



VTRA

VICTORIA THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION

Winter 2015

The Stable Voice

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HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE STABLE!

It's a new year at VTRA and our stable is full with 12 horses working in the VTRA program!

Chaussette has made a full and miraculous recovery! Thank you so much to everyone who donated and helped with her large vet bill. We are so thankful to have her. She has really taken to her job with her new students who are already in love with her. She is one of our only narrow horses, and she is a relief for those students with tight or spastic muscles. She has settled back into life and classes here at VTRA, and is as good as new thanks to your love and support.

We'd like to introduce our latest addition, Charlie! Charlie is a 14 year old Quarter Horse, and an accomplished and wonderful therapy horse. He spent a few years up at the Comox Therapeutic Riding Association and has done 4H and Pony Club with many children over the years. In his few short weeks with VTRA, he has already won the hearts of his riders and the volunteers!

Dinah, the Rock Star pony of our program, has ended up with an injury she sustained to her leg during the Christmas holidays. Silly Dinah got her leg caught in the fence, and as a result of trying to get it free, she damaged the tendons and skin on her



back leg, and cut her eye. The VTRA team of staff and volunteers jumped into action, having to provide Dinah with full time care – eye drops, leg wraps, stall rest, walking, cold hosing, wound care... It looks like Dinah will be able to make a full recovery, but she is going to be taking some time out of the lessons in order to heal. The change in horse has resulted in some sad faces, as her riders

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UPDATE FOR RIDERS AND FAMILIES

The 2014/15 riding year has welcomed a huge number of new riders into our program. In session 1, we saw 5 new riders and in session 2 we had 21 new riders! For the first time in a number of years, our waitlist has virtually disappeared and we are actively seeking new riders.

With all the new faces, it is a good time to remind riders, families, and caregivers of a few housekeeping items:

- Please ensure riders are wearing appropriate clothing: long pants and dressed in layers. Please either wear a boot with a heel, or borrow one from us.

- If there has been a change in medication, behavior, or diagnosis, please let us know right away.
- Please do not chew gum during lessons.
- If you are interested in applying for external funding, we have compiled an updated list of places you can apply. You are responsible for the application and meeting the requirements, but we are here to help with any questions.

If you know anyone who would like to be considered for our program, please contact Liz Brown at admin@vtra.ca.

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all have to ride a new horse while she heals. Dinah is such a champ, and her calm nature likely prevented a worse injury as she remained calm when she was in trouble. It is that nature that is so integral to our program – we depend so heavily on horses like Dinah to remain stoic yet sensitive for the diverse students within our program. Get better soon Dinah!

Cisco has done really well on his allergy shots. He has not had an allergic reaction to his 33 different allergies in over a year now. Way to go Cisco!!! We are so pleased that we were



able to eliminate most of the things he was allergic to and that the allergy shots were a success!

VTRA is so thankful to have such an amazing support team to help us keep our horses happy and healthy. ***We would like to thank Dr. Danica Olenick and Jessie of Swiftsure Equine Veterinary Services, Trevor Bradley-Farrier, Jane Kettner- Equine Chiropractor, Kristen Gilglio-Equine Physiotherapist, Dr. Pat Food, as well as the VTRA community for your constant love, dedication and support for our horses.***

BOARD UPDATE

From the President, Carol Hubberstey

I am excited to welcome several new members to the Board and thankful for the continued presence of existing Board members. They are a committed and knowledgeable group. Transitions are always important at the Board level and for that reason I am also pleased that Annie has stepped into the Vice-President role with the intention that she will eventually become President.

Last year the Board set some goals; our focus was on our internal resources - staffing, administration and program. We wanted to set in motion a succession plan for Sue's retirement and to ensure we had a strong operation. We are generally pleased with how this has been unfolding and grateful for everyone's patience. Lots of changes are taking place, some visible, others not. In the end, it is always about

being able to offer a good quality program.

In January (2015) the Board held a day long strategic planning session. Despite being a relatively new Board, we were remarkably consistent and united in our goals and direction for the next couple of years. We will seek input from staff and members in the coming weeks/months as we fine-tune the final plan.

