

Marianna Greene Henry Special Equestrians
Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind Foundations
29401 AL. Hwy 21 S.
Talladega, AL 35160

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit No. 155
Talladega, AL 35161

Name & Address

Unbridled Joy

Looking back and looking forward
Special Edition



THE MGH PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY GENEROUS GIFTS FROM FRIENDS

By Pat Greene – President MGH Foundation

For over twenty years the people at the MGH arena have been providing their unique form of therapy to the children and adults at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind thanks to numerous donations to our non-profit organization. As a result, thousands of therapy sessions have been given without charge and the quality of the program continues to grow. It is a program that has been nationally recognized by magazines and national press both here and in other countries.

The annual cost of programs exceed \$200,000 per year not counting special needs like building repair and expansions, special therapy equipment, horse additions, etc. AIDB pays some staff salaries and AIDB therapists provide their expert services. Fortunately, many donors have established endowments that permit earnings to flow into the program while maintaining the body of the endowment for the future.

Many companies, foundations and individuals make donations each year to allow the MGH staff to serve hundreds of special needs kids.

The depressed economy has hit MGH like all other charitable organizations but we are determined to maintain our program as planned. However, some emergency needs must be quickly addressed. Safety is top priority and we must address these needs before the next school year. Can you help us?

These are our pressing needs:

**30 riding helmets*

**tires for our arena truck*

**miscellaneous equipment for horse safety*

**Won't you please consider helping us raise the \$4,000
required to meet these critical needs?**

Mail your donations in the enclosed envelope...

Thank You!!!

What you will see at the MGH ARENA 2011-2012

EQUINE FACILITATED MENTAL HEALTH

This year we are very excited about the growth of our Equine Facilitated Mental Health program. This program has been piloted for 4 years here at MGH Arena. There are two parts to this very powerful program.

The first is called Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy program. This is done with a Counselor, Equine Specialist, equine and client. In this program counseling is held with the help of a horse. Hurdles can be cleared as the equine partner helps bring new things to light, bring comfort that sometimes people can not, and help the professionals to see things that were not as clear before.

The second is called Equine Facilitated Learning is held with an Educator, Equine Specialist, Equine Partner and the client. Student can build academic skills in a fun and safe environment. The sky is the limit on the different skills that can be gained such as: reading skills, math skills, comprehension skill, sequencing, following directions, team building, trust, and many more. This is a great new asset to the MGH programs

ADDED EQUINE SPECIALISTS

This year we are working to increase the number of Riding Instructors who are certified as equine specialists. This will allow us to service more students in the Equine Facilitated Mental Health programs. The instructors are very excited about this new opportunity.

EXTENDED HOURS

This year MGH will be trying out some extended hours. These added times will help us to provide the much needed one on one time for the EFMH Programs. This will allow more individuals and groups to benefit from our services.

HORSEMANSHIP 101

This year we will be riding back to the basics of horsemanship. Students will be learning life skills through learning the basics of horsemanship. They will be learning all about grooming, tacking, feeding, stable management, and much more. Riders will gain a firm foundation of knowledge and skills that will carry over into other areas of their lives. Riders will be encouraged to develop a relationship with their horses and learn to be responsible horse people. Care of their Equine partner will be stressed as they learn to be a confident leader both at the barn and in their lives.

NEW CLASS

As part of our Rider's Club program we hope to incorporate "Rhythmic Riding". This new and exciting addition can help students to learn to control their actions and reactions and learn to self regulate themselves. This program combines the use of music with riding to help promote new brain organization and development, not to mention it is A BLAST! Student will have a great time as we learn all kinds of new skills.

A Medieval Fairy Tale



“A Medieval Fairy Tale” is not only a production cast with the students from the MGH Special Equestrian Program, but also our four footed friends who provide therapy for the students at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind. This production was a first of it’s kind for MGH and was absolutely a team effort. The students love being in costume, and being involved in the theatrical aspect of the project. What makes the production unique as well is it was volunteer driven and written by a volunteer as well. 14 year old Cody Staeck of Ohatchee took on the job of writing and directing the play. His mother Michelle and sister, Aspen handmade each of the costumes, for both the students and the horses. There were 20 students involved in the play from ages 8 to 18. Members of the ASB Drama Club also assisted with the project.

The story line for the play is set with knights from throughout the kingdom who compete to become the winning knight who was sent to slay the ferocious dragon before he can gain the princess’s hand in marriage.

Some of the students are deaf, some are blind, and some are blind and or deaf and have developmental delays. They are a truly inspiring group who put on a truly inspiring performance.



Volunteers GIVE so much to the MGH Program; MGH gives back to volunteers in need

By now everyone has heard, seen or knows someone that has been impacted by the devastating tornado outbreak in April. One of our own volunteer families; the Staeck Family of Ohatchee lost everything; we were relieved to hear that no one was injured. “This family is so special to us and was instrumental in the medieval performance earlier in the year.”

