

The HETRA Heartbeat

Quarterly Newsletter with Updates
from Our Hearts to Yours!



2021-2022 Calendar

Course D
Sep 27 - Dec 19

Drive to Ride
Oct 1 - Dec 31

Course A
Jan 3 - March 27

Course B
March 28 - June 19

Off Week:
April 19- 25

Blue Jeans & Dreams
April 23rd



Drive to Ride *The Final Stride*

The end of 2021 is drawing near, and with it, our Drive to Ride campaign is closing in on its final fundraising stride.

Drive to Ride is an online fundraising campaign led by HETRA participant families. All funds raised throughout the duration of this campaign help HETRA maintain session fees at a reduced and affordable rate for all of our participants, regardless of their financial situation.

To help our participants and their families reach their fundraising goals this month, HETRA has hosted weekly contests and a \$2,500 flash match, with plans for one more contest and two more flash matches between now and the end of the year.

HETRA is also hosting an online fundraising auction from now until December 19th! Items can be bid on [HERE](#), and all proceeds will directly support our Drive to Ride teams, helping our participants receive access to our programming in partnership with horses while providing them with opportunity to gain confidence, coordination, strength, flexibility, and so much more!

With only two-and-a-half weeks left to raise \$33,500, HETRA's participants could really use your support! If you'd like to help our participant families and riders reach their goals by December 31st, please visit the Drive to Ride page on our website to donate. Thank you for your generosity!

DRIVE TO RIDE

GOAL:

\$125,000

100%

60%

20%

80%

40%

\$91,416



Connect With Us On Social!





New to the HETRA Herd!

We are so excited to announce that the HETRA herd is growing! Over the last year, we've added not one, not two, but **NINE** new equine partners to our HETRA family.

As we continue to grow the HETRA herd, it's important to remember that all of the hardworking horses in the HETRA herd aren't considered tools of therapy. They are our **partners** in therapy and our **family** at heart. One of our greatest joys here at HETRA is watching our participants build a one-of-a-kind bond with our equine partners in the herd, and we can't wait to see how each of these new, beautiful faces help us on our mission to improve the quality of life both physically and mentally of adults and children of all ability levels through equine-assisted activities.

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to:

- ♦ **Big \$** — a 16-year-old quarter horse gelding, coming to HETRA after a successful career as a show horse.
- ♦ **Frank** — a 10-year-old haflinger gelding, coming to HETRA to join the Carriage Driving team.
- ♦ **LaLa** — a 13-year-old miniature horse mare, coming to HETRA to join the Miniature Horse Onsite Learning Program.
- ♦ **Merry** — a 13-year-old miniature horse mare, coming to HETRA to join the Miniature Horse Onsite Learning Program.
- ♦ **Rhoda** — a 14-year-old paint mare, coming to HETRA following a successful career as a show horse.
- ♦ **Rita** — a 16-year-old quarter horse mare that truly LOVES people and being pampered.
- ♦ **Scarlett** — a 10-year-old quarter horse mare who hopes to join the Adaptive Riding program in 2022.
- ♦ **Stella** — a 9-year-old paint mare who is working in the Independent Riding, Adaptive Riding, and Therapy Services programs.
- ♦ **Thunder** — a 10-year-old draft cross gelding, coming to HETRA to join the Carriage Driving team.

Research in Motion

An exciting new research study is happening at HETRA, in conjunction with Creighton University! The project began this fall and will continue into 2022. This study will follow 15 children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and 15 additional children in a control group. This pilot project aims to determine the effects of a 6-week program on movement and social behavior of children with ASD, and to investigate the underlying mechanisms of why occupational therapy utilizing hippotherapy is successful for ASD through the coupling of physiological responses between horse and rider.



