

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

Special People in Riding Therapy

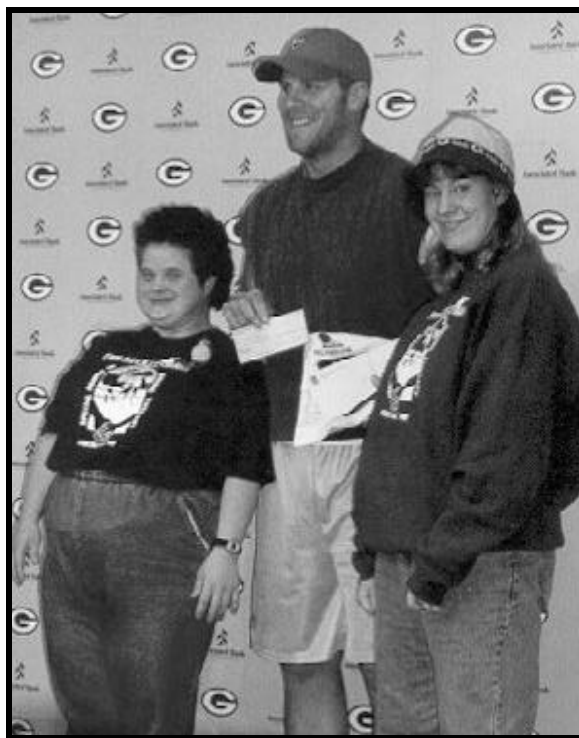
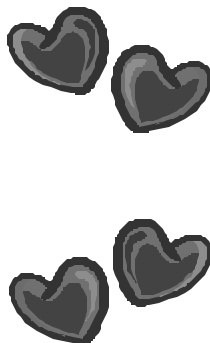
January 2003

Pianist Erik Helm presents... Concert to Benefit FSR!

Hope you have reserved Friday evening, February 14th for a real treat for yourself, or for you and your special valentine! Erik Helm, brother of one of our program participants, has planned a concert to benefit FSR at the Prairie Theater on the UW-FdL campus. The concert will begin at 7 PM.

Erik's piano artistry displays a strong, fluid technique with great emotion. A virtuoso in his own right, Erik has been compared to artists such as Liberace for the flair and showmanship that he possesses. When not performing or recording in the studio, Erik is actively involved with many other musical activities, including teaching and composing.

...Tickets are available at KFIZ radio on Winnebago Drive; Wegners on Court Street; Connie's Hallmark Store, Forest Plaza; Gib Heitpas and Assoc., 86 South Macy, and from any Board member. Tickets can also be purchased by mailing \$10 for each ticket desired with a self addressed stamped envelope to *FSR Piano Concert at P. O. 1291, Fond du Lac WI 54837-1291*. See you there!



Program participants and volunteers, Amy Jo Marquard (left) and Jordy Gerlach (right) are shown with Brett Favre.

Brett Favre Teams With FSR

The Brett Favre Forward Foundation has awarded FSR a \$10,000 grant! The money will be used to offset the cost of the outdoor arena and fencing. The Brett Favre Forward Foundation was founded in 1996 with the purpose of helping programs who serve disadvantaged or disabled children in Mississippi and Wisconsin.

FSR was one of 10 organizations that received funding from money raised at a softball game between the Packer offense and defense at the Timber Rattlers Stadium last summer. Riders: be sure to get your re-applications in soon so you can enjoy the privilege of riding in our outdoor arena during the nice weather.

From 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 Narges

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.

Note from Cocoa and Fudge

Thanks, **Cindy Staggs** for the Purina Kitten Chow.

It was delicious and we enjoyed each morsel!



FROM THE RIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

Introducing **Donald Pressley!** Don was diagnosed with MS in April of 1993. He lives in Oshkosh with his wife, Barbara, and 3 Shih-tzu dogs, "Tori" is a grandmother to "Fox" and a great grandmother to "Teyha". Barbara enjoys going to dog shows and often shows Teyha. She works at J. C. Penny at the Aviation Plaza in Oshkosh.



