

Inside...

Page 2

President's Report

Page 3

Horses, Riders
and Volunteers

Program Coordinator Report

Page 4

Pledge Ride Cancelled

Pyramid Stables Report

Page 5

Our Volunteers

Page 6

What Makes a Good
Therapeutic Horse?

This is Prince!

Page 7

Sponsors, Benefactors
and Service Clubs

Fundraising Fiscal Report

Back page

Board of Directors



Meet Luke!

Our son Luke is 7 years old and has been riding with ETRA for 2 years. He has a complex medical history including surgeries for craniosynostosis and syndactyly. He has a ptosis of his right eye and has undergone 2 surgeries to correct it. In total he has had 7 surgeries. He has also been diagnosed with autism and neurological challenges. Currently Luke is working on his gross motor movement, balance, speaking, and social relationships!

It has now become a wonderful routine to attend the therapeutic horse riding on Wednesday afternoons. When we arrive at Pyramid Stables, Luke loves to walk into the stable waiting area and look out for Tom and Jerry who are always there with smiles, big hellos, and high-5's for him! After getting his helmet and riding belt on he waits for "Buddy and Sheila" and the wonderful volunteers who come weekly to walk beside him. He has 3 volunteers who in conjunction with Sheila, delight in him, take great care of him, and love to hear his laughter ring out as he trots on Buddy! We all look forward to that laughter!

The therapeutic horse-riding has helped Luke to have stronger core muscles. Due to that, he can now walk with a more "normal" gait and has better balance. He learned how to ride a 2 wheeler without training wheels this past spring and this summer actually started running! Tears of joy streamed down our faces as we saw him running across the grass for the first time. It was one of those beautiful moments that you never lose the feeling of. Everyone at ETRA engages Luke in conversation and is so patient waiting for his responses. We so love seeing the same riders and families week to week and encouraging each other. I personally have developed a friendship with another mother whose daughter rides at the same time as Luke and thus while Luke receives the amazing benefits of riding; I receive the gift of having time with a friend.

We are very grateful to Sheila and the amazing volunteers who provide this extraordinary service to families who have extraordinary lives. The quote, "It takes a village to raise a child" is so important for any family, but for the life of a special needs family it becomes a lifeline. Thank you for the very important role you play in being part of our village! – Lisa Chlysta



ETRA's 2016 Featured Rider Luke!

**Proud to be the recipient of
United Way Central & Northern
Vancouver Island funding**



**United Way
Central & Northern
Vancouver Island**

President's Report

The year 2015 was another good year for ETRA thanks to everybody involved in this great program - our clients, our instructor, our volunteers, Pyramid Stables and not to forget the patient and hardworking horses. We all enjoyed two sessions without incidents, with lots of laughter and joy and accomplishments.

Fundraising, Sponsors And Donors

Due to a very hot and dry summer we were forced to cancel our biggest in-house fundraiser, the Pledge Ride. The hot dry summer resulted in the closure of the back country trails to recreational use due to extreme fire danger. It was a tough decision for the board to make.

ETRA enjoys on-going financial support from various organizations, service clubs, municipalities and individuals. This continues to provide a solid base for our current and future operations.

ETRA volunteered and was present at two major community events this year: the Parksville Beachfest (the sandcastle sculpture competition) and the Lord Strathcona's Musical Ride held at Arbutus Meadows. Thanks to the funds generated from these events, as well as to the efforts of our hard-working fundraising team of Barry Galenzoski, Gordon Reid, Hanna Coulson and a new member, Laura Beck, we were able to financially mitigate the cancellation of the Pledge Ride.

Clients

We continue to enjoy strong support from our client base with full enrolment in both 2015 sessions.

THANK YOU to Lisa Jaggard for having coordinated the client activity for the board with a very sympathetic and diligent approach.

Positive feedback from clients and caregivers shows that our program is running successfully and smoothly.

Volunteers

The volunteers are the backbone of ETRA. All of them - the ones who have been with ETRA for a long time and the ones who have recently joined - never cease to impress me with their tremendous passion, their joy, their great humour and with their energy to assist our riders and our program.

Thank you all for helping with this great program! Thank you to those who always go that extra mile to assist and help out!

