

The HETRA Heartbeat

Quarterly Newsletter with Updates
from Our Hearts to Yours!



2021 Calendar

Course C

Jun 21 - Sep 26

Course D

Sep 27 - Dec 19

Off Weeks:

September 7 - 13

Volunteer Olympics

Aug 21

Blue Jeans & Dreams

Sept 11

Drive to Ride

Oct 1 - Dec 31

We Walk So They Can

Ride, 2k/5k

Oct 2



A Letter From Lane

Earlier this year, Lane Cartwright, a masters OT student from Georgia State University, interned at HETRA for a few months. Recently she reached back out with the following letter.

I am so thankful for the experience and the mentorship that I received while interning at HETRA earlier this year. When I first arrived at HETRA, I was very excited but also nervous. I had just finished the last didactic semester of my occupational therapy program and moved across the country to complete my Level II Fieldwork closer to my fiancé. I felt very out of place in this entirely new environment and was experiencing a little bit of self-doubt in my abilities.

However, I received extensive support and encouragement as soon as I started here, not only from the therapists, but also from other HETRA employees and volunteers. I learned quickly that this was not only a well-organized facility but also a very close-knit family who constantly pushed each other to be better. Being in this environment made me want to be the best that I could be as well. I continuously felt motivated and inspired by the therapists and other employees I was working with. Their passion for HETRA and its participants was evident throughout their work and their many ongoing projects.

This fieldwork experience allowed me to refine and gain many skills such as teaching, leadership, problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity skills that will undoubtedly help me as I continue to grow. I've gained so much more confidence in my abilities as an occupational therapist which has significantly helped me in my current fieldwork. I am so grateful for all that I learned from my clinical instructor, Kaiti King, and everyone else who also offered me advice and mentorship. HETRA has made a meaningful impact on my personal life and my professional life, and I'm so thankful to have received this opportunity.



Connect With Us On Social!





More Than Just A Horse

Whether you follow HETRA on our social media platforms, attend our events, or just keep up to date with our emails and newsletters, you might have noticed that we sometimes refer to the horses of the HETRA Herd as our Equine Partners. There's a reason why we do that. During any given session or equine-assisted activity, the horse is working just as hard as the sidewalkers, the horse leader, and even the therapist and instructor. Our horses aren't our tools of therapy, they are our partners in therapy, and it takes a special kind of horse, with the right kind of personality, to work in this environment.

Every once in a while, you might see one of our horses retire from the HETRA barn and we have to find a replacement for them. This isn't an easy task, to say the least. Shelby, HETRA's Equine Operations Manager, travels far and wide throughout the year to find horses with the right temperament and physical ability, but it doesn't end there. When she thinks she's found a potential horse to join the HETRA Herd, that horse must then go through several weeks of a vigorous vetting program to see if he/she can handle all the variables that might be involved in an Equine-Assisted Services (EAS) session.

Studying The Bond Between Humans & Horses

A recent study out of Italy entitled "Inside the Interaction: Contact With Familiar Humans Modulates Heart Rate Variability in Horses," focused on the different factors involved with horses connecting with people. It found that horses tend to be more relaxed when "physically interacting with familiar handlers" that they have deemed as positive people. Horses are classified as prey animals, not predators. They can be incredibly sensitive, and they are definitely "affected by the positive or negative emotional valence" of the humans around them.

It goes without saying that everyone from HETRA's Equine Operations Manager, to the barn maintenance volunteers, to the groomers, the horse leaders, the sidewalkers, and

sidewalkers, the instructors and therapists work hard on a daily basis to maintain a positive relationship with each and every one of our horses. Likewise, when a horse is introduced to a new participant, our instructors and therapists are there to ensure that a positive connection is made so that the horse can be that much more instrumental in the EAS session with that individual.



It is understandable for an outsider to look at these large, majestic horses and think that nothing that big and strong could ever connect, understand, and empathize with the struggles of us humans. The fact is, these horses are a part of the HETRA Herd for that very reason. If you see them in a session, it means that they have passed every test that we put them through. It means that they are patient and kind, and willing to work with participants young and old. It means that they care about you, and they are there to help. Again, in this business, they are more than just horses, they are our Equine Partners.

Come Volunteer with us!

