



Three Gaits, Inc.

Three Gaits of a horse for the freedom of movement to explore new worlds

Office: P.O. Box 153, Oregon, WI 53575 • Phone: 608.877.9086 • E-mail: 3gaits@3gaits.org
Stable: 3741 Hwy. 138 W, Stoughton, WI 53589 • Phone: 608.873.1929

Fall 2009

Ribbons, Riders and Horseplay 2009— **A Record-Breaking Event for Three Gaits**

This year's annual student show, *Ribbons, Riders and Horseplay*, held on Sunday, August 16, saw a new record number of riders: 60 riders from Three Gaits programs participated in a little friendly competition while supporters cheered them on. The judge for the day was volunteer Gina Meronek. The event also raised a record-breaking \$10,000 for our programs, including a \$5,000 donation presented the day of the show by the Gordon Flesch Foundation.

"Our annual student horse show is the highlight of the summer for many of our riders," said Dena Duncan, program director for Three Gaits. "It's a great opportunity for riders to show off the skills they've been working on, celebrate with family and friends, and to enjoy their time to shine. Even with the winds and uncooperative weather, the day was perfect."

The event, a celebration of the spirit and accomplishments of Three Gaits riders, enjoyed tremendous volunteer support, as always. Dena added, "Our volunteers are amazing. Without their help the day wouldn't happen—everything from registration to handing out ribbons to leading horses and walking

alongside riders is all done by volunteers. Our volunteers share in our riders' successes. In fact, sometimes I think the volunteers are more excited by the color of the ribbon than their rider."

Besides the competition on horseback, participants and show attendees were entertained by Magician Nick W, the Madison Children's Museum, stick-horse making, and face painting. Students, spectators, and volunteers also participated in an inclusive quilt art project, commemorating this Three Gaits celebration.

Photographer Kristine Fisher captured memories of the day and photos are posted on her website: <http://www.kristinefisher.com>

In addition, an exceptional lunch was coordinated by rider families. Student participants helped by bringing a side dish or dessert to pass, and other lunch items were donated by local farmers from Oregon, McFarland, and Stoughton Farmers' markets, as well as delicious bread from the Bread Barn. Many thanks for all who supported our show and made it a great success!



Three Gaits Provides Welcome Opportunity for McFarland Girl

By Lynn Hanus

For more than twenty-five years, the nonprofit Three Gaits Therapeutic Horsemanship Center has been providing unique opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs. Few know that better than Jan and Dick Hruby of McFarland. Their daughter, Michele, benefited from the program many years ago and now their grand-daughter, Brittany Hruby, does too.

Continued on page 3

Left: Brittany Hruby riding Dillon.

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 153
 Oregon, WI 53575
Office phone: 608.877.9086
E-mail: 3gaits@3gaits.org

Stable address:

3741 Hwy. 138 W
 Stoughton, WI 53589
Phone: 608.873.1929

Visit us on the Web at
www.3gaits.org

Three Gaits Mission:

Three Gaits, Inc., is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization whose mission is to provide a safe and effective therapeutic horsemanship program for children, youth, and adults with disabilities and special needs. Therapeutic horsemanship uses equine-oriented activities to promote and enhance the development of each participant's cognitive, physical, and communicative abilities, and positive self-esteem.

Three Gaits strives to serve interested individuals within Dane County and the surrounding area. It is the policy of Three Gaits, Inc., to promote equal service and employment opportunities for employees, clients, board members, and applicants to the agency. Equal service and employment opportunities means the treatment of those categories of people mentioned above without regard to their age, race, sex, creed or religion, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin, color, disability, ancestry or political affiliation.

Board members:

President: Andrea Strayer
 Treasurer: Rob Gooze
 Secretary: Deb Gunderson
 Directors: Jay Gunderson, Steve Link, Ann Lovegrove, and Pam Moen

Staff:

Program director: Dena Duncan
 Office administrator: Melissa Lawrence
 Instructors: Sandra Faust, Angela Frank, Betsy Kelley, Rudi Meyer and Heather Hasenstein
 Occupational therapists: Stephanie Bruschi and Karen Diegel

Letter from the Program Director

In October, I had the opportunity to talk with the members of the Madison Sertoma Club and the Knights of Columbus (Madison Council #531), as well as employees of businesses involved with several United Way rallies (Three Gaits is a donor-designated agency with United Way of Dane County). Each event was well attended, with people asking lots of questions about our programs and the benefits of equine assisted activities.