A very special THANK YOU goes to Karen Anker for coordinating, organizing

and caring for ETRA's great volunteers. Her experience and passion for therapeutic riding and all that is involved is very important to the success of our program.

Another big THANK YOU goes to C.J. Poznansky who organized the schedules for the Community events. She assists Karen in showing our appreciation for the great work our volunteers do. CJ also donates her talent as a graphic designer and artist by compiling our newsletter and creating all the materials that promote and present ETRA in a very professional manner.

Instructor

Over the last number of years Sheila Morrison has shaped our program to achieve the best results for our clients. Her organized volunteer orientation sessions are very well received by all, and we learn a lot from Sheila. The Board extends its appreciation for her continued support and direction.

Pyramid Stables

Pyramid has been very supportive and has remained very responsive to our needs. The arena and riding trails are in good shape.

ETRA Board

It is very important to remember that all board members are volunteers. Therefore it can't be stressed enough how impressive the high level of involvement by each and every member of the board is!

Barry Galenzoski, Past President, is very knowledgeable and is always willing to help, to take over, and to contribute in all situations and in all discussions that arise.

Jennifer Thomson, who as a newcomer, takes time to observe and contribute in a very knowledgeable and subtle way to our discussions. Great that she now became Vice President!

Kathy Calder, our diligent and thorough Secretary, who in addition to taking precise minutes and looking after all the paperwork, provides much invaluable insight into the operation of Pyramid Stables and into the horses we lease for our program.

Debra Vincent, our Treasurer, not only looks after our finances, she also keeps track of the funds received thanks to the great efforts of our fundraising team.

Great to have on board, Patricia Thomson-Turner who took over the program coordinator position!

Marie Morton and Gary Petersen, Members at Large, can both be counted in to do their utmost to ensure special events are successful.

Lila Whitley, our Special Events Coordinator, spent months preparing for our 2015 Pledge Ride, looking after every detail, only to have it cancelled. She is not discouraged and will organize the 2016 Pledge Ride next year! Way to go!

Philip Hopewell, our Equipment Manager, looks after ETRA's owned equipment - everybody loves the new baby blue and pink saddle blankets! Philip also arranged a new roof on the tack shed to ensure all our equipment stays dry.

All the Board Members have done a great job and their desire for ETRA to succeed is obvious.

I want to thank the Board members who stepped down:

Gordon Reid, who despite stepping down as a board member, agreed to continue looking after on-line applications for our fundraising.

Lisa Jaggard who looked after the program coordination for our clients.

Thank you both so much! Your presence on the Board will be missed. We consider ourselves very lucky that you will remain active with the program!

As for myself, after many years as an ETRA volunteer and now after my first year serving in the position of President, I am first and foremost grateful to observe and learn from this great program. Whether it be from our clients whose joy, optimism, bravery and gratitude I experience in each and every session; from our volunteers who are engaged, passionate and reliable; or from our instructor who is so knowledgeable about horses and about their interaction with our clients. Being part of ETRA is indeed a very humbling and rewarding experience.

Thank you all! -Gini Eder, ETRA President





Horses, Riders and Volunteers

Horses are not easy to ride. They are expert readers of body language and emotion, and are as opportunistic as dogs when it comes to having it their way. Most if not all beginning riders have experienced the frustration of being out-manuevered by a horse or pony, especially pony, who does not feel from the rider the impulse to co-operate. Horses become co-operative only if their riders sit well upon them, with balanced, deep, quiet seats which result from a set of strong core muscles.

Very few, if any, of ETRA's clients have strong core muscles. Indeed, they come to us to develop those muscles. Only when they have some core strength can they develop the posture of a rider, and with much practice gain the coordination, timing and understanding of what to do with their bodies that will allow them to communicate clearly to the horses, who will then (almost always) do as they are

asked. Riding only once a week, six months of the year, makes learning how to walk, let alone trot independently, a monumental task for our clients.

It would be impossible for me to help them attain this goal if it were not for the hours and hours of help so graciously provided by our volunteers. I need help fitting the riders with helmets and belts, and with mounting them on the horses. I need horse handlers who at first are prepared to do everything for the rider, but then gradually yield control and foster independence in the rider, while keeping both horse and rider happy and safe. I need horse handlers and sidewalkers who are prepared to trot (run!) for longer and longer stretches of time. I need sidewalkers who are attentive to the rider's every need, whether that be for support or safe independence. Here at ETRA I need horse handlers and sidewalkers who, within a group lesson, will

allow me the luxury of giving extra attention to the rider or riders for whom independence is the immediate goal.