As of the November 20th AGM, VTRA's Board is comprised of the following people:

Carol hubberstey, President

Bob Climie, Past President

Scott Vannan, Member

Annie Brothwell, Vice-President

Alyson Hawksworth, Member

Anne Waterhouse, Member

Penny Ledoux, Treasurer

Jason McNaughton, Member,

Terry Wendorf, Member

Sarah Pash, Secretary

Glenda Turner

THE CENTRAL SAANICH LIONS CLUB



The VTRA staff, board and volunteers would like to take this opportunity to thank the Central Saanich Lions Club for their continuing support. Members of the Lions have volunteered their time to:

- Operate the concession at our annual horse show
- Provide a pancake breakfast at the Elk and Beaver Lake Equestrian Centre for our Ride-a-thon Pledge event.
- Enclose the opening of our indoor arena with a new garage door and Dutch doors at the mounting ramp
- Design, build and install a sensory trail inside our arena and outside around our riding trail

Thank you, Central Saanich Lions Club!

VTRA HOSTS THE NATIONAL CLASSIFIERS

2014 was a great year for para-equestrian sport in Canada, and VTRA was excited to participate in the training of officials for para-equestrian competition. In October, we hosted the 2014 Equine Canada Para-Equestrian Classifiers Conference. Classifiers are officials that grade para-equestrian athletes in order to give them the opportunity to compete against other riders with similar abilities.

The grade is based on their functional ability, and riders are judged against other riders of the same grade. Many Para-Equestrian athletes also compete alongside able-bodied competitors in Equine Canada competitions. At the grass roots level, Para-Equestrian encompasses a number of different disciplines, while the international stream focuses only on Para-Dressage. For more information, please visit www.equinecanada.ca/para-equestrian.

Every two years the para-equestrian national classifiers come together to review the classification program and ensure best practices are being maintained and developed, and in 2014 this meeting was held at VTRA. We were honoured to host such an important event, and a few riders and horses from our program were invited to attend so the classifiers could practice with real scenarios. During the classification process, riders may receive approval to use compensating (adaptive) aids during completion which are designed to level the competitive playing field e.g. looped rein, rubber bands on stirrups, voice commands, two whips etc. Our riders were very lucky to be able to receive this feedback.

VTRA was also successful in receiving a grant from Equine Canada to host a clinic on compensating aids clinic in February. During this clinic, our instructors and volunteers will be joined by other therapeutic riding professionals, physiotherapists, and riding instructors from Vancouver Island to learn more about the use of adaptive aids for para-equestrian athletes. If para-equestrian competition is something you or your rider is interested in pursuing, please let us know!



THANK YOU ASHLEY GOWANLOCK AND MELANIE HOUSTON

The VTRA had the honour of welcoming *para equestrian Olympic rider Ashley Gowanlock* for a presentation and talk after our AGM in November 2014. This was a fun and moving event peppered with her humorous stories. What a privilege this was!

This past week, *Melanie Houston* came to the VTRA to talk to us about her 2 passions in life: speech and language pathologies and horses. As a very accomplished professional in both these areas, Melanie was kind enough to share with us her recommendations and observations to help us in our mission. With more to discuss we hope to convince her to come back soon for our horse handlers!

EVERY DAY WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT VTRA

- Keep receipts from **Country Grocer** and deposit them at the VTRA barn. 3% of what you spend is returned in the form of gift cards.
- Choose VTRA as your charity of choice at **True Value Foods** in Cordova Bay and 1% of your total comes back to us in the form of gift cards.
- Use our **Co-op # 37989** when you purchase groceries, gas or furnace oil at Peninsula Co-op.
- Bring your **empty drink containers** to VTRA!



Where will YOU go?

Raffle tickets: \$10 each. Get yours Today!

2 Westjet tickets

OR 2 tickets to Taylor Swift concert
(plus ferry crossing, accomodation and food)

OR \$700 cash

Draw: 6 June 2015, at the annual horse show

To get your ticket, call: (778) 426-0506, e-mail: info@vtra.ca, or visit www.vtra.ca

2015: A BIG YEAR FOR VTRA EVENTS!

February 22, 2015: Compensating Aids Clinic with Marion Slatter-Blitstein. Join International Classifier Marion Slatter Blitstein as she reviews the use of adaptive (compensating) aids for competitive and non-competitive para-equestrians. This one-day clinic is open to instructors, therapists, assistant instructors, and all those interested in the use of adaptive aids in a therapeutic or competitive setting.

