



VTRA

VICTORIA THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION

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The Stable Voice

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HORSE UPDATE: DINAH'S BACK, BABY!

We are so thrilled to welcome Dinah back in the classes! Dinah seems to be enjoying being back at work, as being on stall rest and limited turn out for 4 months was so boring for such a smart pony!

As many of you know, our lovely Dinah had an accident in December. She injured her back legs and tendons, as well as her eye, when she got caught in the fence. As a result she had to be removed from the program from January through until April.



and the staff and volunteers have been working her every day to get her back to being good as new! Injuries to tendons can take up to 6 months to heal, so we still have to make sure she's not galloping around with the other horses. In the meantime, Dinah is happy to be back to work in classes! Thank you to all the volunteers who have spent countless hours hosing her leg and walking her around the track. It is because of your hard work that she is able to be back in classes this session. Dinah and her students

Dinah has been cleared by the vet to start her own physiotherapy really appreciate all your effort, love and attention!

Calling All Walkers

Come and walk for People with Disabilities!
 Sunday May 31, 2015, from 9 am,
 starting from the Elk/Beaver Lake Equestrian Centre

**VTRA RIDE-A-THON 2015:
 WELCOME TO THE WALK-A-THON!**

This fun event for the whole family will take place May 31st at the Elk and Beaver Lake Equestrian Centre. The horses and their riders will head out on a 9km loop. Pledge raising OR \$50 entry fee will be accepted at registration, which starts at 9am. All entries will come with 1 participation to the trail competition orchestrated by our friend Laura Foxgord. Walkers will take part in a 10 or 5 km marked walk, suitable for families! Pledge raising is encouraged, but you can choose to pay the \$10 entry fee instead (no entry fee for children under 15). Prizes will be attributed for highest pledge raisers (prizes for both walkers and riders) and trail competition.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK

The volunteer appreciation luncheon was held at the Central Saanich Lions Hall on April 18 at the Central Saanich Lions hall. The event was a wonderful chance for volunteers to mingle and share stories, and also an opportunity for the VTRA to express our deepest gratitude for all that the volunteers do for us on a weekly basis. A special thanks to the Central Saanich Lions Club for allowing us the use of their facility, to the Hen House and caterers Sherril and Dusty, as well as to Jenna Miller for getting us the delicious cupcakes! We would also like to take this opportunity to personally say a big 'THANK YOU' to each and every one of our volunteers for the time and energy that you dedicate to help our program run – we simply could not do what we do without you! VTRA cannot thank YOU enough for making a difference in our rider's lives!

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all which have the potential to turn a life around."

-Leo Buscaglia

BOTTLE DRIVE

On Sunday, April 12, 2015, we held our first Bottle Drive at the Glanford Bottle Depot. It was a wonderful, sunny day and a few of us (i.e. Jess) even managed to get a little sunburned! Special thanks to all of the volunteers who came out to help with the sorting of bottles, and thank you to everyone who stopped by to donate! With your help, we raised a total of **\$466.25 for VTRA!**

VTRA AT THE DIVERSABILITY FAIR

On April 24th, Jess Game and Liz Brown spent the day at the Diversability Resource Fair, held at Pearkes Recreation Centre and facilitated by Community Living. VTRA had the opportunity to meet new people and hopefully some prospective riders. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know some of the other service providers in our community.



COUNTDOWN TO VTRA ANNUAL SHOW - 6 JUNE 2015

The final countdown is on!

On Saturday June 6, 2015, the year-end horse show will take place between 9am and 3pm. Over 50 riders have registered and are busy rehearsing their pattern with their instructors. Each rider will perform the Show Pattern that we have been practicing in class in front of a judge. Riders will be judged against other riders at a similar skill level. After the Show Pattern, the riders will do a fun obstacle course around the trail. Ribbons will be awarded for the placements of the Ring Pattern at lunch for the morning participants and approximately 3:00 for the afternoon participants. Friends, families, and community members are welcome to stop by and enjoy the day watching the achievements of the students. We will have food sales on site and a small craft market. Hope to see you there!



SENSORY TRAIL: THANK YOU TO THE CENTRAL SAANICH LIONS

Once again, the Central Saanich Lions have made an amazing contribution to VTRA! The Lions have built and installed the sensory trail around the track, providing a multi-sense experience for our riders. Sensory trails were originally designed to expand the senses of people with visual impairment, but have expanded into the world of equine therapy. The trail incorporates visual, textural, and physical stimulus, designed to connect riders to their surroundings. Our trail features custom bird houses with surprises inside, ball and hoop games, shape identification, and more! This trail allows classes to spend more time outside, and engage in their surroundings. Make sure you take a walk around the track next time you are at the facility! Thank you to the Lions for helping us make the program even better!



STEEPLECHASE SESSION 3 & 4

This spring, we launched the first VTRA Steeplechase! In our steeplechase, riders are divided into teams based on which horse they ride. For example, all the riders that ride Danny are on team Danny. The horses then “race” across our steeplechase course, displayed in the clubhouse. How do the horses move? Each rider has the opportunity to collect pledges for their team, and as the money is donated, the horses move along the race course. The team that raises the most money wins a prize at the end of the race, and the individual rider that raises the most amount of money wins a free term of riding lessons. **In Session 3, the winning team was team Joey and the winning rider was Angele Johnson!**

The Session 4 steeplechase is still in progress, so make sure to stop into the clubhouse to see which horse is in the lead. Donations can be made by anyone, for any team. Just talk to any staff member. Team Maryke and team Orchid are currently in the lead, but it is too soon to make any bets! The last race was decided in the final day!



Shout out to an innovative fundraising team!

