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rom your  
Director

It's that time of the year! You can expect to receive the Rider Re-application forms in the near future, if you haven't gotten them in your mail yet. Because the Physician Referral and Liability Releases expire after one year, we have made a habit of sending out re-applications at the beginning of each year. That way every rider can have an up-to-date application on file. As usual, the sooner the forms are returned, the more likely the rider will be scheduled at the beginning of our riding season this spring. Please call 920-924-9920 with any questions! We look forward to another busy and successful season - also the end of our era with a waiting list. If you know anyone who would like to become a volunteer to help us during classes, please let us know. As always thanks for all your support and suggestions for improvements, we do listen to what you say!

*Mary*

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**Thanks to everyone** who made a pledge to help the United Way through their employer. Special thanks to those who designated FSR to be the recipient of their payroll deduction payment!

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**We are still trying** to make our mailing list current...Do we have your name spelled correctly? Does your address need correcting? Are you getting duplicate copies? Do you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list? Call 920-924-9920 to make necessary changes or e-mail [info@FreeSPIRITRiders.org](mailto:info@FreeSPIRITRiders.org).

## FROM THE RIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

**Chris Beltz** began with FSR as a rider in 1995. He was diagnosed with Tuberous Sclerosis (TBS) prior to that (see related article in this newsletter). Chris turned 20 years old last month and attends Special Education classes at Fondy High. Chris is a member of the class that came weekly to do cleaning duties at our facility last Fall and they will return when it gets warmer this spring. Chris has a seizure disorder associated with TBS and his are under good control. He has high blood pressure and has had brain tumors resected on more than one occasion.



Chris learned to ride when he started with FSR, currently his weight precludes him from riding so he has been involved in classes doing grooming and ground skills. Chris has a blended family. His natural sister Kathy has TBS but has a much milder case. She is not in Special Ed and has had very mild seizures. Chris also has 2 brothers: Mark drowned in a swimming accident in Lake Winnebago about 9 years ago and Michael who is 26. The family has two cats, Sammy and Midnight. Chris loves having cats around and he especially enjoys petting them.. Chris's favorite school activities include working on the computer and field trips.

One of Chris' strengths is that he can recall every scene from movies he has seen and recall the words to songs he has heard. His favorite activity at FSR is grooming the horses, he considers it play. We are glad to be a part of your life, Chris!

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### Important Dates to Remember

- ? January 27, 6:00 pm—Horse Handling Certification
- ? February 3, 6:00 pm—Horse Handling Certification
- ? February 14, 5:30 pm—Valentines Dinner.
- ? February 14, 7:00 pm—Concert pianist Eric Helm Benefit Concert for FSR
- ? February 18, 6:00 pm—Gator training.
- ? April 18,—Volunteer Appreciation Day
- ? August 21, 2004—14th Annual FSR Ride-A-Thon

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**Volunteers**—Would you like to be certified at a higher level of Horse Handling? We are planning to do certifications on the evenings of Tuesday, January 27 and Tuesday, February 3 starting at 6 PM at our facility. Call 920-924-9920 and let us know if you will be taking advantage of this opportunity. It will help us when it is time to sign up for volunteering during classes this spring. Also let us know what level you are currently at to help with scheduling the certifications.

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## Hint for Volunteers

Are you remembering to keep track of your expenses related to volunteering? Not only can you deduct direct money gifts made to FSR, you can also deduct 14 cents per mile while commuting to and from our facility; or to and from a fund raising or other FSR events. Make certain that you keep a record of the date, amount of mileage or other deduction. If you have questions, refer to section 170 of the IRS code and Revenue Ruling 70-519 or talk to the individual who prepares your taxes for you.!

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## Got e-Mail?

Have you changed your address recently? If so please e-mail us at [info@FreeSPIRITriders.org](mailto:info@FreeSPIRITriders.org) with your new e-mail address.

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## Thanks to Fond du Lac Area Foundation

who made a donation in honor of, and at the request of, their retired board member, **Jack Pollei!**

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**Aluminum Can Collection Continues**—they can be dropped off at the barn in the designated stall in the north aisle.

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## Needed:

- Yarn; material scraps (48" X 25" light-weight preferred, especially if horse related).
- Leather scraps; 36 inch, 3/4 inch in diameter.
- Dowels.
- People with artistic or crafty talent with time to use their talents with us.
- Someone who enjoys creating with plastic canvas and your ideas to help us increase our revenue.

*Call 924-9920 for more information or if you wish to help.*

## From Our New Volunteer Coordinator



My name is **Rose Smith** and I am your new volunteer coordinator. I grew up on a farm east of Lake Winnebago and live in Fond du Lac. I have begun the process of setting up e-mail correspondence. If you have not received an e-mail from me and you are a volunteer with an e-mail address, please introduce yourself and send your email address to me at

[roses@famvid.com](mailto:roses@famvid.com).

I look forward to working with all of you and getting to know the volunteers, riders and parents/guardians. The New Year holds many possibilities and opportunities for everyone involved with Free SPIRIT Riders and I am excited to be a part of it!