Marion is a registered physiotherapist who has been involved in therapeutic riding since 1979, and has since become a registered National and International Classifier. Throughout her career, Marion has developed a tool kit of easy to build aids that can be used in a variety of scenarios. Cost is \$30 for the general public, and \$5 for VTRA staff and volunteers. To sign up, e-mail Liz Brown at admin@vtra.ca.

May 31, 2015: VTRA Annual Ride-A-Thon. Our Ride-A-Thon will take place on May 31st, and will depart as last year from the Elk/Beaver Lake Equestrian facility (located off West Saanich Road). So please save the date and pass it around to your rider friends who would like to take part in a fun ride for a cause! More information will be available soon!



June 5, 2015: VTRA Annual Horse Show. Save the date for our annual horse show! All 2014-2015 riders are invited to participate! Riders will complete an equestrian pattern, followed by an obstacle course around the trail. Families and friends are encouraged to attend and cheer on their riders. We will have a concession with food, snacks and beverages for sale, and this year, a small local market too! We will also welcome a feature guest, as we did with The Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia last year. We also expect a number of our supporters and donors to attend so that they can witness first hand their dollars at work! So let's all make this year another resounding success! More details about registration will be made available over the next few weeks.

February 6 to June 5, 2015: the 2015 VTRA raffle. Our raffle will run until our annual horse show, when the draw will take place. The prizes for this year are AMAZING:

- **2 Westjet tickets** to any of their destinations (blackout periods

apply)

- a fun package including 2 tickets to see **Taylor Swift** in concert in Vancouver on August 1st, along with *ferry crossing* (car and 2 adults), one night stay at the *Accent Inn* (Richmond), and a GC to the *Keg Restaurant*.

- **\$700 CASH**

Do you have a great sales person around you? We are looking for people to sell these tickets on our behalf. Contact staff for more information and your own tickets!

February 16 to May 29, 2015: the 2015 VTRA Steeple Chase.

This is the very exciting new event for riders and volunteers! For this operations, each VTRA horse will head a team comprised of all his or her riders. Each team will work together to fundraise money for their horse's team, and all the horses will race along the steeple chase course. The more money raised by a team, the further its horse will move along the course. The race course is displayed in the club house so riders will be able to watch and follow their horse's and team's progress over time. A free term of riding will be awarded to the rider that raises the most money individually (regardless of his or her team result); as well the winning team will receive a prize!

What is a steeplechase? During a traditional steeplechase, riders race between churches (steeple) across long distances. In our race, cardboard cut-outs of our horses will move along the course as the money is raised.

Who are the riders? All of our program participants! Each student in session will be entered in the race on his or her horse's team. For example, if you ride Danny, you are on Danny's team! In the event of mid-race horse changes, students will stay on the team they started with!

How to participate? You have 2 ways to win:

- Individually: riders can pick up pledge sheets in the clubhouse from Monday 23 February or via e-mail, and start raising money for your team! Be creative! Then return your pledge sheet **BEFORE** March 27th 2015, the last day of the race. The rider who individually raises the most money during the race will win 1 FREE TERM OF LESSONS for use in the 2015/2016 riding year (we are unable to offer a cash equivalent).

- In teams: all funds collected and delivered to the club house will also be pulled together towards their horse team. The winning team will receive a prize the last week of classes, after the closing of the race.

Anyone can help out their favourite team by placing money in the donation bins made out to each horse. **But remember** that in order to count for the individual prize, all money raised by riders need to be recorded on a pledge sheet and submitted (and stamped) to the office!

VTRA depends heavily on donations and fundraisers to keep our program going year after year - and this is a chance for our riders to participate in our fundraising efforts!

Ready ... Set ... Go ...

2014/2015 RIDING AND TRAINING DATES

Session 1:

Riding:

September 30 - November 25

No classes Oct 13 and Nov 11

Session 2:

Training: November 26 - 28

Riding: December 1 - February 5

No classes Dec 22 to Jan 9

Session 3:

Training: February 10 - 13

Riding: February 17 - April 6

No classes February 16

Session 4:

Training: April 7 - 10

Riding: April 13 - June 5

No classes May 18

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- Choose VTRA as your charity of choice at True Value Foods in Cordova Bay and 1% of your total comes back to us in the form of gift cards.
- Use our Co-op # 37989 when you purchase groceries, gas or furnace oil at Peninsula Co-op.
- Bring your empty drink containers to VTRA!