Donald and Barbara have three children: a son, DJ, who lives in Denver CO, a daughter, Kara, who lives in Winnetonka and a daughter Robin in GA. Robin owns a horse and she was the one who told her dad about us. She had heard about therapeutic riding and what riding can do for persons with MS and wanted her dad to get involved. She went to the internet to find out if there was a program in the Fox Valley area--and learned about FSR through our web site! She told her dad about us and the rest is history.

Don started with us during the summer of 2002. His start with us was delayed because he spent some time in Las Vegas with a fishing buddy at about the same time as an opening in FSR occurred for him. He enjoys fishing and spending time with this friend who he describes as "the best friend a guy could have. He pushed me and my wheel chair all over Las Vegas!" When he started with us, Don hoped to improve his balance, mobility and muscle tone. Don tells us that he lost his ability to walk in November and is now using a motorized scooter or wheel chair all the time, depending on where he is and what he is doing. He remains committed to not letting MS take over his life! Don said it was the people at FSR he liked the best! That says a lot for **Donna, Phyllis, Cindy and Jay**. We all look forward to Don being back with us next year!

HELP!!

We need a volunteer who is familiar with data base entry procedures to help us keep our database up to date. Duties include making address, telephone number and other changes as needed (2 to 3 times/month for ½ hour or less). Also running address labels for newsletters, volunteer and rider mailings, and other related duties as needed. The database is currently on a compact disc (CD) as it has become too large for a floppy disc. You will need to have the capacity to read and make changes on the CD. Volunteer hours will be less than 3 hours/month at the most. Call 920-924- 9920 and leave a message indicating your interest today!

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!

Calling All Artists...

We invite anyone with artistic talent (riders, siblings, volunteers) to do sketches in color or black and white using crayons, colored pencils or markers. The topic of the drawing is "what FSR means to me." Remember all sketched riders need to be wearing helmets. A banner or sign saying Free SPIRIT Riders in the drawing will make the drawing more suitable for the intended use.

So what is the intended use?? We are running out of our note cards we use to thank donors and feel these would be quite appropriate for that use. Maybe we could start a new fundraiser by selling packets of note cards. Or maybe a 2004 calendar can be produced using the drawings.

Congratulations to Kim Mueller

FSR volunteer and board member, and her husband Ryan on the birth of their first child, a son named Remington on Christmas Day!

Schwan's

For every new Schwan's customer that signs up with FSR before February 23, 2003, FSR will get a \$5 bonus! And Schwan's is offering a FREE DINNER for two to new Schwan's customers who place a \$20 or more order. What is your part? Just call 920-924-9920 to participate!

Doing Good and Getting Caught at it!

Our volunteer, **Megan Prado**, was pictured in the local press for her help with the **St. Mary's Springs Campus Ministries** annual fund-raiser food drive during homecoming week. Megan was pictured with the group who delivered the non-perishable food and household items. Volunteer **Karen Bongert**, also of St. Mary's Springs, was pictured as she painted Christmas scenes that decorated the Fond du Lac Post Office

Another Way to Help

FSR is looking forward to the 13th Annual Ride-a-Thon on August 16 at the Kettle Moraine State Forest Horse Campgrounds near New Prospect. We could use your help with acquiring pledge raiser prizes. A popular item last year was "quillos" which were made by the ladies at Taycheedah Correctional Institution. We appreciate that anyone with scraps of material no smaller than 45" by 45" donate them to FSR to be used in making the quillos. While horse pattern material is most desirable, any material will do. Call 920-924-9920 to make your donation, or give to any board member.

FSR Participants in Special Olympics!

Congratulations to **Amy Jo Marquard** and **Allison Westemeier** members of the **Fondy Eagles**, **Tom Schmidt**, member of **City Slickers**, **Tim Pergande**, member of the **Music Men**, **Mike Ryan**, member of **The Champs**, **Jana Broberg** member of **Team Disney**, **Jerry Westemeier**, member of **Wolf Pack**, and **Suzanne Radtke**, member of **Wild Cats**, all teams that recently bowled in the Special Olympics tournament. **Stephanie Schenk**, **Kari Lefeber**, **Amy Nemitz** and **Christine Gallitz** made up the **SPIRIT Riders Team** (wonder where they got that name?) All are affiliated with FSR in some manner. Our extraordinary volunteer, **Kathy Fleury**, was a volunteer for the event. What great representation FSR had at this special and fun event!

