



Together ... People & Horses
Challenge ♦ Strengthen ♦ Inspire

TEC Connections

The Therapeutic Equestrian Center engages the power of horses to challenge people with special needs to build stronger bodies, minds, and spirits.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Winter Volunteer Training: Jan. 30 & 31
- Winter Riding Session: Feb. 10 - Mar. 23
- Spring Volunteer Training: Mar. 25 & 26
- Spring Riding Session: Apr. 7 - June 8

www.tecfarm.org

Contact TEC at
(269) 429-0671 or
info@tecfarm.org.



All TEC instructors are
certified by and TEC is
a member center of:



The Power of Persistence



Saturday morning lessons are now a joy for Olivia.

When generous supporters like you give of your time and money, riders like Olivia Whitcomb thrive. Olivia, who was born with Down Syndrome and autism, began riding at TEC when she was six years old. Even though she hated it at first, her parents kept bringing her, convinced that she would benefit from it.

Her instructor Autumn Zick says, *"When we first started lessons, Olivia was hesitant to try many tasks. Coordinating with her school teachers, therapists, and parents has made a big difference. I combine verbal directions with signing like they do in school. Riding gives her an opportunity outside of school to practice her school goals."*

Olivia is now nine years old and loves going to her Saturday morning lessons, which she calls "horse school" in sign language. She is now able to sit Szanghi's trot with minimal assistance (and usually with a giggle). She can tell her horse to "walk on", "trot", and "whoa".

Her mom, Rachel, feels that stimulation from the rocking motion helps Olivia to be more verbal. She and her husband, James, have become sidewalkers for Olivia, and would love to see a much bigger pool of volunteers to help with lessons.



Olivia strengthens her legs and improves her balance in a two-point position on Bess.

Gateway to Possibilities at TEC

Through a generous donation from the Frederick S. Upton Foundation, TEC is teaming up with Gateway Services in Benton Harbor. During their lessons, Gateway clients are learning to groom, lead, ride, and care for the horses. These activities provide exercise and social interaction along with increased self-confidence as they master new skills. Being in a barn around horses is a bit scary for some of the clients, but with courage, teamwork, and effort they have powered through and accomplished their goals. **Thank you to the members of the Upton Foundation!**

From Retirement to Dream Job



Debbie and Johnny model their Halloween hats for the camera.

When Debbie Kaniewski retired, she promised herself that she was NOT going to do any volunteering. But she moved from Illinois to Michigan, discovered TEC, and proceeded to break that promise.

Since last spring Debbie has become a regular at TEC, and describes the experience as being **"like a dream job; you don't even care if you get paid"**.

Debbie has taken over most of the maintenance and repairs at the barn, making her the unofficial head maintenance person.



One of Debbie's chores is bringing the horses in for dinner.

Debbie also volunteers for lessons three days a week, and has found the other volunteers and staff friendly and eager to help. She now counts many of them among her friends.

One of the things that keeps Debbie coming back to TEC is the exercise. **She finds the activity helps her "move parts that may not feel like moving that day". It is, she says, her "physical and mental therapy".**

According to Debbie, "If you like horses and people, TEC is a great place to be. There is no pressure, and the people there appreciate anything you are able to give, even if it's just one hour a week." Like Debbie, if you should decide to become a volunteer, you just may find yourself feeling "very fortunate to have found TEC."

Out to Pasture

After many years of service to TEC, this fall we retired our beloved horses – Tori, Bess, and Thunder. Tori was with TEC for 10 years. Bess and Thunder over 2 years each. They have been placed in loving homes where their work load will be lighter, and they can enjoy lots of TLC from their new families.



Thunder shows off his retirement garland.

To fill their shoes, TEC has been



awarded a grant from the Berrien Community

Foundation's T.E.A.M. Youth Advisory

Committee. The \$6,000 grant will be used to purchase new horses able to keep up with the growing demands of our expanding programs.

Thank you to the members of the T.E.A.M. Youth Advisory Committee!

Bess asks, "Where's MY carrot cake?"



Tori reaches for a bite of carrot cake.

GIFTS FROM SANTA COME ALL YEAR LONG



"The stockings were hung by the chimney with care in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there". We hope everyone had a great holiday and enjoyed time with family and friends.

As we say goodbye to another holiday, we wish to thank you for being a "Santa" with your past donations! You have helped many people make "I Did It!" moments happen at TEC. Like Alex who gains strength to someday walk like his peers. Or Olivia who didn't want to ride at first and now calls TEC "horse school".

These moments happen because of you and our amazing horses, who we call our "change agents". **Together you change lives!** And we couldn't do what we do without either of you.

We need more change agents and we need "Santa" to help us grow our horse team. It costs \$5,100 a year to care for one TEC horse. Multiply that times eight and it cost TEC \$40,800 a year in basic horse-related care.

We are asking for a gift to our general horse care fund. No matter the size of contribution it all helps TEC to feed, shelter, and maintain the health and wellbeing of the horses. We are as efficient with our funds as possible. We often use volunteers to care for our horses. We only have a couple of part-time staff members. We have also done our homework, to be sure we are spending wisely for what they need and maximizing the value of items purchased.

As our participant list grows, we have expanded the days and hours of our therapeutic riding sessions and programs. **Horses are vital to our success all year long.** In addition to our riding sessions, they play a key role in our summer day camps, TEC WITH VETS, and Saddle STARS programs.

We are expanding but we can't do this without horses. That is why it is so important for you to help!

Please donate today. Your gift will change lives. And, for that, we are most grateful - Thank YOU!



Give only what you can - \$5, \$25, \$50, etc.! Want to give more to Sponsor a Horse? See backside for details.