Before the 6-week program begins, participants have a pre-evaluation that includes an attention-following, joint attention protocol as well as a standing postural control assessment and other measures. The same evaluation is performed after the 6-week program in order to identify improvements. We are also collecting video and physiological data from the horse and the participant during their sessions via small sensors that record data, such as heart rate and movement. We are looking forward to analyzing data, identifying common themes, and seeing preliminary results soon in 2022! To learn more about this project, listen to the ['Not Just a Pony Ride' podcast episode #17](#) featuring Anastasia Kyvelidou discussing more specifics and our hopes in discovery with this project!

Professionals working on this project include: **Edye Godden**, OTR/L, HPCS, CTRI, ESMHL; **Kaiti King**, OTD, OTR/L, CTRI; **Katherine Smith**, OTR/L, CTRI, ESMHL; **Anastasia Kyvelidou**, PhD; **Kirk M. Peck**, PT, PhD, CSCS, CCRT, CERP; **Dimitrios Katsavelis**, PhD; **Maya, Almazloun**, BS



Learning Beyond the HETRA Barn

This Fall, HETRA staff and volunteers partnered with schools in North Omaha and Fremont to explore academic, social, and emotional learning with children in kindergarten through fifth grade through the help of our beloved equine partners. While a formal education is important for children, the shaping of young minds extends well past the hours spent in the classroom. HETRA recognized this and saw an opportunity to partner with our miniature horses and after-school programs in the surrounding areas to integrate equine education with academic learnings.

Merry and LaLa joined the herd in the fall and joined forces with Blue and Stormy to pilot the program. The miniature horses were perfect for the after school program. They are easier to transport and less intimidating to young children who may not have much experience with horses or large animals.

A core curriculum for the program was carefully constructed to include hands-on lessons that focused on safety, health and nutrition, boundaries, teamwork, and communication skills, all while relating back to horses and humans alike. With a plan in place, the Minis loaded up and headed out, ready to help students learn beyond the four walls of the school. The program included twenty-two events, consisting of a six-day program for two North Omaha schools, and a two-day program for five Fremont schools, each of which was incredibly successful.

After seeing the successes of the Miniature Horse Onsite Learning Program, HETRA hopes to expand their reach in the spring to partner with schools in the Lincoln and greater Omaha area. There's also a goal to broaden their curriculum to include lessons in math, reading, science, and more.

For more information on the Miniature Horse Onsite Learning Program, please contact Cassidy Fredrickson at cfredrickson@HETRA.org, or call (402)359-8830.



Return of the Adaptive Carriage Driving Program!

HETRA is happy to announce the return of our Adaptive Carriage Driving program in the spring of 2022! With the recent addition of Frank and Thunder to the HETRA herd, we are nearly ready to once again offer driving sessions to our participants!

Our Adaptive Carriage Driving program offers participants who do not wish to be or cannot be mounted on a horse the rewards of interaction and control of a horse while driving from a carriage seat. A horse and carriage gives participants an alternative or an addition to riding, opening up the world of horses to those who may be unable to ride due to weight, balance, fatigue, fear of heights, the inability to sit astride, or other issues.

Be on the lookout for more information on when the program will resume sessions in 2022!





**SAVE THE
DATE**

**SATURDAY
APRIL 23RD
2022**

**SILENT AUCTION
WHISKEY TASTING
BBQ DINNER
WINE TOSS
DANCING
& MORE**

**Tickets go on sale
Mid-February!**



**For more info, please contact Angie Connell
at AngieC@HETRA.org or call (402) 359-8830**

COME VOLUNTEER WITH US!

For more information,
contact Rachelle Tidwell,
HETRA's Volunteer
Operations Manager
at: 402-359-8830 or
rtidwell@HETRA.org



**BARN
MAINTENANCE**



**SESSION
VOLUNTEERS**



**GREETER
VOLUNTEERS**

Join Our Family Today!

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

Be the Difference!

Are you looking for some fulfilling volunteer work in the local area? Spend your free time doing something you can be proud of, while making a difference in the lives of our participants. HETRA is powered by volunteers, with over 240 volunteer shifts a week. We currently have openings for barn maintenance helpers, session, and greeter volunteers.