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## Easy Ways You Can Help FSR

If you shop at any Pick 'n Save, register for an Advantage Plus Savers Club Card. On the registration form, designate FSR to be an organization to receive a 1% rebate from the amount you spend on groceries. The Account number for FSR is 243100. Each time you present your Advantage Card when you grocery shop, a donation from your purchase is added to FSR's account at no cost to you. If you shop at Piggly Wiggly, save grocery store receipts and mail to PO Box 1291, FdL 54936-1291, give them to any board members, deposit them in the container at our facility or call 920-924-9920 for pick-up. FSR gets a 1% rebate on the value of your purchase. If you use Farnum products, Zymecterin, Rotectin 1 or Rotectin 2 for worming, save the bar codes for us and turn in as described above. If you are a Schwan's Home Delivery customer, or wish to be, call 920-922-9920 to enroll in their fund raising program to benefit FSR at no cost to you. The more registered customers purchase, the greater the funds received by FSR!

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## 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 ready? In the message, there will be an address to click on which will bring up the newsletter. You can read the newsletter from there or download it. Please e-mail us at [info@FreeSPIRITriders.org](mailto:info@FreeSPIRITriders.org) if you are interested in helping us reduce our printing and mailing costs in this manner.

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## What is Tuberous Sclerosis?

Tuberous Sclerosis (TBS) is a rare genetic, neurological disorder primarily characterized by seizures, cognitive disabilities, and skin and eye lesions. In some cases, neurobehavioral problems may also occur. Individuals with TBS may experience one or all of the symptoms with varying degrees of severity. TBS is a multi-system disease that can affect the brain, kidneys, heart, eyes, lungs, and other organs. Small benign tumors may grow on the face and eyes, as well as in the brain, kidneys, and other organs. Seizures most often begin in the first year of life. There is no specific treatment for TBS. Treatment is symptomatic and may include anticonvulsant therapy for seizures; dermabrasion and laser removal techniques for the skin manifestations; drug therapy for neurobehavioral problems; treatment of high blood pressure caused by the kidney problems; and surgery to remove growing tumors. The prognosis for individuals with TBS varies depending on the severity of symptoms.

There are many people with TBS living independent, healthy lives who are enjoying challenging professions such as doctors, lawyers, educators and researchers. There is no cure. At least two children born each day will have TBS. There are many undiagnosed cases due to the obscurity of the disease and the mild form symptoms may take in some people. TBS is transmitted either through genetic inheritance or as a spontaneous genetic mutation. The cause of these mutations is still a mystery. The tumors resulting from TBS are benign, but may still cause problems. Tumors that grow in the brain can block the flow of cerebral spinal fluid in the spaces (ventricles) in the brain. This can lead to behavior changes, nausea, headaches or a number of other symptoms. In the heart, the tumors are usually at their largest at birth, and then decrease in size as the individual gets older. These heart tumors can cause problems at birth if the tumors are blocking the flow of blood or causing severe arrhythmia problems. The tumors in the eyes are not as common, but can present problems if they grow and block too much of the retina. The tumors in the kidney can become so large they eventually take over all of the normal kidney function.

Today, doctors are more aggressive and remove individual tumors before they get too large and compromise healthy kidney tissue. Early intervention is helping to overcome developmental delays. Advancements in research are bringing new and improved therapeutic options. Surgery to remove tumors or stop tumor growth is helping to preserve the function of affected organs. Technology is pinpointing the exact portions of the brain stimulating seizures and creating new therapies to help control seizures.

With every new day we are one step closer to finding improved treatments. The benefits of interaction with horses for those with TBS include an opportunity for group activity and emotional therapy, improvement in muscle strength and self image, stimulation of speech and perceptual skills and fine motor skills.

*More information about TBS is available at [www.tsalliance.org/redirect.asp](http://www.tsalliance.org/redirect.asp); [www.stsn.nl/tsi/tsi.htm](http://www.stsn.nl/tsi/tsi.htm) ; [www.tsalliance.org](http://www.tsalliance.org) and [www.tuberous-sclerosis.org](http://www.tuberous-sclerosis.org)*

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**FSR Logo Items for Sale** Logo t-shirts and sweatshirts! All are 50/50 cotton/polyester. We have youth t-shirts, sizes small (6-8), medium (10-12) and large (14-16) in lime green, daffodil yellow, blue, light blue and pink. They sell for \$10 each. Adult T's are available in small, medium, large, x-large and xx-large and sell for \$12.50. The colors are orange, blue, gray, purple and daffodil yellow. We now have children's sweatshirts and they come in children's sizes small, medium and large for \$15 each. The colors are red, blue, steel gray and gray. Adult sweatshirts are \$20 each and come in small, medium, large, x-large and xx-large. The colors are purple, yellow and gray. We have a new selection of FSR Logo caps in two styles. The GAP Cap comes in dark green or Khaki with our log in dark Green or black or navy with our logo in gold. We have two-tone caps in navy and Khaki with our logo in slate blue and Khaki and Dark green with our logo in dark green. Caps sell for \$15. To purchase any of these items, ask while you are at the barn or call 920-924-9920 to make arrangements.

