

Free S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders, Inc.

Special People in Riding Therapy

April 2003

What Are You Doing May 18th?

Our Grand Opening will be held from 1 to 4 PM on Sunday May 18.

We need people to help with parking, selling logo items, Silent Auction booth, set up and clean up, assist with the wagon rides, sidewalk during the riding demo, bake bar cookies or horse head cookies (we can provide the cookie cutter), sell raffle tickets, and more. Call 920-924-9920 to state you interest.

There will be horse drawn wagon rides, a Silent Auction, the start of our 5th Annual Raffle (you can even meet "Daddy," the miniature horse that is one of the prizes this year), light refreshments, barn tours, therapeutic riding demo, and more. Maybe even a guest appearance by Buffalo Bill Cody and Annie Oakley!

Update for Volunteers

In an effort to resolve the problem of too much sand in the arena, 30 yards or 1½ inches of sand has been removed from the entire arena. Salt, which is a binding agent and helps to retain moisture, was then added. These changes should make walking in the arena easier for riders, horses, volunteers and instructors while we continue to help riders gain confidence and improve posture.

If you were one of those who had to discontinue volunteering because of difficulty walking in the sand, we welcome you back! Thanks to those who shared their concerns about this issue with us.

Want To Win...a 2003 Harley Softail Standard?

Just send \$5 for 1 ticket or \$20 for 5 tickets to: FSR Raffle, PO Box 1291, Fond du Lac WI 43936-1291 with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Tickets stubs will be mailed to you. Winners will be selected at the Ant Hill Mob Motorcycle Show and Dance on April 27 in Manitowoc. A portion of the proceeds will benefit FSR!

Award Winners!



Mary Narges, FSR Co-Founder and Director (left) and Kathy Fleury, FSR Volunteer (right).

Congratulations to **Kathy Fleury**, FSR Volunteer and **Mary Narges**, FSR Co-founder and Director, each of whom were recently recognized by the Arc of Fond du Lac.

Kathy was recognized for her special achievement as a person with a disability who has made great progress to reach goals towards independence during the past year.

Mary was recognized as an "individual who has successfully advocated on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities to greatly improve their quality of life."

The awards were presented at the Arc of Fond du Lac Annual Recognitions Banquet on February 27.

F

rom your
Director

Hold on to your britches! We are about to embark on a roller coaster ride with the start of this season. We will have our Grand Opening to show off with pride the fruits of our labor to the public, our donors, interested individuals and supporters on May 18. You will learn more about his event elsewhere in this newsletter. As always, we appreciate any help you can give us with this and other events.

It's been years since we were a part of the Forest Mall Community Bazaar, but we plan to be a part of this Spring's Sale on April 11 and 12. Let us know if you would like to help our public learn more about us as we sell marionettes, give out information and more.

We have already started working on the 13th Annual Ride-A-Thon scheduled for August 16 and, if you haven't already guessed, we need lots and lots of help with that fun event.

This is also the year we will be going through the re-accreditation process and we will be subject to a site visit sometime this summer. Won't you come along for the ride! There is something for everyone to do!

Mary Narges

Wanted

Items, Services, and Opportunities to raffle or auction at our Grand Opening or 13th Annual Ride-A-Thon.

Call 920-924-9920. This is your chance to help us put smiles on faces and hope in hearts!

FROM THE RIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

Introducing **Christa Eiler**! She attends Theisen Middle School where her teacher is Mrs. Marcy. Christa is in Special Education and has the diagnosis of Down's Syndrome. Her favorite subjects are art and music. Christa loves music as a hobby and sings every day before school and at different times after school.



Christa's favorite movie is *Spirit*, because it is about a horse. Her favorite TV show is *Seventh Heaven*. Christa likes FSR not just for the horses, but also the cats. She is enjoying the relationship she is developing with the other riders and the volunteers. Her favorite horse is Sonny.

Christa has 2 older brothers, 20 year old Justin and 23 year old Erik and older sister, Diana Helm who is 17. Her younger brother, Christian, is 10 years old. We thank Christa for introducing FSR to her older brother, Erik, who is a concert pianist. This led to his decision to do the Valentine Benefit Concert for FSR!

When Christa enrolled in FSR, her mother hoped Christa would gain a sense of new and great achievement. "Christa is emerging as a more confident young lady and flourishing in the joy of riding horses," says her mother. "The program will only serve to continue to edify her in the development of self-image and to gain and maintain needed motor skills while experiencing the sense of adventure all human beings need to experience to know purpose and fulfillment." We enjoy being a part of your adventure, Christa!!