Even though the organizations and businesses I spoke with were quite diverse, I noticed some common themes in the responses I got. Invariably, someone would approach me to say that their cousin, their friend, or a co-worker's child has participated in hippotherapy, summer day camps or therapeutic riding lessons at Three Gaits. Others knew people who volunteer. In every case, it was evident that those who are part of Three Gaits truly treasure their experiences here. These stories are so powerful; over and over again, I am moved when I hear how much Three Gaits means to those whose lives we have touched.

At the same time, there are plenty of people in our community who aren't aware of Three Gaits and how we make lives better for those we serve. And that's where every one of you can help.

Our volunteers, riders and supporters will always be the best ambassadors for Three Gaits, because you can speak not only with knowledge, but also with emotion and enthusiasm. So today, I'm asking you to help us spread the word about Three Gaits to your friends, neighbors and co-workers. The next time someone asks you what you've been up to, instead of responding with "not much," share a story about Three Gaits. (If you're unsure of the confidentiality rules that preclude conversations about specific riders, contact me and I'll fill you in.) If your service club is looking for a speaker, suggest a speaker from Three Gaits and we'll get out and tell our story.

There are still more ways to support Three Gaits. Tax-deductible donations are always welcome and much appreciated. At this time of year, you can support Three Gaits and get a nice item for yourself or for a gift by making a purchase through our Holiday Pottery Sale or buying the new, 2010 wall calendar. Our programs are costly to run, and there's no question that the financial support we get from the community helps make our work possible. But don't forget that you—whether you are a rider, family member, volunteer, or friend—also have stories to share.

Wishing you all a warm and healthy winter season!

Dena

Dena Duncan, Program Director

Thank You Rider-ship Initiative Investors

This initiative is an investment in rider-ships, which is the difference between the actual cost of a therapeutic riding session (\$790) and what Three Gaits charges a rider (\$290) or \$500 for a 12 week session. Current investors are:

- Dean Health System \$500
- Alliant Energy Foundation \$750
- Jack DeLoss Taylor Charitable Trust \$3,000

Thank you to the many other individuals and businesses who invest in Three Gaits mission and make a difference in the lives we serve. Please spread the word about Three Gaits to your employer and business acquaintances! Feel free to call or e-mail if Three Gaits board or staff can be of assistance!

Three Gaits Provides Welcome Opportunity for McFarland Girl

Continued from page 1

Since birth, Brittany has lived with her grandparents, who have had guardianship of her for the last few years. Brittany is eleven years old and has issues with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a brain-based biological condition. People with ADHD often have difficulty with concentration and mental focus, are easily distracted, and can demonstrate impulsive behaviors. It is one of the most common mental disorders to develop in children and symptoms often continue into adolescence and adulthood. As a result, those with ADHD may perform poorly in school or at work, have difficulty with social relationships, and have feelings of low self-esteem.

Brittany has participated at Three Gaits for about three years and enjoys riding lessons, the youth summer day camp, and the popular Student Show. “Brittany really enjoys Three Gaits and I’ve seen a boost in her self-esteem,” says Jan. “She has more confidence in herself and her balance has also improved. I was apprehensive at first about her participating in the Student Show, but it was a very positive experience for her. She was awarded ribbons and I was pleased that she was thoughtful and had the presence of mind to leave half her ribbons behind to decorate the stall of the horse that she rode.”

Brittany is in fifth grade this year at Waubesa Intermediate School. Besides riding she also enjoys many activities typical for girls her age. She likes having friends over, and Jan has enrolled her in activities that will continue to help with Brittany’s social skills. Brittany has taken classes in gymnastics and swimming and also likes bowling and the outdoor programs and classes at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center and the Wisconsin Youth Company’s Wander Wisconsin program.

