

HOPE - HOrses helping PEOple, Inc.
 9722 SW 153rd Avenue
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Our Mission Statement

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.

Board of Directors

Amanda Rios Walnes, President
 Cathi Brown, Secretary
 Megan VanRysdam, Treasurer
 Christine Aytug
 John Chancey
 Mark Crews
 Peter VanRysdam



HOOFBEATS

Winter 2009



HOPE has had an exciting year and we wanted to tell you about everything that has happened in 2008 and our plans for 2009. We have a new horse, a new board member, a new executive director, and even a new instructor, although we are sad to see our instructor, Becca, leave.

Hi, I'm Kristen Shimeall and I'm the new executive director here at HOPE. I am very excited to be involved with this organization as it combines my passion of horses, children and helping people. I haven't been here very long but I have already gotten to see what an awesome group of volunteers we had this semester. We hope they decide to join us again this coming year.

My first experience here at HOPE was the fall festival. I had a lot of fun and I was happy to see what a success it was. I plan on putting a newsletter together every few months to keep you updated to the happenings here at HOPE. I hope you enjoy this edition and make sure you sign up for our electronic newsletter and check our website often for updates.

Kristen

Rider Spotlight: Dale Ginder

Dale is a spunky blue-eyed six year old. He loves legos, his dogs and his brother. He also has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Several people recommended HOPE to us when Dale was diagnosed. After some research we learned that hippotherapy was highly recommended for boys with Duchenne. We started this past summer. The farm is so special to Dale. He finally has an activity that is his and that he can excel at. He seemed at home immediately from the start. He has an affinity for all the horses and does not play favorites. I secretly think Harry is his favorite. Cathi senses his needs and has helped Dale improve in many areas. The emphasis is on what Dale CAN do. Dale does not realize it is "therapy". He is always so proud of himself. He loves being involved in everything from the grooming, choosing the tack, to the riding and the game playing. He really loved hosing the horses down in the summer! I think he has hosed down a couple



of volunteers as well. This experience is such a boost for Dale's self esteem. He thrives from all the attention he gets. It is such a sight to see him riding off with his "harem" walking with him. He is so comfortable here, we can tell by how relaxed he is with everyone and how he "hams" it up on a regular basis. We are thankful for HOPE and most importantly the staff and volunteers that make it possible. It has been a positive force in Dale's life and our life as a family.

The Ginders



HOPE Joins with Dale's Fund

Cure Dale's Duchenne Fund has been established with the Gainesville Community Foundation, a non-profit, tax-exempt public charity. Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy research is extremely under funded. Only five cents of every dollar collected by the Muscular Dystrophy Association goes to Duchenne, even then only a portion of that five cents goes to research.

HOPE would like to help Dale Ginder and other boys like him by donating half of all general donations during the months of February and March to the Cure Dale's Duchenne Fund.

Please consider donating to HOPE during these months to not only support our program, but to really make a difference in Dale's life and other boys who face the same future.

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Volunteers Needed for 2009

HOPE is always looking for dedicated volunteers to assist with lessons, therapy and horse care. Volunteers are relied upon during each lesson and therapy session to ensure the safety of the participant. Horse care volunteers are needed every day of the week, including holidays, to feed, groom, and ride. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please contact Amanda Rios Walnes at awalnes@gmail.com or call us at 352-495-0533.

Buy Your HOPE T-shirt at our NEW Online Store, A Bit of Hope

You can now buy t-shirts and other HOPE merchandise at our Ebay store, *A Bit of Hope*. Help support HOPE by purchasing something from the store. Check back for new items frequently. <http://stores.ebay.com/A-Bit-of-HOPE>

www.horseshelpingpeople.org

The 2008 Horsin' Around Fall Festival is a Success!

We hope you were able to attend our Fall Festival, as it was a hit and a huge success for the organization. Not only did we have about 400 people in attendance, but we brought in over \$1600 during the event. The Fall Fest was started in the fall of 2007 as an attempt to draw community members and their families to the farm for a fun day of family activities. If you have been to HOPE, you know how beautiful the facility is and how wonderful a fall afternoon can be. The board members of HOPE put together a low cost event this year that attracted many families with children.

Hayrides, a hay maze, games, crafts and even the Sun Country Sports Gym Bus helped make the day special. Kids carved pumpkins for a great year-long ice cream prize from Ben & Jerry's. The adults even got into the spirit with a pie bake-off. The Williston Junior Horseman's Drill Team put on a spectacular show too with their junior members showing off their riding and drill team skills. Mark your calendars for 2009, as HOPE will surely be hosting this family fun day once again in October.



The Newest Member of the Herd: Mason

Mason joined the HOPE herd in January of 2008 on a free lease from his owner, Maggie Machen. Mason is a very personable horse who enjoys attention, but is no longer able to event with Maggie. She thought he would be happiest working in a program where he gets attention on a daily basis and can participate on a less competitive level. Mason is a tall guy at over sixteen hands and is ready for some adult riders to give him a workout.

Mason is not currently sponsored through our Horse Sponsorship program, but for \$200 a month, you could ensure his basic equine needs are fully supported.

Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center and HorseMPower Partner with HOPE

Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center is partnering with HorseMpower and HOPE to offer four free equine-facilitated psychotherapy workshops for survivors of sexual violence. The workshops use human-horse interactions and activities to help the participants work through victimization issues.

Sessions are conducted by Dr. Marilyn Sokolof, Licensed Psychologist, and Memree Stuart, M.L.S, Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and are held at the HOPE farm. The next session will be held March 28th. If you are a survivor of sexual violence and would like to experience the healing power of horses, call Rita Lawrence at 352-264-6764 or toll free at 1-866-252-5439 for screening and additional information.

