding menagerie that includes two dogs (Synapse and Ginger), three cats (Marigold, Aubie and Penelope), two turtles (Kudzu and Mudpie), and a bunch of fish. Besides taking care of the critters and the husband, her interests include photography, gardening, cooking, camping and traveling.

Despite this broad scope of interests, however, most of her extracurricular activities have an equine theme. For the past six years she has spent most Saturdays helping out at Mill Creek Farm's Retirement Home for Horses in Alachua, Florida, which is a haven where abused, abandoned and elderly horses live out the rest of their lives roaming around pristine pastures. She has also volunteered at the equine neonatal intensive care unit at the University of Florida's vet school during foaling season, and has been volunteering at Mosswood Farm in Micanopy, FL since April 2005, where she started taking riding lessons for the first time in her life.

Beth-Ann began volunteering at HOPE in the fall of 2005. After volunteering for a semester, she began providing Speech & Language Therapy services at HOPE in January 2006 and will continue to provide therapy services during the 2006-2007 season. Beth-Ann loves being able to combine her passions for horses and speech/language therapy at HOPE. She can be reached at bethannrau@yahoo.com.

Amanda Rios Walnes was born in Fairfax, Virginia, where she lived all her life, near her grandparents who had three thoroughbred horses. She was riding as soon as she could walk and had the benefit of the riding expertise of her father, grandparents, uncle and particularly her Aunt Kim who competed in the International Horse Show and on the U.S. Olympic Equestrian team. At 11 (or so), she leased a horse and joined the local Pony Club.

At the beginning of high school, Amanda's parents bought her a beautiful Arabian which she kept at a nearby barn. She spent many hours taking riding lessons and eventually discovered Parelli training. She also began volunteering at a therapeutic riding center. After she saw how much the children enjoyed the horses, Amanda was hooked. Even though she was not trained as a therapist, equine therapy has long been a love of hers.

After graduating from James Madison University with a bachelor's degree in business, Amanda soon met her future husband, Luis Rios. Because Luis was in the process of finishing his doctorate at the University of Florida, Amanda moved to Gainesville, Florida, in 2003. Moving was stressful and she knew that horses were her stress relief. She needed and wanted to continue her passion for horses and people with disabilities through equine therapy. Her search led Amanda to HOPE.

Amanda has volunteered with HOPE for the past two years helping in sessions and exercising the horses, and she not only loves working with this organization but believes in what they are trying to do and how they are doing it. Amanda can be reached at AWalnes@cs.com.



Amanda with her husband, Luis, enjoy the year-end party and awards ceremony.

Giving to HOPE

In order to provide the best possible services to our participants, HOPE relies on the generous donations of our friends, families, and community partners. As you consider how you might be able to give to HOPE, we have a few tips to make giving easier:

- **HOPE is in need of sponsors for its 2007 calendar. The calendar sponsors help offset the cost of printing. Full-page sponsorships are \$500, and half-page sponsorships are available for \$250.**
- Many employers offer matching funds to match your donations. Check with your employer to see if they offer matching funds to make the most out of your gift.
- HOPE is now part of the University of Florida Community Campaign. Employees of the University of Florida can donate to HOPE through payroll deductions. You must designate HOPE as the charity where you wish your contributions to be sent. You must re-select HOPE every year.
- All four HOPE horses are seeking sponsors for 2006-2007. A plaque with the sponsor/business name will be placed by the horse's stall.
\$2500/year will help to provide: feed, supplements, hay, shavings, immunizations, and regular veterinary needs
- Sponsor a rider \$100 per month covers facility fees for a hippotherapy participant
- Our wish list currently includes:
 - desktop computer & laptop computer
 - refurbishment of the round pen
 - copier/scanner/fax machine combo
 - Telephone
 - Covered arena
 - minifridge
 - letter-sized file cabinet with lock
 - Gazebo for family observation area
 - LCD Projector

Significant donations given for above items will be honored with a displayed plaque

Meet HOPE's Farm Managers

In late May, HOPE went in search of new farm managers. This time the search found two dynamic individuals, who will be a terrific team and invaluable assets in the operation of the farm.

Ryan Clary has been volunteering for HOPE for over a year and is extremely excited to have the opportunity to be one of HOPE's farm managers. He is originally from Chardon, Ohio, a small town northeast of Cleveland and has been in Gainesville for several years while working on his B.A. degree at UF. Ryan has already completed his A.A. degree from community college following 4 years serving in the Navy. Ryan can be reached at r_clary@hotmail.com.

Becca Huy was sitting in the saddle before she could walk.

She enrolled in 4-H at age seven, then Pony Club where she found the sport of three-day eventing in which she currently competes her horse Montana.

Becca came to Gainesville three years ago as an "undecided" freshman at UF. After her first week of classes she suffered a traumatic brain injury while competing. During her recovery she saw a speech pathologist for a short time before returning to UF a month later, and a new interest in the field of rehabilitation gave her a direction for her education. Becca graduated this summer with her bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences & Disorders and hopes to stay at the University of Florida for graduate school next fall. Becca can be reached at cowchipss@aol.com.





9722 SW 153rd Avenue
Archer, FL 32618

Phone: (352)495-0533
Fax: (352)331-3966
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