Whether you have a ton or absolutely no horse experience, there are plenty of ways for you to volunteer! We'll teach you what you need to know to be the difference in our participants' lives. All volunteers must be at least twelve years of age.

Sign-up for a volunteer tour through the HETRA website, or contact Rachelle Tidwell, HETRA's Volunteer Operations Manager for more information! Call (402)359-8830 or email: rtidwell@HETRA.org.

"Five years ago, I was looking for some way to give back, but wasn't sure what to do. Then I found HETRA. I had such a love of horses as a child that I thought HETRA would be perfect. Now, not only do I get to spend time with the horses and help others, but I have gained a second family. When I walk into the barn and see my friends (horses and people alike), all my stress goes away. It's my bliss." —HETRA Volunteer

We Couldn't do it Without You!

From constantly changing COVID-19 protocols, a storm-damaged roof, and everything in between, 2021 has been a whirlwind of challenging obstacles here at HETRA. Despite these challenges, our goal to keep equine-assisted services available to everyone who seeks them, regardless of their ability to pay, has stayed the same.

While we are beyond thrilled to announce that the number of weekly participants at HETRA saw a steady increase this year, we also faced a 43% increase in the need for financial assistance for our HETRA families.

With your support, we were able to welcome these new faces to the HETRA family, knowing our generous sponsors and donors would help us face the increase in financial need with a smile. Whether you chose to donate, shopped from our wish list, volunteered your time, or helped to spread the word about HETRA in 2021, your support didn't go unnoticed.

On behalf of all the HETRA staff, volunteers, and our participants and their families, we THANK YOU for your generosity and continued support during these hard times. Your support made a huge difference in the lives of each and every one of our participants, and we honestly couldn't have made it through 2021 without your help.



Can you Imagine?



Imagine... you've spent your whole life in a wheelchair, always looking up at people and dependent on your caregivers to get you from place to place.

Now imagine coming to a place where you are assisted onto a large warm horse. Imagine the freedom you now have as the horse acts as your legs and carries you where you want to go. Imagine instead of always looking up at people from your chair, now having others look up at you.

IMAGINE THE CONNECTION



Imagine... you have spent your entire life in hospitals, doctors offices and therapy clinics. It has been 3 months since you started riding once a week.

Now imagine you are stronger, can now sit more independently, and even take more steps with less assistance. Imagine what it is like to go to the barn and do your therapy with a 1200 pound partner that has 4 hooves and a huge heart.

IMAGINE THE FUN



IMAGINE THE FOCUS



IMAGINE THE COMMUNITY



If you can imagine all of this, then you can begin to imagine the magic that happens at HETRA, each and every day.

Become a part of all this by joining us in supporting our participants in each of their unique journeys. Your support ensures that individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and ability levels can continue to have their lives changed every day! Together we can create a lasting impact!

At the end of last month, HETRA sent out our Annual Fund letter, and in the following weeks, we began to see your contributions roll in. Through your support, we've managed to reach our halfway goal for the Annual Fund, which is absolutely great news! But with the needs of our wonderful participants in mind, we can't afford to stop there.

While it's easy to see the impact HETRA has made in the lives of our participants, their families, and even within our community, we can't do it without your loving help! Can you imagine what a difference YOU can make with the easy click of a button? Give the gift of changing a life this holiday season! We promise you that your donation, no matter how big or small, will truly make a difference in the lives of our participants and their families.

If you wish to support HETRA's mission, but have not had a chance to send in your donation yet, please visit HETRA's website (www.HETRA.org), visit the Donate page, and submit your generous gift through the "[Make a Donation](#)" tab. As always, thank you for your continued support and generosity! Together, we'll continue to change lives one stride at a time.

Amazon Smile Helps HETRA and Other Non Profits

As you wrap up your last-minute holiday shopping, keep HETRA in mind and shop through AmazonSmile! Shop for your same products at the same prices, and AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of all eligible products to the charity you choose! Visit <https://smile.amazon.com> to sign up, choose HETRA, and make a difference with your shopping!





HETRA

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