Feast for All

Several of our program participants were featured in pictures in the Fond du Lac Reporter after they made a Thanksgiving meal and invited their families to Fond du Lac High School to enjoy the meal. Pictured serving the meal were **Missy Kolaske**, **Christina Mueller**, **Tim Pergande** was shown being served corn by **Jenny Zeman**. Pictured in another feature were **Bobby and Ronny Kiefer**.

5th Annual Raffle Being Planned

Would you like to be a part of the success of our 5th Annual Raffle? We are in the process of soliciting raffle items from now through the end of March. We hope to have the tickets printed and ready for sale at our Grand Opening in May 18. If you wish to donate an item, or know someone who would like to, let us know by calling 920-924-9920 or e-mail at info@FreeSPIRITRiders.org. One of the featured items will be a live miniature horse donated by **Mike and Cheryl Wescher** of Iron Mountain, MI. More information on the mini will be available soon.

Congratulations!

Marcia McLaughlin is the proud owner of her first horse, a quarter horse named Beau!

Hint for Volunteers

Are you remembering to keep track of your expenses related to volunteering? Not only can you deduct direct money gifts 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 event. 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.

Recent General Fund Donors

United Way, Sherwood Lions Club, Fond of Memories Club/Connie's Hallmark, Brian Madigan, Kevin Madigan, FdL Evening Optimist Club, AAL/LB Branch # 1709, North Fond du Lac Knights of Columbus, KMCI Health Fair, Dodge County Horseman's Association, Fox Valley Kids Foundation, Betty Leedle in honor of Eric and Travis Grams, Elaine Miller in memory of Mitchell Dawson, Fond du Lac Rotary Club

Debt Reduction Fund

Split Rail Foundation, Kaye Rothe, John and Sally St. Peter, Fond du Lac Lioness Club, Eden and FdL Veterinary Clinics, C.R.Meyer Foundation, Brian and Kristen Johnson, Mary Narges, Eden and FdL Vet Clinic, Elaine Pirsig and Fond du Lac Associated Builders

Thanks...To Fond du Lac Area Foundation who made a donation in honor of, and at the request of retired board member, Donald Jones.

All About Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a progressive neurological disease with degeneration of spinal column tracts, resulting in scar formation. MS most commonly occurs in the persons aged 20 to 40 years. It is progressive with periods of exacerbation and remissions. Symptoms include weakness and fatigue, visual impairment, loss of coordination and emotional sensitivity. It is more common in women than in men.

In people with MS, there are three processes going on that normally do not occur in healthy people. First, tiny patches of inflammation occur in the brain and spinal cord. Second, the protective myelin coating around the nerve fibers starts to deteriorate (this is called "demyelination" or loss of myelin). Third, the nerve fibers themselves, called axons, may actually be damaged or destroyed.

In MS, there are patches of inflammation in the brain and spinal cord that cause damage to the myelin. This makes it more difficult for information signals to travel along nerve fibers with the required speed, eventually causing the symptoms seen in MS. These processes are never the same in any two people with MS. When they occur, how quickly, and to what extent can, in fact, vary a great deal.

The cycles of damage and recovery occur over and over, often unnoticed, especially in early stages of the disease. When and to what extent problems become symptomatic depends on the location, the extent, and the severity of the inflammation. If the inflammation occurs repeatedly in the same place, the repair processes may not be able to "keep up," and permanent damage to the axons may occur. When the inflammation covers a large area, it can often leave a scar in the nervous system, known as a "plaque," which can be identified through an MRI scan.

Another factor that contributes to the progress of MS is a process called axonal injury. Axonal injury means that the neuronal transmission of electrical signals is completely lost and cannot be restored. Axonal injury might occur very early in the course of the disease even before visible symptoms appear. Experts believe that permanent disability in MS could be the result of both ongoing demyelination and axonal injury.

The benefits of therapeutic horseback riding for individuals with MS include the maintenance and strengthening of weak muscles, improvement in posture and balance, and improvement in quality of life due to opportunities for socialization and emotional therapy.

