

SEBASTIAN RIDING ASSOCIATES



Fall 2023

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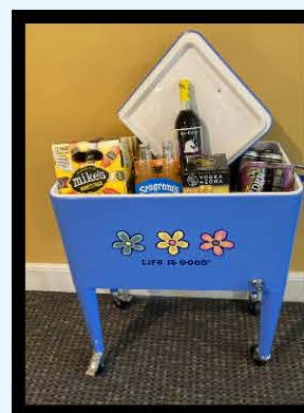
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11th Annual Triple Crown Gala

By Kendra Bonner

Thank you to all who participated, either by attending or by donating to our 11th Annual Triple Crown Gala held on May 20, 2023 at The Empress Room in Blue Bell, PA. We started the evening with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres before viewing the "Preakness Stakes" live and cheering on our favorite horse. In the end it was National Treasure that won. One of our hippotherapy students, Olivia Berry shared an amazing video that she created to share her talent of riding Galen for her school talent show. After a wonderful dinner prepared by Paravati Catering, we welcomed the Diablo Sandwich band to the stage for live music and dancing. Classic Memories photo booth helped provide fun photo keepsakes. The event continues to be our largest fundraising event and this year we welcomed over 100 ladies and gentlemen, wearing their Kentucky derby hats, to raise funds in support of Sebastian Riding Associates. This year marked our highest profit, more than \$25,000. We had 15 sponsors, 15 silent auction items and 31 raffle items. We are excited to have had some new families, volunteers and board members as our sponsors. Our thanks to all who donated, collected and created items for this event making the silent auction and raffle items fabulous! Some of the big items at this years event included a weekend stay at a Adirondack chalet, autographed Eagles memorabilia, original artwork, a wide variety of gift baskets, Eagles tickets, Phillies tickets, Union tickets, etc. A huge thank you to our Gala committee this year which included Chris Hanebury, Casey Pierce, Danielle Reitingner, Wendy Brynan and myself.

SAVE THE DATE! The 2024 Triple Crown Gala will be on May 4, 2024. If you are interested in donating your time or talents, or items for our auction/raffles, just call the office and let us know or speak to any of our committee members. Don't forget to mark your calendar and join in the fun!



New human faces at the barn

Ali Burdick, Program Manager



Ali was born and raised in Vermont but came to Pennsylvania for college and loves it here. She graduated from Delval University with a degree in Equine Management. Her love of horses started at a very young age, riding at five, working the barn at twelve and then started teaching at eighteen. She was part of the hunt seat team at Delval, helped coach the IEA team and have competed in many horse shows over the years. She also has her carriage driving level 1 certificate and loves driving ponies. She has had the opportunity to teach people of all ages and riding levels. In addition to a love of horses, she also loves being outdoors doing things such as hiking, four wheeling, swimming, the beach, and gardening.

Emma Roberto, Barn Manager



Emma has been at SRA since 2012 as a volunteer horse handler, sidewalker, and feeder. She grew up loving horses and always wanted a horse of her own. Emma started riding when she was a young girl and bought her first horse in November of 2021 named Arya. When Emma isn't caring for the horses she is playing with dogs. She has raised six Seeing-Eye puppies in training to become guide dogs. A Seeing-Eye puppy raiser gets the puppy when they are seven weeks old and raises them to become guide dogs for people who are visibly impaired. Emma also enjoys training with her personal dogs, Miles (a German Shepherd) and Darwin (a Golden Retriever). Miles is a therapy dog and likes to visit kids and adults in nursing homes and hospitals. Miles is also going to be in a play, "The Sound of Music". Darwin is a goofy dog who loves to run and play ball, Emma plans on competing with him in agility and FastCAT.

Sarah Bryan, Instructor



Sarah has been riding for as long as she can remember. From pony rides to competitive show jumping for years. Over the years of taking many lessons and doing a ton of camps, she found a two week overnight summer camp that offered horseback riding programs, Camp Wood Haven of Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania. Sarah has spent summers there since 2009. She became part of the staff in 2013 and worked at the barn which is where she found her horse, Cheyenne. Sarah says, "I fell in love with him the instant I rode him!" Together they have competed at many different shows. When she is not with her horse, Cheyenne, she can be found at the local YMCA where she also works in Aquatics teaching the Abilities swim lesson program. She also runs a program called Fridays with Friends. Sarah knew from a young age that she wanted to work with horses and those with different abilities. Her Aunt Jamie used to ride at SRA many years ago and that is how she found about SRA. She started as a volunteer here when she was 13. But as life would have it sometimes, you leave a place for a bit and then come back to find it again later in life.

FUN FACT: SARAH'S FATHER AND GRANDFATHER INSTALLED THE PROPANE HEATING IN THE INDOOR ARENA MANY YEARS AGO

Until we meet again.....

We should also note that we said goodbye to two instructors. Sydney D'Ortone accepted a position as an instructor for a program in Texas that focuses on Veterans. Instructor Natalie Haggard accepted a full time IT position and needed to give up her students. We appreciate all the knowledge and enthusiasm these ladies shared with everyone at the farm and wish them the very best. .