But despite the many of activities, Three Gaits remains high on the list for the

Hruby family. “It’s just a great program,” says Jan. “Brittany is so comfortable with the staff and volunteers and really enjoys the horses. I know it helps with her listening skills, paying attention, and following directions. It’s a very comfortable place for her; she’s gotten secure on the horse and it’s just a relaxing feeling for her. Her instructor, Dena Duncan, is so calm and easy-going, which is just what Brittany needs for her focus and thought processing. We also hope to try the new carriage-driving program at Three Gaits so Brittany can learn some new skills and have a different experience.” Jan’s husband, Dick, often accompanies Brittany to her lessons at Three Gaits and adds, “Brittany is less hesitant and shows more independence with the horses. Dena sets expectations for the riders and always reinforces them—but always in a gentle manner. If Brittany were to do something improperly, Dena will pause and ask Brittany if she knows why, and then they can figure out how to correct things and continue.”

Patience and consistency have always been hallmarks of the program at Three Gaits, which remains committed to providing the best possible opportunities—safe, effective, challenging, and fun equine-assisted activities—that meet the individual needs of all of our participants.

*** A version of this article appeared in the October 8, 2009, edition of the McFarland Thistle. ***



Right: Brittany and Dillon enjoying a ride outside.

Making a Difference

“I JUST WANT TO LIVE AT THREE GAITS.”

“After a month of pre-school and Three Gaits my daughter ditched her walker and began walking on her own.”

“My son has always struggled in school...with his ability to fit in...after his first lessons I knew we were hooked....he tells other kids how special Three Gaits is for him...he has even met a few friends.”

The list is endless! Three Gaits makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. See for yourself! Two dedicated volunteers, Rudy and Diane King, created a video to share all the amazing facets of the Three Gaits program.

Visit our website, www.3gaits.org/video.htm, to view the impact Three Gaits has in the lives of our students.

Please consider a donation to Three Gaits this holiday season. The form is on the cover.

☺ Thank you!

Grants Awarded to Three Gaits

Three Gaits, Inc., was recently awarded a \$2,900 America’s Horse Cares grant from the American Quarter Horse Foundation. The award granted for scholarships, was one of only 18 given to therapeutic riding programs throughout the United States. This support with the help of The Capital Times Kids Fund who awarded \$3,000 in early 2009, was extremely helpful to those with additional financial stressors. The Jack DeLoss Taylor Charitable Trust awarded \$3,000 for the Three Gaits Rider-ship Initiative. An investment in rider-ships, which is the difference between the actual cost of a therapeutic riding session (\$790)/hippotherapy (\$1,200) and what Three Gaits charges a rider (\$290)/hippotherapy (\$650) or \$500/\$550 per session, enables people the opportunity to experience the physical challenges and emotional joy of the Three Gaits program. Other foundations who have awarded rider-ship grants are Globus Medical Foundation (\$1,000), Alliant Energy Foundation (\$750), and Dean Health System (\$500). Early in 2009, Three Gaits received a heart warming gift of \$16,500 from the Timothy Nebel Foundation. All of the above gifts, as well as the many, many others from individuals and companies, have made it possible for Three Gaits to fulfill its mission. Thank you to each and every one.

Holiday Pottery Sale



Now thru November 22, 2009

PROCEEDS BENEFIT THREE GAITS

Unique and beautiful pottery pieces by Ruth Hansen are available from Three Gaits, Inc. for a limited time only. Don't miss this opportunity to select meaningful holiday gifts or adorn your own home with an artisan piece.



Esteemed local potter Ruth Hansen is moving on to other art media, so this will be *the last of her pottery* available for retail sale anywhere. Ruth has been working in clay since 1987 and has been selling her pieces at local galleries and shows. Now, she has generously donated her entire remaining inventory to Three Gaits.

With each piece, you will receive a gift card indicating that your purchase supports the work of Three Gaits. The card will include a blank panel so you can add your own message.

Pottery by Ruth Hansen is lead-free and oven, microwave and dishwasher safe.

To view the selection and place your order, visit our Web site: 3gaits.org

– SELECTION IS LIMITED –

We suggest you order promptly—these one-of-a-kind pieces won't be available again.

Local Author Donates *Saving Grace* Proceeds to Three Gaits

By Lynn Hanus



What began as e-mail updates to family members became an inspirational book for Joan Laffey of Stoughton. Joan's memoir, *Saving Grace: A Grandma's Story of Spiritual Growth*, chronicles the first three-and-a-half years following the birth of her fourteenth grandchild, Grace Ann

Nichols, who was born with a syndrome that presented serious medical difficulties.