I am happy to say that I have, and have always had, just such help from each lesson's start to finish, and clients Lynn and Nicholas come to mind as model beneficiaries of all of those months and years of volunteering. With ETRA, both of them have learned how to do a rising trot. Lynn, before she graduated, could trot Turbo around the arena, posting, by herself. Nicholas can now post around the arena, and with a bit more practice, he'll soon have what it takes to gain Addy's co-operation and trot by himself. None of this could have happened without the help of a small army of dedicated volunteers, and we should all be very proud of our client's, and ETRA's, accomplishments. And of course grateful to Addy and Turbo, and all the other horses too.
 – Sheila Morrison, ETRA Instructor

Program Coordinator Report

2015 was another successful and rewarding year for the 40 plus clients who all enjoyed the eleven week spring session and then the eleven week fall session. As in the past our classes are held on Tuesday and Wednesday with five one hour classes on each day, with a maximum of four riders per lesson. Once again, in 2015, our lessons were filled to capacity and we welcomed clients from our waiting list. We are always delighted to see many of our clients returning to each session from year to year.

I joined ETRA in the spring session of 2015 as a side walker and I have found my time here both rewarding and fulfilling. I was soon asked to join the ETRA board and with the encouragement of our president I was asked to become the program coordinator since Lisa, our former program coordinator was hoping to step down from this position. With Lisa's assistance, guidance and encouragement I have enjoyed learning the duties of this position. I have enjoyed working with all of the clients and their caregivers to find a location on the program that is suitable for each and every one of them. Every Wednesday afternoon I enjoy my role as side walker since this gives me the special time getting to know the clients and to watch their progress from week to week. It gives me such delight to witness their strengths and see how they have overcome their fears, how they have improved their coordination from the joy of being on a horse. I am looking forward to a successful 2016 for ETRA and our clients.

–Patricia Thomson-Turner, Program Coordinator

*"We make a living
by what we get
but we make a life
by what we give."*

~Winston Churchill

ETRA appreciates the generous support of:



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MID ISLAND



District of Lantzville

26th Annual Pledge Ride Cancelled

Everything was in place to make 2015 a stellar Pledge Ride event, however, the weather was not so cooperative.

The 2015 event was to take place on Sunday, September 20th at Arbutus Meadows. The ride takes place on private land owned by Island Timberlands. About six weeks before the ride, we learned the logging company closed the area to all public recreational traffic. Logging the area was also halted. The reason for the closure was the extreme dry weather and the fear of fire caused by humans and animals (sparks from metal horseshoes against rocks).

The Board also learned that several other riding events in the area had been cancelled due to fire danger. At the regular Board meeting of the Directors on August 26th, with regret, the members voted unanimously to cancel the 2015 Pledge Ride.

Pledge ride donators (Quality Foods, Thrifty's, Tim Hortons, Coast Realty,) and top prize contributors (Buckerfields, Old Country Market, Bridles and Bits, Trading Post and Shar-Kar) were advised by telephone and email of the cancellation. All 5 prize contributors agreed to use 2015 gift certificates for the 2016 ride. Any 2015 Pledges collected will count towards 2016 funds raised by Pledge collectors – they were advised accordingly.

Many of the supporters were very disappointed the ride was cancelled; however, look forward to 2016 with renewed vigor. I am hoping the 2016 ride will be the best yet.

– Lila Whitley, Special Events Co-ordinator



www.pyramidstables.com



Ranger



Buddy

Pyramid Stables and Farm Inc.

ETRA had another great year operating from Pyramid Stables and Farm Inc. in Lantzville. As usual, things rarely stay the same at Pyramid as they continue to grow and offer more services and programs each year.

The Pyramid farm market added a produce fridge this summer which was always filled with freshly picked items from Jenny's organic garden. Free range eggs were a popular item and you need to get there early to get them. Jenny's fall harvest of pumpkins, various types of squash and huge sunflowers made for impressive displays around the barn. The produce flourished thanks to the magic of Howie's composted manure. Fence posts are going in as I write to expand the garden area once again.