DID YOU KNOW

As a PATH (Professional Association on Therapeutic Horsemanship) Center our instructors are required to attain PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (CTRI) status. This requires commitment on the part of the instructor as the continuing education and student teaching requirements are vigorous. Please join us in congratulating our newest CTRI's,

**Susan Niskey Popp
and Amy Ray**

Longtime volunteer newsletter editor Cindy Diamadi has unplugged her computer and moved to North Carolina. Since 2012, Cindy has been the wiz behind the graphics and design! We are so grateful for her creativity a all these years. If you or someone you know would be interested in working on the newsletter, please contact Chris

Once again, SRA was one of two recipients of the Merck Sharp Dohme Federal Credit Union Charity Cowplop held in October. We have been a recipient of the Charity Cowplop since 2014. Our appreciation to MSDFCU for their partnership with SRA for many years

Williamson College of the Trades once again came to the farm to put their skills to work. Together they built the new run in shed in the front pasture.

Our thanks to Tracey Hepner for organizing and to Frank Viall for overseeing the project. A shelter from the sun and the cold wind!



Wehrungs Do It Best in Collegeville is a supporter of SRA! For the past few years, they have a Whinny Wish tree in their store full of SRA wish list items available through their store. We are grateful for the continued support of our program.

We moved from five ten-week sessions to four sessions, two of which are twelve weeks and two are 14 weeks. The 14-week sessions take into account the program closure for two weeks in December and two weeks in July.

You certainly noticed, a large white horse head that appeared by our sign on the road. We have no idea where this horse head came from but knew the eyelashes were way too much. Thursday volunteer, Erin Class took the horse head home and gave it a new look and we love it!!! Thank you Erin!



This Summer, Eagle Scout candidate and student, Jamie Bonawitz, built the new archway to the sensory trail. Thank you Jamie, it is being enjoyed by all!



Eagle Scout Candidate, Kevin Corr, also added Lighthoof Mud management webbing at the entrance of several paddocks to help eliminate the mud problems when taking horses through the gate.

In addition, we welcomed volunteer teams from SEI, GSK, Arcadia University, Rotary Club, TruMark Financial Credit Union, Lincoln School Leadership Academy and Allan Myers. We are so grateful to be the recipients of the generous donation of time and talents to help with projects around the farm.

SRA recently sponsored the updated CPR/First Aid and AED training for the instructional staff and key volunteers.



Thank you to everyone who rated SRA and shared feedback about your experiences earning us the 2023 Top Rated Great Non Profits Seal again this year. Visit greatnonprofits.org to see what folks are saying about us!

2024 Horses of SRA Calendar are now available in the office for \$20.00 They make a great holiday gift



SRA is once again partnering with North Penn School District to provide work opportunities as part of the KITE (Knights in Training Education) program. Every Wednesday, two students come to the farm with their job coach to complete different jobs around the farm! Everyone benefits from this partnership!

Rest in Peace our Dear Friend Lucky

You arrived two weeks after the loss of another great horse, Thunder. A cute, but a little chunky, Fjord from Ohio, and we welcomed you with open arms. You settled right in and we were all curious about the new horse called a "Fjord". You were so popular, with your distinctive two-tone mane and stripe, that we had to move your stall to the arena, so the students could concentrate on their grooming in the barn. That didn't stop you from trying to get attention. Anytime you saw anyone pass remotely near your stall, you would give a little nicker to encourage people to come visit you, who could resist? You loved your stall window so you could keep an eye on us! Of course there was work to do, so we started to introduce you to the world of therapeutic riding, which included lots of scary objects and noises. You noticed if the leader wasn't bothered by the objects or noises, it must be ok and you picked up on that very quickly. In addition to these lessons, we had to lose a few pounds and you took to exercise like a fish to water. You quickly became a lean therapeutic and loved the students.

You learned that this was a great place get lots of love, and treats. Speaking of treats, Lucky was the Horse of the Month for Mrs. Pastures Horse Cookies. You were also introduced to the Teeter Totter and the creek. You mastered the Teeter Totter quickly and you cautiously entered the creek. Once you got used to the creek, you didn't want to come out. You were too busy playing in the water. Unfortunately, you had a severe case of Colic and you were unable to recover. You gained your wings at the age of 20, five years after you arrived at the farm. We miss you greatly and we were glad you were able to spend time at Sebastians, helping children and adults. Your picture will be added to the wall of heroes located in the lounge. We miss you big guy.