Yes! I want to support more "I DID IT!" moments at TEC with this tax-deductible donation.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

☐ Check or Money Order (Payable to: Therapeutic Equestrian Center)

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover Account Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____ (3-digit code on back of card)

Name of Cardholder (print): _____

Signature of Cardholder: _____

Mail your donation to: Therapeutic Equestrian Center, PO Box 1250, Niles, MI 49120

Save a stamp! Make your donation online using your debit/credit card or PayPal at www.tecfarm.org/donate.

Holiday/Year-End 2018

You Will Make a Difference!

Do you love horses? Maybe you always dreamed of owning a horse but have no place to keep it, limited time to ride and enjoy it, and no time to care for it. At TEC, we have a way for you to support your love of horses without having to worry about all the other stuff. Show your love of horses by becoming a sponsor of a TEC horse!

Sponsorship levels are for a **yearly donation** and can vary within that level:

- Pewter Sponsor – Up to \$299
- Bronze Sponsor – \$300 to \$1,449
- Silver Sponsor – \$1,500 to \$2,999
- Gold Sponsor – \$3,000 to \$4,449
- Platinum Sponsor – \$4,500 to \$5,099
- Titanium Sponsor- \$5,100



Sponsoring a TEC horse is a great way to honor or memorialize a loved one, or to promote a business, organization, or group.

Donors will be included at the level given with the exact amount kept confidential. The names of all donors will be listed on the horse's stall door (unless you wish to remain anonymous). Donors will also receive a picture of their horse.

You can also visit our website at www.tecfarm.org/sponsorahorse to make your donation online.

Have questions or need more information, please contact TEC at (269) 429-0671 or azicktec@gmail.com.

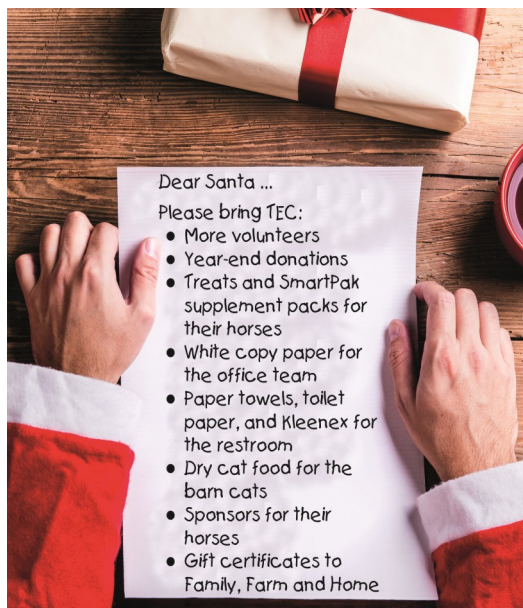
Want to Help? There's More than 1 Way!

Your Donation of Time and Service Help Us to Change Lives.

Volunteers are needed for ...

- Serving as horse leaders and sidewalkers for our school programs and therapeutic riding lessons.
- Assisting with our fundraisers and special events.
- Lending a helping hand with barn and pasture chores, and barn maintenance.
- Spreading the word about TEC.
- Teaching school children and young adults.
- Performing administrative and clerical duties.
- Creating communications and marketing collateral.
- Organize groups to dedicate a day at the barn.
- Growing our Board of Directors.
- More than we can list.

To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, visit www.tecfarm.org/volunteer.



Lincoln Elementary Super Saddle STARS



Avionna's smile says it all!

How would you like going to your job each morning knowing that the work was going to be a tremendous struggle? For Avionna, this is an everyday reality at school. That began to change, however, the day she came to the TEC barn. That was the day she got to put into action what she had learned from TEC's Saddle STARS program.

Avionna is a student in Tessa Shelton's special education class at Lincoln Elementary in St. Joseph, and this fall she and nine of her classmates spent six weeks taking part in the program.

Avionna's classmate, Stiles, found that the principles he learned in Saddle STARS applied in the classroom as well as at the barn. **These principles, called the Code of the West, were ones that cowboys lived by out on the range, such as "Do what has to be done!", "Finish what you start!", and Take pride in your work!"**. Mrs. Shelton also noticed her students taking to heart another Saddle STARS concept: **"Have a can-do attitude!"**.

The students loved learning about horses and cowboys, and according to their teacher, even sought out new books and videos to learn more about them. What great motivation to practice those reading skills they've been working so hard to learn at school!



Learn more about our school programs at www.tecfarm.org/schoolprograms.

Stiles enjoys a sense of accomplishment from riding Alex.



OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO RECENT DONORS



Stephen E. Upton & Elizabeth Vial Upton Charitable Lead Trust, Plym Foundation: The Moorings for Carol Mansfield, L.J. Sehy, Patricia Forbes, Ruth White, Rodney Wilder, Elizabeth Sexton, Julie & Kurtis DeJong, Ray & Patricia Zemaitis, Midwest Elite Racing LLC, Papa Vino's, Diane Conover, Beulah Woodfin, William Martindale, Barbara Priest, Clover Lee Wolford, James Lenhardt, DeWayne & Lori Helenga, Autumn Zick, Jeffrey Richards, Rachel & James Whitford, Nikos Restaurants, Inc., Bradford & Anne Jensen, Tom Wiczorek,

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Horses Change Lives Through TEC



**Gateway comes to TEC ...
THANK YOU
Frederick S. Upton
Foundation, for making
this program possible!**



Do you want to support a horse, volunteer, ride, or participate at the Therapeutic Equestrian Center? Visit our website at www.tecfarm.org, call (269) 429-0671, or e-mail info@tecfarm.org.