Can You Help?

FSR will have a booth at Forest Mall on the April 11 and 12 during the Spring Community Charitable Organizations Craft Sale.

We will be selling our marionettes, Apple Cookbooks, logo items, Eaton's Pizza Coupons, and our new FSR note cards.

We need people interested in working 2 or 3 hour shifts. Families can help by taking a shift! Call 920-924-9920 for more information.

To Give Away

Two rolling saddle racks, each hold 2 or 3 saddles, call 920-924-9920

Message from Sheila

I would like to have past volunteers go through a refresher course this year as I think it is a valuable safety practice. I would also like to get a skills sheet on file for everyone. (This is new and will not be required again!) You can choose to go through a regular session or choose to go to a "refresher" class that will move at a quicker pace. Here is a proposed schedule for **April 19th. Training:**

9:00 - 10:30 Horse Handler Training Certification Class: Open to those who have already been through one horse handler training course and wish to be handlers during the 2003 riding season. We will review the basics, update you on what is new for 2003, and assign you a new color coded designation based on the skills you demonstrate.

10:30 - 12:00 Horse Handler Basic Class: Open to anyone who has served as a class side walker during a previous season and wishes to become a Horse Handler during the 2003 riding season. We will cover all the basics needed for you to safely and effectively lead horses during riding sessions. You will then have an opportunity to demonstrate your skills and earn your designation "yellow".

1:00 - 2:30 Side walker Training Class: Open to anyone age 14 or older who wishes to become a class volunteer. This class is required to begin assisting riders during classes. We will cover what you need to know to safely and effectively side walk during riding sessions providing hands on practice. You will then have an opportunity to demonstrate your skills and earn your designation "white".

2:00 - 3:00 Side Walker Refresher Class: Open to all volunteers who have already served as class volunteers. We will review basic procedures and update you on what is new for 2003. If you do not already have a skills sheet on file, you will be asked to demonstrate your skills at this time to complete our files.

Got questions? Call Sheila at 920-923-4274.

Important Dates to Remember!

April 11 and 12: FSR at Forest Mall Spring Charitable Organization Sale

April 11, 12 and 13: Midwest Horse Fair

April 19: Volunteer Training for side walkers and horse handlers

April 26: HOG's Ride For Pride (see orange insert)

April 25 and 26: Ant Hill Mob Annual Bike Show, Dance and Raffle

May 5: Start of 2003 first 6-week riding session

May 18: FSR Grand Opening

May 18: Start of 5th Annual Raffle

June 16: Start of 2nd 6-week riding session

July 28: Start of 3rd 6-week riding session

August 16: 13th Annual Ride-A-Thon

Vrrrrroooooom!

If you live near Manitowoc and want to help out with the Anti Hill Mob HOG Bike Show and/or Dance on April 25 or 26, call Heidi Jannette at 920-901-5445 or e-mail her at Penny13@charter.net to get more information or to confirm your work hours. FSR is one of 6 charitable organizations designated to benefit from the annual fund-raiser.

Vrrrrroooooom! Vrrrrroooooom!

It's that time of the year again! We need help at the HOG's Annual Ride For Pride on April 26. See the orange insert and call Tim Cruz to register to help at the time and in the way that suits you best.

Wanted:

Experienced plumber/fix-it person. We have donated, used outdoor pasture stock waterers and are looking for someone to look them over to see if they can be salvaged or repaired. If you or someone you know is interested, call Mark at 920-923-4272. This may be a project you can work on at home!

Do you Know How to Re-Upholster??

We have 4 donated "guest" chairs, 2 of which could use a redo. They are very basic chairs. If you would enjoy the challenge of this job, call 920-924-9920.

All About Down's Syndrome

The word syndrome means a collection of signs or characteristics. The name Down comes from the doctor, John Langdon Down, who first described the condition in 1866. There are more differences between people with Down's Syndrome than there are similarities. They will have many of their families distinctive characteristics and will therefore resemble their brothers and sisters. As well as these individual characteristics however, they will have features shared by others with Down's syndrome.

Down's Syndrome is normally suspected soon after birth, because a doctor, nurse, or sometimes a parent recognizes the characteristic features. Chromosome tests are then carried out to confirm the diagnosis. Normally there are 46 chromosomes in every cell; half of these come from our mother, half from our father. The person with Down's Syndrome has an extra chromosome 21, making 47 in all. This results in a mental retardation and developmental delay.