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## All about Duke!



Duke is a 15 HH dark roan gelding Appaloosa with white spots. Though he is 19 years old, his exact birth date is not known. Before Duke came to us he was owned by Katie Bichler of Cedar Grove, WI. She had met Duke when she worked at

a place that offered trail rides in 1991. Katie said she liked riding Duke because "he listened to me instead of putting his nose in the tail of the horse in front of him and just following along." Katie occasionally used Duke for a lead, but for the most part he was a trail horse.

Katie and her husband purchased Duke in June of 1996 and donated him to us in the spring of 2002. They felt he was wasting his time decorating their pasture and they didn't have time to do much with him because of also having 2 two-year old fillies and another energetic horse that demanded a lot of attention, not to mention jobs, children, etc. etc.

Katie recalls that Duke showed some lameness the summer before she bought him and this was explained as a shoulder injury from a kick. After moving in with the Bichler family he was sound for three years before it appeared that some arthritis may have started to set in. He seems to know his own limits pretty well. Duke is known to be a very tolerant horse. He loves to be groomed and will stand for hours. Our instructors describe Duke as very "determined" and is prone to expressing himself on his terms i.e., he's stubborn and opinionated! He is also very cautious of new elements in his surroundings but adapts well. Duke is a favorite of several of our riders who love to talk about him at school and with friends. Duke keeps volunteers on their toes and likes to test them. In the arena he is very dependable, patient and steady. And those are great strengths for a therapist in our program!

## VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Meet **Ed Mikalofsky**! He learned about FSR through pictures and articles in the Action Advertiser. But the presence of the new barn/stable and sign on Hwy 23 is really what got him interested. Ed states the most enjoyable thing about helping at FSR is sharing in the fun the participants have when they get on that great big horse! But the satisfaction comes in helping "our therapists" do

their stuff for the client.

Ed is a semi-retired pharmacist and works part-time for Agnesian Healthcare at the Health Shoppe, Pharmacy Plus, North Fond du Lac Regional Clinic or at Markesan. He was born and raised in Sheboygan and moved with his wife to FdL from Chilton in 1960. They have seven married children and eight grandchildren, who all live in the state.

They enjoy playing golf, traveling, visiting family and relatives, reading and doing things they couldn't do when they were busy raising a family. Last December they had to put down their eleven year old cocker spaniel, Mickey. They have decided they had better take a rest from any more pets. Ed tells us that he *"wanted to be involved in a volunteer activity that was going to be equally as fun for him as it is for the clients. I've found that at FSR."* We are glad you found us, Ed!

## Hey Volunteers!

If you are a class Side Walker, Horse Handler or Groomer, have helped assemble the newsletter or with bulk mailings, done any of our office work, helped in the garden or with craft work, worked at brat sales or the Ride-a-Thon, sold Raffle tickets or helped with the Silent Auction, helped to keep our barn and observation area clean, cleaned tack, sold pizza coupons, helped with meal preparations for DACC or helped us in any other way, then you deserve to be a part of our **Volunteer Appreciation Day** event at the American Legion Memorial Clubhouse, 500 Fond du Lac Avenue. The event will include dinner, DJ entertainment and a whole lot more! Because you are appreciated you must be a part of this! **SAVE THIS DATE.**

**Help us Brag** If you belong to an organization that you would like to have learn more about fsr. Invite us to bring our video to an upcoming meeting. We love to brag!

Thanks also to the Fond du Lac Evening Lions and United Youth for financing the worthwhile video. Because of them, more people will learn what we are all about, so help us spread the word. Call 920-924-9920 with any questions



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

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

Non-Profit Organization  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
Fond du Lac, WI 54935  
Permit No. 13



## DATED MATERIAL



### 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

Free SPIRIT Riders, Inc.,  
a NARHA premier accredited center,  
will be known as an efficient, cohesive,  
professional, multi-disciplinary team  
enthusiastically committed to fulfilling  
our mission.

We will provide excellent,  
comprehensive, equine therapy  
services focused on the individual  
needs of the people we serve,  
in an enriching, nurturing environment.



#### Facility Address:

W3950 Hwy 23  
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

Tara, Stitch, Duffy, Magic, Sonny,  
Fancy, Chevettes, and Duke

#### Riding Instructors

Cindy Anderson 920-326-6108  
kenanderson@centurytel.net

Ginger Schlentkgen 920-979-3110  
gingerschinktgen@hotmail.com

Sarah Perry 920-907-8279  
horsewhisperer566@hotmail.com

#### Program Director

Mary Narges 920-533-5025  
chknmary@hotmail.com

#### Volunteer Coordinator

Rose Smith 920-923-4713  
roses@famvid.com

#### Newsletter

Vikki Becker 920-322-9532  
vikkib@charter.net