During the session 4 steeplechase, Angus and his mom Kelly came up with a creative way to raise money for his team. Kelly is a weaver who works with cedar and one of her creations is a cedar vase with woven cedar flowers. For every steeplechase pledge of \$5, she gave an entry in a draw to win the vase and flowers! This innovative way to raise pledges was so successful, she decided to do another draw for a traditional cedar hat. Way to go Angus and Kelly for your creativity and dedication!



COMMUNITIES FOR VETERANS & VTRA: ONE DELICIOUS FUNDRAISER

VTRA was honoured to host the riders and horses from the Communities for Veterans Foundation (CVF) Ride across Canada from April 10 to 13, 2015. We were closed for a session break, so the horses stayed in our indoor arena and our paddocks. During that time, Paul and Terry Nichols taught riding lessons to local Veterans. On Monday, April 13, Paul and the local Veterans left from downtown Victoria on horseback after a wonderful ceremony on the Legislature steps. Paul is now on his way across Canada, riding with local Veterans in each community he passes through. For more information, check out www.communitiesforveterans.com/.



On Sunday, April 12, we hosted a pancake breakfast as a co-fundraiser for CVF and VTRA. **The Central Saanich Lions** generously donated their time, skills, and supplies to provide us with delicious pancakes for the event. The event was a delicious success! We would like to thank the

Central Saanich Lions for their continued support! We would also like to thank **Gobind farms** for the amazing syrups and fruits they provided to top the pancakes, and for selling their amazing products. CFAx generously supplied us with music for the event, and we received coverage from CFAx and CTV. Thank you to everyone, including our volunteers, who helped make this event so wonderful!



SUE COLGATE RETIRES

After nearly 10 years with us, VTRA's Executive Director Sue Colgate is retiring. Sue started with what was then known as the Victoria Riding for the Disabled Association, at Forest Mere in 2006 as a volunteer, and quickly moved into the newly created role of Volunteer Coordinator. Sue was an easy choice for the role, as she had spent the 10 years prior with Powell River Therapeutic Riding Association and had filled many roles including instructor, board member, and program coordinator.

During her time at VTRA, Sue oversaw many of the important changes that helped us evolve into the successful organization we are today. When Sue started with VTRA, the day to day operations were managed by the board and volunteers. Under her guidance, the board shifted to a governance board and part time staff were hired to keep the program going. With more staff came other important changes, such as the installation of a dedicated phone line and number, the use of computers, and the confidence that we were operating correctly and legally. Sue has been the primary motivator in expanding the program to our current capacity. Over the past 10 years, we have expanded from 3 days per week to 5 days per week.

Ever a promoter of VTRA, Sue has always been a vocal advocate for the program and has worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the good work that we do and develop many of the relationships that are so key to our operations. There is no question that VTRA would not be the organization we are without her dedication and hard work over the past 10 years.

We all wish her the best in her future adventures, and we hope that we will see her around the barn from time to time!

Sue Colgate's succession has been organised by the board of directors over the last few months. Effective 7 June 2015, Audrey Cooper will be our new Executive Director. Over the past year, Audrey has been our Operations Manager. Prior to that, Audrey was a dedicated volunteer and board member. We welcome Audrey to her new role, and are sure she will be able to fill the big shoes she is stepping into.

A press release will be going out to the local media over the next little while. Here is a copy for your information.

"The Victoria Therapeutic Riding Association announces the appointment of Audrey Cooper as Executive Director

17 May 2015 - The Board of Directors of the Victoria Therapeutic Riding Association (VTRA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Audrey Cooper as Executive Director (ED) effective June 7, 2015.

Audrey Cooper is currently Operations Manager, responsible for day-to-day management. Prior to joining VTRA as an employee one year ago, Audrey was a member of the Board of Directors where she can be credited for her valuable contribution to the rebranding of the organisation, our new and improved website and our growing presence in the world of social media.

Audrey brings extensive management and marketing experience she gained overseas while working for major multinational companies in London, England. Audrey obtained a Masters Degree in Business Administration in Manchester, England. "I am incredibly excited for the chance to bring my years of professional experience to such a great organisation and its therapeutic riding program" said Audrey Cooper.

Audrey will be replacing Sue Colgate who, after 10 years spent at the VTRA in various positions, will be retiring in June. The Board wishes Sue Colgate the very best in her future endeavours and recognizes her considerable contribution to the successes of our therapeutic riding program. In turn, we warmly welcome Audrey to her new role with VTRA."



Sue assures us her decision to retire did not have anything to do with working condition!

VTRA HAS A TACK STORE

Did you know that VTRA has its' own tack store, called Faensi's Little Tack Store? Like so many ventures, the tack store started as the kernel of an idea – what if we could transform getting rid of stuff, into contributing to social good? We thought we would give it a go to see what would happen. Here's how it works; local riders donate their gently used riding gear to VTRA, thereby supporting the program and making it possible for children and adults with disabilities to continue to have a program to come to. In turn, VTRA provides local riders with low cost, clean riding gear.

So, here is how you can help.....if you are a rider, look around your barn, car, locker, or house and ask yourself if there is anything that you see that you are no longer using that you could donate to VTRA. Remember, gently used, not worn out. It has to be something that still has value and that someone else will want to purchase. Bring your donations to the barn on Veyanness Road; we will tell you right away whether we can accept it. If you have a larger item such as a saddle and you want a donation receipt, leave it with us and we will have the item valued. If it meets the appropriate criteria we will give you a receipt.

If you can't donate but are looking for equestrian equipment – saddles, bridles, bits, blankets, helmets or clothing – come by the store to see what we have. Faensi's is open during the week during business hours and on Saturdays from 11am to 2pm.

It's a win-win for everyone! So please, consider making your next donation and/or purchase at Faensi's.

We are also at the Sidney Market on May 28 and June 2, so you could also drop by the table to check us out then.