The tell tale features which indicate the presence of Down's Syndrome include:

- eyes that slant upwards and outwards. They often have a fold of skin that runs vertically between the two lids at the inner corner of the eye (the epicanthic fold)
- a head which is rather flat at the back with a hairline that is low and ill defined at the nape of the neck, often with rather loose skin in this area.
- a face that appears somewhat flat with a flat nasal bridge.
- a mouth cavity that is slightly smaller than average, and a tongue that is slightly larger.
- hands that are broad, with short fingers, and a little finger that curves inwards. The palm may have only one crease across it.
- a deep cleft between the first and second toe extending as a long crease on the side of the foot.
- reduced muscle tone which results in floppiness (hypotonia). This improves spontaneously as the child gets older
- a below average weight and length at birth.

It is important to point out that any of these features can occur in people who do not have Down's Syndrome. Certain medical conditions are more common in people with Down's Syndrome. For instance:

- 40% have heart problems at birth, half of which are serious and require surgery.
- more than half of children with Down's Syndrome have significant hearing problems and problems with vision are even more common.
- it is likely that up to 30% of people with Down's Syndrome may develop thyroid disease.
- There is now increasing evidence of a greater risk of developing Alzheimer's disease (senile dementia) and sometimes at as young an age as 30 years.

More minor complaints, such as dry skin and coughs are common as well as colds and respiratory infections.

It is not inevitable that people with Down's Syndrome are unwell, they can be very well, and the right to be should not be influenced by the fact that they have Down's Syndrome. People with Down's Syndrome look a little different and are in general relatively less able than the population as a whole. It is important that the lives of all people have the same value, and that they enjoy the same rights. Down's Syndrome is not a disease so it is inaccurate to say people suffer from it or that it can be treated.

The benefits of therapeutic horseback riding for someone with Down's Syndrome include improvements in expressive and receptive language skills, gross and fine motor skills, balance, posture, muscle tone and coordination. Therapeutic riding also increases feelings of self-confidence and self-awareness, and provides an appropriate social outlet.

More information about Down' Syndrome can be found at www.dowms-syndrome.org; www.nas.com/downsyn; www.downsyndrome.com

Jet Has Reached Retirement

Paco Jetty Boy, better known to us as **Jet**, came to FSR on July 5, 1998 when he was 19 years old. He is a Buckskin Quarter Horse with streaked mane and tail and has a star on his forehead and white pasterns on all four hooves. Jet came to use from **Karl and Amy Kirmse** from Campbellsport.



Jet is back at the Kirmse's after having a difficult winter and failing health. Jet had an old neck injury that seems to have revisited him and he may have over compensated by incorrectly using some of his back muscles. It was clear he was uncomfortable and would not be a good candidate for the work required of a therapeutic horse. Amy and Karl had indicated at the time of Jet's donation that they would happily take him back if we could no longer use him.

Amy reports that Jet seems to remember where he had been before coming to us and says that he seems "really relaxed" (as he should be in 'retirement') at their place. He continues in chiropractic care and has a sense of renewed energy as he reunites with everyone and everything at his old home.

Jet was always an energetic horse for us until this past winter. He is generally a kind and good-natured horse. He is responsive to leg cues so did not do well with our riders who had "noisy" legs. We remember Jet for his bravery on trails at our Ride-A-Thons, and also his lively responses to any mare in sight!

Thanks to the Kirmse' for being there for Jet and continuing to care for him!

VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Randy Love started volunteering for FSR in 2002. He had several reasons for volunteering: he likes horses, and enjoys helping and working with people, especially children. He likes working with the horses, assisting the riders and says "it makes me feel good about myself." His favorite horse is Duke, he doesn't have a favorite rider as he enjoys working with each of the riders.



Following graduation from Spooner High School in 1970, Randy attended a trade school to become a machine operator then moved to Beaver Dam to work for the now closed Chrysler Marine. He was drafted and sent to Viet Nam at the end of the conflict so spent 5 months in Viet Nam. Randy spent 6 years in the Army and while stationed in Thailand, was an amateur kick boxer. Randy returned to Beaver Dam and began working for the John Deere plant in Horicon where he has been employed for 25 years.

He has many varied interests and hobbies and refers to himself as a "reformed thrill seeker" because his mind still wants to but the body says "no way." Randy enjoys backpacking, camping (sometimes at the same time!), scuba diving, kayaking (he just bought 2 new kayaks), photography (he is a master at catching people when they aren't looking), golf, target shooting and traveling. He is currently a Hunter Safety Instructor and would like to become a NARHA registered therapeutic riding instructor. Randy is chairperson for the upcoming Dodge County Horse Riders Association Annual Fall Trail Ride.