Grace had gastro-intestinal problems requiring a feeding tube, hearing loss, a cleft palate, and other conditions that eventually required eight surgeries. Grace's syndrome remains undiagnosed, as the geneticists still differ on what it could be.

At first, the e-mails to Joan's six brothers and sisters with updates of Grace's condition and progress were a convenient way to communicate. But soon Joan found this writing to be healing and therapeutic, and it also became a record of this difficult time in the family's history. Joan taught speech and English in the Stoughton Area School District for 34 years before retiring in 1995, so she was no stranger to writing. Her sisters encouraged her and Joan attended a conference where she was told that her chronicles could raise awareness and provide a voice for other families and children living with disabilities. "We had our struggles and our worries, but we also had the great gift that Grace is to us as a family. I wanted to share the story, but I didn't write to profit in any way."

Joan donates proceeds from sales of the book to organizations that help families of children with disabilities, such as Special Olympics, school special education programs, Stoughton MARC Center and START Programs, and Three Gaits, which she learned about through her wide network of connections in the Stoughton area community.

Grace is now seven years old and in second grade at Big Bend Elementary. She has a great sense of humor and is well loved by her classmates and her siblings. Grace still has problems with speech and hearing loss and uses sign language to communicate most of the time, but she is encouraged to speak and she works hard at it.

Over the years Joan has been awed by the support it takes to raise a child with a disability, especially during the first two to three years in Grace's case. But she feels that Grace and the family have been lucky to have a strong network of family and friends, high-quality care, and other resources. She knows that many in a similar situation are not so lucky. Joan has done many presentations to share her story with a variety of groups. She's gotten hundreds of notes, e-mails, and phone calls from people who thank her for her honesty or who want to share their story and can relate to the anxiety and worry that can come from the situation—but also the rewards and joys that a child like Grace brings to a family.

Saving Grace: A Grandma's Story of Spiritual Growth is available for sale at Three Gaits and at Clocktower Gifts and Cheesers in Stoughton.



Right: Joan and Grace take a moment away from their ice cream to pose for a picture.

2010 Calendar Fundraiser

Enjoy a full year to benefit Three Gaits!



Great for friends, relatives, neighbors, clients and colleagues.

Everyone will enjoy and support a great cause!

Prizes for Most Calendars Sold

Watch for details at www.3gaits.org

Calendar development a gift from Dave Matthews Studio and Gallery—
<http://www.davemattthewsstudioandgallery.com>



Three Gaits Holiday Wish List

In the office:

- Postage stamps
- Legal size white & colored paper
- Letter size white & colored paper & cardstock
- #10 Window envelopes
- #10 Envelopes
- Avery labels (#5160 or #5660)
- CDs & DVDs
- Staples' letter size hot laminating pouches
- Toilet paper
- Kleenex
- Paper towels
- Clorox disinfecting wipes
- Cleaning supplies
- Tide/Detergent
- Front loading washing machine (commercial grade?)
- New, energy efficient refrigerator for office

Around the barn:

- Leather cleaner/saddle soap
- Shavings/bedding
- Pitchforks (plastic or metal)
- Large plastic leaf/lawn rake
- Broom (small or large)
- Gravel
- Mats for stalls/aisle
- Cross-ties with quick release snaps
- Bleach

On the farm:

- Fencing materials (including wood fence posts)
- Grass seed
- 4 Wheel/Gator

For our riders:

- Helmets (must be new)
- Scholarship donations
- Child & adult sized riding gloves

Program needs:

- Surcingles (vaulting or training)
- Child size Wintec Saddle
- Horse size dressage/English bridle
- Snaffle bits – with double or single joint (5"-5 3/4")
- Leather side reins with rubber donut
- English saddle pads – dressage or A/P type saddles (new or in good condition)
- English reins (new)
- Games/toys that can be used in classes
- New cones

Remembering our four-legged friends:

- Acetyl D (medication for equine arthritis)
- Adequan (medication for equine arthritis)
- 5 cc syringes (must be new)
- 20 x 1 1/2 sized needles (must be new)
- Bute powder or paste (equine anti-inflammatory)
- Banamine paste
- Good quality grass & alfalfa hay (small bales only)
- Equine Senior (Purina or Patriot brands)
- Safe & Easy (pelleted feed – Buckeye brand)
- Equishine pellets (vitamin/mineral supplement)
- Fly spray (summer will return)
- Fly masks (draft/horse/pony size)
- Cowboy Magic detangler

Three Gaits Quick Facts

Community Support

240 volunteers from Madison and 24 surrounding communities contributed 10,540 hours of service in 2008.