Upon hearing the news the next day, MGH staff and volunteers sprang into action. The first mission was to rescue three of their horses, getting them veterinary help and bringing them back to MGH stables for recovery. On a wild twist, the three injured horses were retired MGH therapy horses that the Staeck family so generously put on their farm to live out their retired days in their beautiful grassy pastures. The horses will be at the arena indefinitely until the Staeck family can rebuild. Many thanks to Coosa Valley Feed, Triple Crown Feed and all of the individuals who donated funds to help pay vet bills and aftercare.

We would also like to thank all of the volunteers and also the staff of AIDB’s Health and Clinical Services Dept. who provided food, water, tarps and manpower for clean-up. There is still much more work to be done as the rebuilding process begins.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Staeck family.

Volunteers are the backbone of the MGH Special Equestrian Program. If you would like to volunteer, call Courtney Carbone at 256.761.3364 or email carbone.courtney@aidb.state.al.us

Also follow us on



Search mgharena

MGH would like to announce the newest member of the Marianna Greene Henry Board of Directors; Marcella Bennett. Marcella lives in Birmingham and is married to Jim Bennett. The Bennett’s have been strong financial supporters of the MGH program for several years. Marcella is not only an established business woman but she and her husband Jim were very good friends with Marianna in college and later years. Welcome Marcella!



MGH Riders Club brings home the **Gold** at the Special Olympic State Games in Troy, Alabama!

The Special Olympic Athlete: **Jacob Seago** competed in the Beginner 1 Class, Walk Only with Assistance. 2011 is Jacob's 4th year on the Riders Club team. He is 10 years old and attends the Helen Keller School.

The Unified Partners: **Dallas McMullen Schifferle** competed in the Beginner 1 Class, Walk Only with Assistance. 2011 is Dallas's first year on the Riders Club team. He is 8 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Deaf. **Kaleigh Gable** competed in the Beginner 1 Class, Walk Only with Assistance. 2011 is Kaleigh's first year on the Riders Club team. She is 8 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Blind.

Jacob Seago : *Equitation* -Silver, *Obstacle Course* – Gold, *Ring Grab/Weave* - Gold

Dallas McMullen-Schifferle (Unified Partner *Ring Grab/Weave* with Jacob) - Gold

Kaleigh Gable (Unified Partner *Working Trails* with Jacob) – Gold

The Special Olympics Athlete: **Ryan Hughes** competed in the Beginner 2 Class, Walk Only Independent. 2011 is Ryan's first year on the Riders Club team. He is 13 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Blind.

The Unified Partners: **David Mumford** competed in the Beginner 2 Class, Walk Only Independent. 2011 is David's first year on the Riders Club team. He is 17 and attends the Alabama School for the Deaf. **Cynthia Tillery** competed in the Beginner 2 Class, Walk Only Independent. 2011 is Cynthia's first year on the Riders Club team. She is 10 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Blind.

Ryan Hughes: *Equitation* -Gold, *Obstacle Course* – Gold, *Ring Grab/Weave* - Bronze

David Mumford (Unified Partner *Ring Grab/Weave* with Ryan) - Bronze

Cynthia Tillery (Unified Partner *Working Trails* with Ryan) - Gold

The Special Olympics Athlete: **Andrew Brown** competed in the Intermediate IV Class, Walk/Trot Independent. 2011 is Andrew's 10th year on the Riders Club team. He is 19 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Blind.

The Unified Partner: **Ashley Miller** competed in the Intermediate IV class, Walk Trot Independent. 2011 is Ashley's first year on the Riders Club team. She is 15 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Deaf.

Andrew Brown: *Equitation* -Gold, *Obstacle Course* – Gold, *Ring Grab/Weave* - Gold

Ashley Miller (Unified Partner *Ring Grab/Weave* with Andrew) – Gold

Ashley Miller (Unified Partner *Working Trails* with Andrew) – Gold

The Special Olympics Athlete: Danny Woodard competed in the Advanced Class, Canter Division. 2011 is Danny's 6th year on the Riders Club team. He is 16 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Blind.

The Unified Partner: Meesha Whisenant competed in the Advanced Class, Canter Division. 2011 is Meesha's 6th year on the Riders Club team. She is 16 years old and attends the Alabama School for the Deaf.

Danny Woodard : *Equitation* -Silver, *Obstacle Course* – Gold, *Ring Grab/Weave* – Gold

Meesha Whisenant (Unified Partner *Ring Grab/Weave* with Danny) - Gold
Meesha Whisenant (Unified Partner *Working Trails* with Danny) – Gold

WAY TO GO TEAM!!!!