In his past Randy was a nationally registered Bounty Hunter. He has not been actively working in that capacity recently, but hopes to return to that work upon his retirement from John Deere in five years. The cases he was involved in included recovery of stolen or run-away children and removal of children from a hostile environment.

Randy is a grandfather of a 2-year old granddaughter who is the 'apple of his eye.' His mother still lives in Spooner and he has 5 brothers, 2 sisters and many nieces and nephews.

Randy is a knowledgeable horse person who is a great addition to our class helpers. He also represents FSR in other horse organizations and is helpful in FSR activities beyond the barn. He is an all-around nice guy and we are proud he found us!

We have a New Video!

Thanks to **Joanne Van Geison** for doing hours of filming during classes last season for our new video produced by Bok's Top Production. We appreciate **Diana Gerlach's** help with editing. Thanks also to the **Fond du Lac Evening Lions** and **United Youth** for financing the worthwhile project. Because of all of you, more people will learn what we are all about! If you belong to an organization that you would like to have learn more about us, invite us to bring our video to an upcoming meeting. We love to brag!

New Brochure Available

Our new brochure is hot off the presses and available to those who want to help spread the word about FSR. We thank the **Knights of Columbus councils of Fond du Lac, Lomira, Campbellsport, North Fond du Lac and Ripon** for funding this project.

Very Special appreciation to **Angela Meis**, Graphic Artist, for donating her expertise to help develop our first ever color brochure!

Do Horses eat Pizza??

No, but you can help us feed our horses by purchasing Eaton's pizza coupons for \$5.00 each. You will receive a coupon for .50 cents off on your next purchase with each coupon you purchase.

To order, send \$5 for each pizza desired with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to FSR Pizzas, PO Box 1291, Fond du Lac WI, 54937-1291 or call 920-924-9920 to make arrangements to get the coupons. Coupons can be redeemed at 2 locations in Fond du Lac, also in West Bend and Oshkosh. There is no expiration date on the coupons! Sale will continue until coupons are sold out.

Get It While It's Hot!

Our newsletter is posted on our web site. Would you like to receive an e-mail message when the newsletter is posted? In the message there will be a link which will take you to the newsletter on our web site. You can read the newsletter from there, download it to save on your computer or print it.

Please e-mail us at info@FreeSPIRITRiders.org if you are interested in helping us reduce our printing and mailing costs in this manner.

Gator Operation Training to be Offered

We are planning a training session for those volunteers that wish to be able to help up out with chores that require the use of our John Deere Gator. No one will be allowed to operate the Gator unless they have completed the training. Volunteers who wish to use the Gator must be 18 year old and hold a current driver's license. To take part in this training, call Mark Flucke at 920-923-4274. All interested will be contacted when a training date is established.

Thanks for the Financial Support!

SMC Foundation B
Fox Valley Kids Foundation
Dr. David and Mary Weber
Fond du Lac Area United Way
Canadian National Railroad
Just For the Hell of it Gang

Healing Garden

If you have plants you will be digging up and roots you will be dividing as you start your gardening this year, don't toss them out! FSR can use your surplus in our Healing Garden and for landscaping. Items can be dropped off at the barn, just let us know what you are bringing by calling 920-924-9920.

We Thank These People for The Financial Support of the Healing Garden

- Roland and Mary Seibel in memory of Don Huck
 - Don and Diane Rose in memory of Don Huck
 - Roland and Mary Seibel in memory of Julia Voss
 - Roland and Mary Seibel in Memory of Merle Reisner
 - Rolland, Mary Seibel and Eileen Halfman in memory of Leo Huck
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FREE S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders, Inc.
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Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Permit No. 13



DATED MATERIAL

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Fond du Lac, WI*

Mailing Address:

*P.O. Box 1291
Fond du Lac, WI 54936-1291*

Phone 920-924-9920
Email: info@freespiritriders.org
Web Site: www.freespiritriders.org

Therapists

**Duffy, Magic, Sonny, Sundown,
Tantara, Chevettes, Granite and Duke**

Riding Instructors

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Mission Statement

Free S.P.I.R.I.T. Riders, Inc.
is a non-profit organization
committed to enriching the lives
of children and adults with disabilities
through safe therapeutic interaction with
horses.



Vision Statement

By the year 2003, Free S.P.I.R.I.T.
Riders, Inc.,
accredited by NARHA, will be known as an
efficient, cohesive, professional,
multi-disciplinary team,
enthusiastically committed to
carrying out our mission.
In an enriching, nurturing environment,
we will provide
top quality, comprehensive, equine therapy
services
to a diverse population.