Services Provided

252 individual riders totaling 445 lessons (some individuals participate in more than one session per year) with 3,325 activities provided. 80% of riders are children with a spectrum of disabilities.

Fees cover only 36% of total cost (national average varies from 15-40%).

Three Gaits contributes roughly \$500/rider per session of therapeutic riding and \$550/rider per session of hippotherapy.

Daily care, feeding, and veterinary care of horses costs nearly \$5,000 per horse annually. 14 horses are in the Three Gaits program.

National Accreditation

We have *Premier Center and Nationally Certified Instructors*. Only center in Wisconsin with Advanced Certified Instructors—Three Gaits has 3!

501c3 Organization

- Clipper blades (new)
- Someone who sharpens dull clipper blades
- Wet & dry cat food
- Cat carrier
- Sponsors for each of our program horses

Gift cards to:

- Staples/Office Depot
- Home Depot/Menards/Ace/True Value
- Farm & Fleet
- Target/Wal-Mart
- local grocery stores
- local tack shops (McFarlane's)
- Mounds or other pet food stores
- Kwik Trip (to purchase gasoline for lawn mowers)
- local bookstores



A Volunteer's Perspective

By Rudy King



My name is Rudy King. I'm a guy and I know very little about horses. I also have no experience working with people with disabilities. So you're probably wondering, "Why—or how—could I be volunteering at an equine-centered organization working with students with special needs?"

There are many reasons for that: My best friend encouraged me to check it out, I'd been looking for a way to give back to the community, and I was assured that you need not be an expert in order to volunteer. These reasons all worked together to give me the courage to attend a volunteer training session on September 12, 2009.

On that beautiful, sunny Saturday morning, I joined a great group of about twenty other newbies—some with the same level of experience as me, others with a horse background, and a few who are involved with occupational therapy. We learned about Three Gaits' programs and history, aspects that make a great volunteer, and how we interact with Three Gaits' riders. We also spent some time reviewing emergency procedures and horse behavior.



The orientation was very laid back and we were encouraged to ask lots of questions—even dumb ones by novices like me. And nobody laughed or shook their heads in dismay. Our instructors for the day, Dena and Karen, showed us the ropes, including hands-on experience. We had an opportunity to groom and tack a horse and we also took turns leading and sidewalking during a mock lesson. The training session was fun, very informative, and they even served a great lunch!

Knowing that Three Gaits will pair me up with more experienced volunteers and not leave me on my own, I signed up to give it a try. Although I've only participated in a few lessons so far, they have been great. Yes, there are many little things to learn and remember, but I've been able to retain a lot of it and there's always somebody around to help me with a friendly reminder when needed.

I look forward to helping the students. It's really cool to see them light up when they start working with the horses. I'm also looking forward to becoming more experienced in grooming and tacking the horses.

So if you think you'd never be able to do something like this, or that you wouldn't fit in with this kind of a program, think again. If I can do it, anyone can. The staff and other volunteers at Three Gaits make it very fun and inviting and work hard not only on the main goals of the program but on helping new volunteers fit in and feel at home. Won't you join me?



Three Gaits, Inc.
P.O. Box 153
Oregon, WI 53575

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Stoughton, WI 53589
Permit No. 3

Address Service Requested

Help Three Gaits by detaching this donation slip and sending it with your donation in the enclosed envelope.



Yes! I want to support **Three Gaits Therapeutic**
Horsemanship Center so that it may remain a vital community resource!

Enclosed is my gift of ___ \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$250 ___ \$500 Other \$ ___

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

This is a gift in honor / in memory of: _____
(include honoree's contact information on the back of this card so they can be informed of your gift)

My employer will match this gift *(include your company's matching gift form with this card)*

Charge my credit card (Visa/MC) Credit Card number _____
expiration date _____ Signature _____

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities at Three Gaits

Three Gaits, Inc., P.O. Box 153, Oregon, WI 53575 www.3gaits.org

All gifts to Three Gaits, Inc. are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. You will receive an acknowledgement letter. Thank you.



Three Gaits
is a donor
designated
agency with
United Way