This summer, two very lucky puppies got to call Pyramid Stables and Farm home. Ranger, a quiet laid back guy, and Zen, a ball of energy who never stays still. Watching them grow and play has been fun for the clients, caregivers and volunteers alike. Ranger is now bigger than Zen and getting some of his own back!

There were several new horses to Pyramid Stables this year, none of which were appropriate for our therapeutic program. ETRA continues to have the use of various sized ponies and horses available ensuring that as our clients grow they are able to move to larger horses. Thanks to the great weather this fall, we were able to continue taking our clients on trail rides well into November. The clients and volunteers alike really enjoyed the extra outdoor rides.

This fall the ETRA outdoor equipment shed received a new shingle roof replacing the aging shake roof. The deck of our outdoor emergency ramp had become slippery in spots, so it received a new shingle decking at the same time.

This year also saw Cherish, Howie and Jenny's daughter, move back to the farm. Cherish reinstated her fitness training programs which she operates from the upstairs barn studio. Cherish assists Jenny with coaching as needed as well.

Looking forward to 2016 at Pyramid! – Kathy Calder

Donate online through
CanadaHelps.org
by visiting our website
www.etra.ca



Our Volunteers

We have completed another successful year of therapeutic riding with our clients. Volunteers are the backbone of ETRA and we have never yet had to deny a rider because there were not enough volunteers in place.

For 2015 we had 74 volunteers on our masterlist, 63 women and 11 men coming from Nanaimo, Ladysmith, Nanoose Bay, Lantzville, Parskville, Gabriola Island, Qualicum, Errington, Bowser and Coombs.

An initial responsibility of volunteers is to attend orientation sessions. These sessions provide information, review, and hands-on demonstrations to ensure we are providing a safe environment for all involved. After training, volunteers give of themselves each week making our clients riding experience possible. They come help for hours in the mud or dust, the hot or cold. Volunteers carry, sweep, shovel, set-up, take-down, schedule, organize, and attend extra events in addition to being there for our clients.

It's what we, as volunteers, get back that makes all the effort worthwhile. Witnessing the progress the clients make in confidence and strength is rewarding. Hearing the giggles of the riders when they experience trotting makes everyone smile. Seeing the clients light up when they see their horse coming to the ramp for them to ride is heart warming. It's these reasons that our volunteers keep returning to be part of this amazing program.

On behalf of the ETRA Board, clients, parents and caregivers thank you for your dedicated support & energy. Know that without you ETRA could not exist. - C.J.





Laz

What Makes a Good Therapeutic Horse?

The best therapeutic horses have a history of “been there, done that” as the safety of the clients and volunteers is foremost. It takes a very special horse to take part in a therapeutic program and not all horses are suited to becoming a therapeutic horse... some are too young, some are too nervous, some aren't mentally able to cope with all the demands. Therapeutic horses must be calm with good ground manners. They must be willing to accept handling by different people whether being groomed, tacked or participating in a session. Therapeutic horses must be tolerant of having sidewalkers on either side of them as they work. Some clients make loud and unexpected noises, and some are unable to sit quietly on the horse's back. A therapeutic horse needs to have a low flight response to cope with these noises and movements. The horses must be able to deal with mixed signals coming from their handler and their rider as the rider may be asking the horse to do something different than the handler. For therapeutic horses, the sessions are often more mentally exhausting than physically tiring. The horses must have a “take it all in stride” attitude when dealing with all that is going on around them. While there are full time therapeutic horses, the horses ETRA uses are all part of Pyramid's year round hunter jumper lesson programs. So for those horses, being a therapeutic horse is just one more skill these great horses offer.



Addy



Buddy



Tulsa



Pepper



Turbo



Chester

You see a Horse. We see...

*Freedom.
Courage.
Strength.
Heart.
Grace.
Therapy.*

This is Prince!

I teamed up with Prince as a horse handler for ETRA two years ago. Our first encounters were not always rewarding for me in that Prince had an occasional tendency to nip and head butt when you least expected it. Now don't get me wrong. As a therapeutic horse, Prince is, as his name suggests, great at what he does for ETRA and all his riders enjoy their time with him.