Love Dad (Jeff L. horse sponsor, volunteer, board member)



Special Olympics 2023

By Coach Ruth Swartz

Participating in the Montgomery County Special Olympics equestrian team is very exciting for our athletes. This year we had 33 athletes complete ten weeks of training culminating into the County Qualifying Horse show in April. There is great demand to participate in the equestrian sport however we are limited by our resources, i.e. horse use and staff availability. The County Qualifying Horse show was held in April at SRA and it is always an exciting and inspiring event. All of the names of the blue ribbon winners who have interest in being part of the County team at State Games go into a hat and team member names are pulled. This year the team members whose names were pulled to travel to Penn State University in June included coaches: Ruth Swartz, Amy Ray, Melissa Costell, Sarah Bryan and Emma Roberto. The athletes were: Anthony Timinski, Megan Mullock, Ryan Long, Ravy Boch-Dwyer, Stephanie Wojton, and Caitlyn Darragh. There was practice, planning and lots of packing to be done. The horses (the equine athletes), Gunner and Trixie, left for Penn State at 6:15 in the morning. An hour later, the coaches and athletes boarded the charter buses ready to travel to Penn State. After two hours of driving, the buses pulled off the highway. An announcement was made: The Special Olympic Summer Games were canceled due to poor air quality from the fires in Canada. The horse trailer turned around to head back to Sebastian. The buses turned around to head back home. Everyone was disappointed, but the coaches were so proud of how the athletes handled themselves. They supported each other in their words and actions- demonstrating the good sportsmanship of Olympic Athletes.



SRA Welcomes the Newest Feline Greeter

By Jessica Buck

You are not doing a double-take: SRA now has two large black & white mousers on staff! Manny, a three-year old black and white cat, joins the ranks of farm cat, greeter, mouser extraordinaire, and friend for longtime feline resident, Felix. When selecting an appropriate cat to adopt for the farm, looks were 100% coincidental! It wasn't until we selected Manny, based on description, that we saw



a photo, and knew that it was meant to be! Felix has already taken Manny under his wing, as his farm mentor, and in appearance, big brother. Manny is excited for his new life at a horse farm, after growing up on the streets of Philadelphia. Rescued off the street as a youngster, he is now happy to have the serene farm atmosphere and comforts of a loving home. In return, he offers loving cuddles and rodent patrol. Manny joins SRA following the sad passing of sweet Ernie, who lived at SRA for several years. While Manny has big shoes to fill, he already has demonstrated his love for people, attention, and life on the farm.



Quakertown Vet Hosts Clinic

Dr. Randy Bimes and his staff hosted the SRA staff and volunteers for a Sunday afternoon learning about colic in horses. Colic is the leading cause of horse deaths.

Colic is a term used to describe intestinal pain generally as a result of gas or impaction. The best prognosis when dealing with colic is early detection. As there are many dedicated folks at the farm working with the horses, the more educated everyone is, the better the outcome for detecting colic early. We are so grateful to Dr. Bimes and the Quakertown Vet staff for sharing their time and helping us learn more about our equine partners.



EVERYDAY SHOULD BE STAFF & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY!

Even though only one day is designated as Appreciation Day, we applaud and celebrate them everyday! We count on our wonderful staff and volunteers everyday to make it possible. In 2022 our instructional staff of 15 provided services for 351 students. We had 157 volunteers donate 12,681 hours in service to Sebastian Riding Associates!!! Although one day doesn't nearly express our love and appreciation, it is a fun time to gather in friendship and support. This year, with the help of Project Escape, we joined forces to unlock the mysteries and escape! It was challenging and fun and we continue to learn more about the many talents of staff and volunteers. There is no escaping the equine charm at SRA!



Meet new herd members:



Meet Magic, a 14-year old, 15 hand, bay pinto draft cross gelding. Prior to coming to SRA, Magic was used in a camp program. Magic is a pretty laid-back guy that can make some really funny noises when talking to his friends.



This handsome red roan is Teto. He is an 18-yr old, 15 hand quarter horse on lease from this owner. Prior to coming to SRA, Teto was a reining horse and then retired to his current owner for trail riding. Teto can be quite lively in the field but put a saddle on his back and he immediately gets into work mode.



A Helping Hand Up Indeed

By Chris Hanebury

Sometime ago, SRA was approached by the Allan Myers group as a possible charity to participate in their Helping Hand Up initiative strengthening the communities where they live and work. SRA along with many other charities, was interviewed and we couldn't be more fortunate to have been selected. Although we had no idea of the depth of the generosity about to be bestowed on us, we were so excited about the prospects. For those that aren't familiar, Allan Myers is a design/build firm specializing in infrastructure from small paving projects to multi-hundred million dollar highway reconstructions.

Upon visiting the farm, we offered several prospective jobs where they could help and make a significant impact. The projects included repaving the area outside the barn that had been dug up to repair the water line leak. Second was paving of the floor in the indoor area as it was such a tripping hazard in its current state. Removal of the manure pile that was overflowing its boundaries and too costly to have the entire pad cleared, and finally, a generator to power the office(water supply) and barn during the many power outages sustained each year. Feeling incredibly fortunate to have any one of these projects completed, it was just beyond belief to have all of them completed. Allan Myers reached out to their sub contractors who generously stepped to the plate to help as well. Frank Viall and I recently had the opportunity to attend a reception for the Helping Hand Up recipients and all the employees and contractors that made literally made miracles happen for the participating charities.

If that wasn't enough, the interns at the Worcester office came to the farm to work together and tackle more projects. With the help and direction of board president, Frank Viall, they replaced all of the wood on the back and side of the barn AND built the Plinko game for the sensory trail. Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude for this partnership and our community.

