

## HOPE SPRINGS EQUESTRIAN THERAPY, INC.



### HOPE SPRINGS EQUESTRIAN THERAPY RECEIVES \$6,000 GRANT FROM CHRISTOPHER & DANA REEVE FOUNDATION TO HELP RIDERS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD INJURIES

**CHESTER SPRINGS, PA – JULY 9, 2012 – HOPE SPRINGS EQUESTRIAN THERAPY, INC.** is proud to announce that it has received a \$6,000 Quality of Life grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. The award was one of 69 grants totaling almost \$425,000 awarded by the Reeve Foundation to nonprofit organizations nationwide that aid in providing more opportunities, access, and daily quality of life for individuals living with paralysis, their families, and caregivers. Created by the late Dana Reeve, the program has awarded 2,055 grants totaling over \$15.6 million since 1999.

Founded by Elena Gonzalez Shaffer in 1997, Hope Springs provides high-quality personalized equestrian therapy to nearly 100 children and adults with disabilities each year. This generous grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation will help Hope Springs deliver therapeutic horseback riding to individuals who have experienced traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.

“We are extremely honored to receive this highly-competitive Quality of Life grant,” said Senior Instructor and Executive Director Jeannie Knowlton. “This year, we welcomed several riders from ReMed, a supported living program for adults with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Each ReMed rider uses a wheelchair -- that is, until they get on a horse!”

During therapeutic riding lessons, these students require a little extra assistance and specialized tack to ride safely, but otherwise become just like everyone else. “Our riders use equestrian therapy to work on their posture, balance, endurance, strength, and more,” said Knowlton. “We are so pleased to see them overcome obstacles and gain independence while bonding with their instructors, volunteers, and horses. We look forward to using the Reeve Foundation’s grant to acquire needed equipment and offer therapeutic riding to even more students with traumatic brain and spinal injuries.”



Pictured: Instructor Melanie McCartney and volunteers Jennifer Lord and Biff Rugh enjoying an afternoon lesson with rider Julie S. Injured in an accident at age 7, Julie's back strength, core muscle tone, limb sensation, and concentration have all improved since she began riding at Hope Springs.

A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; MEMBER, PA COUNCIL ON THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP  
PA ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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“The Reeve Foundation believes that each of the nearly six million Americans living with paralysis deserves access to the best programs and services available. The [Quality of Life Grants Program](#) supports other nonprofit organizations that not only believe in that same independence, but achieve great success in carrying out their programs’ missions,” said Peter T. Wilderotter, president and CEO of the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation. “We are honored to recognize these organizations which empower those affected by paralysis.”

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Quality of Life grants program was conceived by the late Dana Reeve to address the myriad needs of children and adults with paralysis and other mobility impairments and their families. Grants support critical life-enhancing and life-changing initiatives that improve physical and emotional health and increase independence. Funded projects offer a diversity of services and approaches: improving access; providing education and job training; sponsoring organized sporting activities; and much more. Quality of Life grants are funded through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Award #1U59DD000838).

### **About the Reeve Foundation**

*The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy. For more information, and to review the entire list of Quality of Life grant recipients, please visit our website at [www.ChristopherReeve.org](http://www.ChristopherReeve.org) or call 800-225-0292.*

### **About Hope Springs Equestrian Therapy, Inc.**

*The mission of Hope Springs is to enhance the quality of life of individuals with cognitive, physical, emotional or behavioral disabilities by providing them with affordable therapeutic riding and associated special education of the highest possible quality, in a warm, safe and supportive environment. To learn more about our programs and view photos of our riders demonstrating what they have accomplished, please visit us on on-line at [www.HopeSprings.org](http://www.HopeSprings.org) or [www.Facebook.com/HopeSpringsOrg](http://www.Facebook.com/HopeSpringsOrg), call 610-827-0931, mail PO Box 156, Chester Springs, PA 19425, or visit us at 1105 Green Lane Road in Malvern, PA.*

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Volunteer Frank Berta helps Cecilia mount her horse Beauty.



Cecilia enjoys a lesson, assisted by volunteers Jennifer Lord and Biff Rugh.



Cecilia experienced a traumatic brain injury when she fell from a horse while working at a race track 25 years ago. Cecilia communicates clearly and is well-balanced in her motorized wheelchair, but cognitive deficits impact her thinking, level of understanding, and attitude. Riding a therapy horse has helped to lift Cecilia's spirits and enhance her social skills, while moving with the motion of her horse continues to improve Cecilia's flexibility and body awareness, letting her ride longer.





Volunteers Frank Berta, Biff Rugh, and Jennifer Lord help Julie remain safely astride her therapy horse Cricket.



Julie's back strength, core muscle tone, limb sensation, and concentration have all improved since she began therapeutic riding lessons at Hope Springs. At the age of 7, Julie's head was accidentally caught in a car window, resulting in an anoxic injury that makes it hard for Julie to speak clearly or feel or control her limbs. During each lesson, volunteers help transfer Julie onto her horse, where she can sit upright without assistance, center herself, steer her own horse, and focus on completing therapy tasks assigned by her instructor. Julie works very hard to do as her instructor asks, and loves grooming her horse Cricket and cuddling barn cat Smudge at the end of each lesson.

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Instructor Melanie McCartney enjoying an afternoon lesson with Julie, assisted by volunteers Jennifer Lord and Biff Rugh.