We are hopeful this partnership can continue in the coming year and be a positive element in the lives of those who have dealt with sexual abuse and violence.

What is Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy?

Duchenne muscular dystrophy is the most common fatal genetic disorder diagnosed in childhood, affecting approximately 1 in every 3,500 live male births (about 20,000 new cases each year). The Duchenne gene is found on the X-chromosome and it primarily affects boys; however, it occurs across all races and cultures.

Duchenne results in progressive loss of strength and is caused by a mutation in the gene that encodes for dystrophin. Because dystrophin is absent, the muscle cells are easily damaged. The progressive muscle weakness leads to serious medical problems, particularly issues relating to the heart and lungs. Young men with Duchenne typically live into their late twenties.

Duchenne can be passed from parent to child, but approximately 35% of cases occur because of a random spontaneous mutation. In other words, it can affect anyone. Although there are medical treatments that may help slow its progression, there is currently no cure for Duchenne.

* Information obtained from the Muscular Dystrophy Association, www.mda.org



Hello & Goodbye

Farewell and good luck to Farm Manager and Instructor, Becca Huy

Becca Huy has been part of our team since 2006. Starting as HOPE's Farm Manager and later becoming our first therapeutic riding instructor to teach lessons, Becca has also been pursuing her Master's in Speech Language Pathology. The time has come for Becca to finish up the last steps of her Master's and move on to an externship outside of Gainesville. Becca has been a dedicated Farm Manager and has taken wonderful care of all the horses. She will be missed by all of her riders in the therapeutic riding program. We wish you the best Becca and appreciate all you have done for HOPE!



Our New Instructor, Amy Anderson

Amy Anderson has joined the HOPE team as a therapeutic riding instructor. She has been volunteering since 2006, assisting with occupational therapy and riding lessons. Amy has a BA in Sociology from the University of Florida and is currently pursuing graduate school for a Master's in occupational therapy. Her life-long love of horses and desire to integrate equine activities with therapy led Amy to HOPE. Amy is quoted as saying, "At HOPE, it is fulfilling to witness the enjoyment and physical benefits that kids and adults get from horses. I am grateful to have found such a wonderful blend of my interests while contributing to HOPE and the community."



New Board Member, Christine Aytug

Chris Aytug joined HOPE's Board of Directors in August of 2008. She grew up riding and loving horses in New Jersey. After obtaining a BS in Zoology and an MBA from Duke, Chris and her husband, Haldun, moved to Gainesville. Currently, Chris is the Director of Marketing and Sales at Florida Biologix. She has 3 cats, is riding a friend's great Connemara/TB and is working on raising a 2 year old Trakehner/TB filly. Chris's goal is to work to help the organization in any way possible and to get as much support from the community as possible.



Plan Ahead for 2009

April 4th, 2009 - Fresh Feast on the Farm fundraiser

On April 4th, 2009 at five o'clock in the evening, HOPE will be hosting a very special fundraiser. The focus of this elegant event is to bring the community together by enjoying quality local food, prepared by local people, while dining "family style" in the middle of our beautiful 40 acre farm.

We hope to bring awareness to our programs and show how the community can support our mission. We've set a fundraising goal of \$10,000. These funds will support HOPE's current therapy and riding programs and will also contribute to the development of new initiatives that will reach more people in our area. These new programs include acquiring two miniature horses to bring to hospitals to visit sick or disabled children and adults and a program directed to aid veterans and service men and women through equine assisted therapy.

The event will be truly one of a kind. We look forward to seeing all of you there! More information about the event and how you can participate can be found on the event website, www.feastonthefarm.com. Tickets are \$50 per person and program sponsorships start at \$100. Both are available for purchase via credit card or Paypal on the event website.

May 9th, 2009 - Natural Horsemanship Clinic, by Avo Kiviranna

Bring your horse to experience Avo Kiviranna's educational instruction of "the path of least resistance." Avo Kiviranna, well known trainer and natural horseman, will be teaching this workshop on May 9, 2009 at UF's Horse Teaching Unit. The \$100 registration fee will completely benefit HOPE. The session is open to 15 individuals and their own horse. Auditing with no horse is open to an unlimited number and is \$10. Check-in begins at 8 a.m. and the workshop will run until 5 p.m. Participants are encouraged to arrive at the HTU early for check-in and be ready to start training at 9 a.m. sharp.

To register for this workshop, please visit <http://avokivirannaclinic.eventbrite.com>. Questions? Call Kristen Shimeall, HOPE's Executive Director, at 352-495-0533. A map and directions to the Horse Teaching Unit are available on the website.

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 28:** ACEL Kickball Tournament, Alachua Co. Fairgrounds
- Mar. 21:** Giddy Up Gators 5k Run/Walk
Support our new Horses for Heroes program
www.ufsota.com to register
- Mar. 28:** Crisis Center Session; To register, 1-866-252-5439
- Apr. 4:** Fresh Feast on the Farm fundraiser
www.feastonthefarm.com for info & tickets
- Apr. 16-19:** Festival of the Horse, Fla. Horse Park, visit our HOPE table
- May 9:** Natural Horsemanship Clinic, Register, <http://avokivirannaclinic.eventbrite.com/>
** Visit www.horseshelpingpeople.org for exact event details.

E-Newsletter - Sign up!

HOPE will be starting an electronic newsletter in 2009. This will help save printing and postage costs, but keep supporters and participants in the know. Our 2009 goals include adding a veterans program, hospital visitations, and other new ventures.

Keep up with our growth and find out how you can be involved by registering for our electronic mailing list. Just visit our website, www.horseshelpingpeople.org, and click on "Sign Up for the E-Newsletter."