More information about MS can be found at www.wisms.org; <http://albany.net/jte/mstory.html>; www.ifnss.org.uk/whatis/English/isms5.aspx or <http://albany.net/tjc/mstory.html>.

Free Spirit Riders, Inc. January 2003 Newsletter

With Appreciation

Thanks to the 14 local Insurance Agents and their companies who helped raise money for FSR through donations raised from customers needing help from Auto Glass specialists during the last few months of 2002!

Way to go!

Volunteer **Lindsay Holschbach** graduated from UW Madison's Animal Science program in December and has been accepted into the Equine Management Graduate School of the University of Kentucky. Good luck with your move, Lindsay. Please stay in touch!

Farewell to CJ

It is with deep appreciation and sadness that we tell you about our farewell to **C.J.** We were aware that C.J. was increasingly uncomfortable during the past season and there were days when he reminded



us of a "grumpy grandpa." It was deemed that the most humane thing we could do was to let his discomfort end and so C.J. joined his frolicking friends on the "other side of the gate" in mid November.

Like other 'grumpy grandpas,' C.J. had arthritis and COPD. He required a special senior diet that was easy to digest and chew and he had a hard time keeping weight on. He had been battling tumors that had to be repeatedly removed for years.

Circle J Bar Bay was a quarter horse gelding, foaled on June 6, 1970 and was donated to FSR by **Roxanne Urbanek** of Beaver Dam on March 23, 1994.

He served our program well for eight years. He was a favored mount for many riders, some for each of those eight years. He was known to stand for extended periods of time in the mounting ramp while fearful students learned to approach and touch him. He was content to just stand there as bean bags were tossed on, over and under him and while brushing, grooming, climbing on, off, and over him was going on. When anxious riders finally found the courage to stay on him and say 'walk,' CJ very slowly and quietly walked off. His rock steady nature along with his slow, lazy walk made him a great mount for those with poor trunk or muscle control or poor balance.

Though C.J. is no longer present in our stable or during our classes, his footprints will continue to dance on in the hearts of many of our riders and volunteers for years to come!

VOLUNTEER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We wish to introduce you to a truly caring young man. His name is **Jerry Westemeier!** He loves to play baseball, basketball and soccer. He is proud of the medals he has earned as a member of Special Olympics bowling teams. He enjoys doing puzzles. But the thing he seems to enjoy most is helping others learn to conquer their fears and ride off with joy!



Jerry graduated from Campbellsport High School (home of the Cougars!) in June of 1993. He has a large family. From his birth family he has two brothers and four sisters. There are eighteen siblings in his adoptive family! He currently lives in Fond du Lac in a house he co-owns with one of his birth sisters. His home is within walking distance from the Fond du lac Lutheran Home where he is employed in Dining Services.

Though Jerry is eligible to be a FSR rider, he much prefers spreading joy around by helping others maximize their potential. He is the volunteer who gave the most hours during class times during the 2002 season with a total of 142 hours! Jerry is so committed to FSR that when he had to chose between an activity with his birth family, his adoptive family or FSR on August 17 (the day of our 12th Annual ride-a-Thon) he chose to put in several hours helping at the Ride-a-Thon.

Jerry enjoys working with each of our horses, and says he doesn't really have a favorite. Thank you for all your hard work and your dedication, Jerry! You are a role model to our other volunteers.

New Fund Raiser Project

Stock Lumber of Fond du Lac and **Schettl Sales** of Oshkosh have jump started our newest ongoing fund raising project by providing dowels, lumber, stain, paint and polyurethane at a tremendously reduced cost. We will use the items for hand made stick ponies (also known as hobby horses) that will be made by inmates at Taycheedah Correctional Institution.

We will need yarn for the manes and leather scraps for ears and reins. Can you help us? We also need more 5/8, 3/4, or 1 inch dowels, 36 inches long.

Look for these crowd-pleasing items to be for sale at our Grand Opening on May 18th! Call 920-924-9920 if you have anything we can use for this project.


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

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*W3950 Hwy 23
Fond du Lac, WI*

Mailing Address:

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

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

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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.