I think initially Prince decided that a novice horse handler could be a bit intimidated so the occasional nip or head butt were OK in his mind. Fortunately ETRA's professional instructor, Sheila Morrison, saw what was happening and give me a few hints on how to help Prince see the error of his ways.

The fact that I made it a habit to arrive at my Tuesday morning sessions early so I could give Prince the opportunity to graze on grass outside his paddock plus get in some extended grooming didn't hurt either.

Today Prince and I have a mutual respect for each other. He is always waiting for me by the paddock gate when I arrive to get him groomed and tacked. He allows me to place the rope halter on him without a fuss and there have been no nipping or head butt issues for over a year now.

Prince is a great therapeutic horse! All his riders love him and he even manages to win the odd “walking race” from time to time. Thanks to Sheila my brief negative experiences with Prince are completely behind us!

– Barry Galenzoski



Prince & Barry

Sponsors, Benefactors and Service Clubs in 2014/15

ETRA gratefully acknowledges the support of the following Sponsors, Benefactors and Service Clubs

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Branch 49 Mount Arrowsmith
Branch 76 Qualicum Beach
Branch 211 Bowser
Branch 256 Mount Benson
Branch 257 Lantzville

Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary
Branch 49 Mount Arrowsmith
Branch 211 Bowser

Women of the Moose
Chapter 197 Nanaimo

Our sincere apologies if we have missed donors in this issue.



This sign appears at all ETRA functions and at Pyramid Stables during sessions. We are very proud to display the names of those who make our program possible. From our clients, their families and caregivers, and our volunteers thank you for making a difference.

Fundraising Report for Fiscal Year 2014/15

At the end of ETRA's fiscal year on August 31, 2015 we had raised enough funds to make sure 2016 programs are adequately funded.

	FY 2014	FY 2015	Increase/(Decrease)
In house fundraising	\$17,810	\$16,187	(\$1,623)
Grants	\$11,500	\$12,272	\$772
Service Clubs	\$10,600	\$13,000	\$2,400
Other	\$7,704	\$8,619	\$915
Total	\$47,614	\$50,078	\$2,464

A big Thank You goes out to everyone involved: board members, volunteers, supporters and sponsors.

2015/2016 ETRA Board of Directors

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Gini Eder

Vice-President

Jennifer Thomson

Past-President

Barry Galenzoski

Treasurer

Debra Vincent

Secretary

Kathy Calder

Program Co-ordinator

Patricia Thomson-Turner

Volunteer Co-ordinator

Karen Anker

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Philip Hopewell

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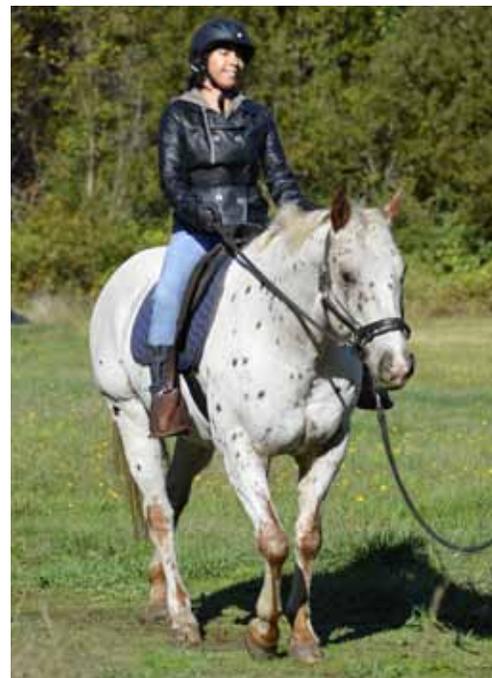
2015/2016 ETRA Fundraising Committee

Laura Beck

Barry Galenzoski

Gordon Reid

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& ETRA at the same
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donating your
Q-Points to ETRA.**



**ETRA
THERAPEUTIC
RIDING Assoc.**

Box 462, Parksville, BC V9P 2G6
email: etrainfo@shaw.ca
www.etra.ca

The logo for ETRA Therapeutic Riding Association, featuring a silhouette of a person in a wheelchair and a horse. The text 'ETRA THERAPEUTIC RIDING Assoc.' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the address, email, and website are listed.