Do you love horses or spending time in the barn? Are you looking for some fulfilling volunteer work in the local area? Whether you have lots or absolutely no horse experience at all, there are plenty of ways for you to volunteer here!

For more info, go to www.HETRA.org or call us at 402-359-8830



*Change a
Life!*

*Saturday,
September 11, 2021
5PM*

*Get Your
Tickets
Today!*



Tickets Now On Sale!

Join us for a night of food, fun, games, and horses. Your attendance is guaranteed to change lives!

When: September 11th, 2021

Where: The HETRA Barn

Price: \$100/Seat

Tickets: Now Available for
purchase via
www.HETRA.org!



*Blue Jeans & Dreams
is currently sponsored by:*

*Mission
Sponsor:*



**Gretna
Wine & Spirits**



\$5000 or more

HyVee



**Henry & Aleta
NEUHAUS**

**Lou & Kathi
ROTELLA**



\$2500 or more



**Dr. Mike & Kathy
Gross**

PayPal

Gold Sponsors:

B Douglas Construction, Barb Cockerill, Bitterroot Farm, F&M Bank, J. Terry MacNamara, Janet & Louis Pol, Kalasek Family, Marathon Commercial Investment Real Estate, Northwest Feed & Grain, Quality Living Inc., Scheels Omaha, Seim Johnson, Terri & Darrell Everhart, TR Construction, Valley Corporation, Valmont Industries, Inc

There's still plenty of time to Sponsor this Amazing Event. Go to HETRA.org for Info

New Construction!

Last week, HETRA had a week off from sessions. We take these breaks a couple times a year to give our horses a break, as well as knock out some projects that would be hard to do with sessions going on. While the barn was quiet and empty, B Douglas Construction and JTM Plumbing broke ground on a massive project!

This construction project will bring two incredibly big changes to the West side of the barn, and we couldn't be happier about it! First, we are installing a brand-new washer and dryer! Having these units on site and in our barn will add functional independent living skills to the Life Skills curriculum as participants learn to operate the washer and dryer, sort clothes, determine loads, measure detergent, time management, and fold and stack clothes. It will also be an added convenience as we care for our Equine Partners, as we will now be able to wash and dry blankets, towels, and more for our horses in-house!

The second change that this project brings is the installation of a new, wheelchair accessible restroom! Adding a restroom to the West side of our barn is definitely a game changer as prior to now, our participants have had to go all the way over to the East side of barn to use the facilities. So, this will absolutely improve accessibility as well as be more convenient for our Life Skills participants since much of their programming takes place on the West side of our barn.

We are incredibly grateful to an anonymous, long-time supporter of our Life Skills programming for funding this important asset to the program.



Check out the Not Just A Pony Ride Podcast Today!



EPISODE # 1



EPISODE # 2



EPISODE # 3



EPISODES #4-5



EPISODE # 6



EPISODE #7



EPISODE #8



EPISODE #9



EPISODE #10

HETRA's Mini Ambassadors Are Earning Their Name!

Over the past few months, our mini ambassadors, Blue & Stormy, have been taking visits across the community to say hi to folks and tell them about the services we offer here at HETRA! So far, they have visited Hillcrest Health Services, CRCC, DUET Endeavors, Iowa Family Works Heartland Family Service, and the Heartland Therapeutic School of Council Bluffs. They also recently made a special guest appearance, saying good morning to the folks in line at a HETRA fundraising event hosted by Gretna Wine & Spirits!

As you can imagine, it isn't typical for a mini horse (let alone two) to visit these communities. Curiosity is peaked when our HETRA crew rolls up in a truck and trailer. When a pen is set up, and everything is ready, the minis strut out of the trailer like stars on the red carpet. It doesn't take long before Blue and Stormy bring out the smiles as the air is filled with cries of "they're so cute!" While the Minis are booked for the foreseeable future, be on the lookout for the next time we call for Mini Visit Requests. Maybe they can visit you someday!

We want to give a big **SHOUT OUT** and **THANK YOU** to Aksarben Foundation for funding the latest round of visits!



Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy
10130 S. 222nd Street
Gretna, NE 68028

**The
HETRA
Heartbeat**

*Quarterly Newsletter with Updates
from Our Hearts to Yours!*



