



*Our mission is to enhance the lives of children and young adults facing extraordinary cognitive, emotional, social and physical challenges through the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding, and unmounted activities.*

## In this Issue

Special Olympics

1

Dear Friends

2

Thank You Volunteers

4

Expanding Our Herd

5

Theme Weeks

6

## Special Olympics Massachusetts North Shore Equestrian Tournament

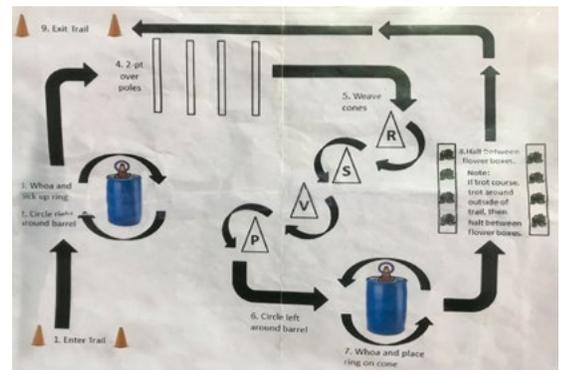
**A**t Friends For Tomorrow, we offer our therapeutic horseback riding students the opportunity to showcase their riding skills each year in the Special Olympics Massachusetts (SOMA) North Shore Equestrian Tournament. Students look forward to this yearly event - excited to showcase their riding skills to family and friends, and don their 'show clothes'!

For participating students, preparation for the games began the weeks of September 17th and 24th with a mock Trail and English Equitation course at our farm. For those two weeks, students navigated a course replicating the obstacles they would be challenged with on Saturday, September 29th at Windrush Farm. Each student was scored on their ability to control their horse while weaving around cones, circling barrels in each direction, walking over poles in the jumping position and finishing the course with a controlled stop.

This year's Team FFT was made up of six riders ranging in age from 8 to 18. First time Olympians were Lilly and Isa. It was the second year for Misha and Amadi, and for Eleanor and Kristen, more than four years each. Most students competed in the walk Trail and English Equitation event. Isa competed in the trot Trail and English Equitation class.

Friends For Tomorrow was one of three farms competing. In total, Team FFT along with their coaches Lucy and Holly, won five 1st place, 2nd place, 3rd place and one 4th place ribbons and medals.

We express our gratitude to Windrush Farm and the number of volunteers and staff members who organize an amazing event which is a wonderful opportunity for our students. We also want to recognize the number of Friends For Tomorrow volunteers who join us to support our students by being side walkers - thank you Barbara, Terri, Evie and Marianne.



continued on Page 3...





Founded in 1994

**FOUNDER**

Diane Lesneski Auger

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Diane Lesneski Auger  
*President*

Nicholas Chigas, CFP®  
*Treasurer*

Roberta Berry

Rachel Drew, PhD

Fritz Ferbert

Lisa Freed, P.E., LEED AP

Christopher Lippert

**HONORARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Bud Allen, DVM

Marie Louise Barrett

Leslie Goldberg

Amy Mastrobattista, Esq.

J. Merriam, DVM

Byron E. Woodman, Jr.

**STAFF**

Janice Gilman  
*Director of Marketing & Business Operations*

Lucy Cornish  
*Program Coordinator & Head Instructo*

Holly Hedlund  
*Instructor*

A non-profit, 501(c)(3)  
tax-exempt organization  
#04-3256412

*Dear Friends,*



Cool mists drape the trees and the fields, as if to try and hide the inevitable brilliance of fall in New England. I am always eager to see what is revealed as the methodical autumnal progression unfolds whatever beauty is just waiting to burst through from above and below.

This fall has been an exciting time for us, as we welcome Shyann (Annie to our students), a lovely new mare, to our herd. The Equestrian Games at SOMA were special this year, with two more of young riders joining our ever-growing "Team FFT". I am thrilled to be officially joining back in as an instructor this fall, and every moment I am with my students and their families is an affirmation of why I became so passionate about this work years and years ago.

Seeing how the FFT team of instructors, volunteers, horses and the support offered by Berryfield staff brings such joy to our students never ceases to amaze me. Bringing those pieces together year after for close to a quarter of a century draws on the creativity of our staff, often in response to ideas that come directly from our students! Misha loves geography and travel, who inspired Holly to bring out a fantastic game for a recent theme week, incorporating colorful directive, roads signs, simple mapping and navigation, and the challenges of moving through a multi-step obstacle course.

Every day I am keenly aware of how, together, we create ways to reach our riders in ways other mainstream activities can't; this multi-sensory experience is unique, offering both physical, cognitive and experiential challenges. The intellectual challenges change from lesson to lesson, each student's physical capabilities defining the plan for the day. And always, always the sensory elements of sight, sound, smell and touch. Every moment our students are enveloped in the experience, entire bodies affected by the experience, movement and tactile challenges sought after, sometimes gradually tolerated and finally welcomed.

Like the seasonal brilliance appreciated every fall, our students' radiance bursts through every week as they learn and play and grow stronger with their friends here. Thank you for your part in making every lesson a chance for our students to be completely immersed in the chance to learn and to grow in such a holistic and all-inclusive way. With your support, we continue to enhance the lives of these very special students and their families!

With all best wishes, and gratitude,

*Diane*



continued from Page 1

Volunteer Marianne said, “I appreciated being part of the Special Olympics team at Windrush Farm Equestrian event. It was very well organized and offered the participants a great opportunity to compete, practice good sportsmanship and build their riding skills - all of which was a great confidence booster and just plain fun for everyone involved. The smiles on the participants faces told the story - it was a motivating and special day for everyone who was there.”

SOMA North Shore Equestrian Tournament is a public event - join us next year on Saturday September 28, 2019 at Windrush Farm, Boxford, MA to cheer on our amazing athletes.



“The smiles on the participants faces told the story.”





## Expanding Our Herd

This fall we welcomed a new beauty to our herd, Shyann.

Shyann, or Annie as some of us have affectionately nicknamed her, is a 20-year-old Chestnut Thoroughbred cross. With a petite frame, she is a wonderful mount for our smaller riders. Annie is experienced and mature, which makes her an exceptionally patient teacher.

Annie brings a softness to the herd and a different stride for our students. Some students may benefit from less 'input' or movement in their horses, while others benefit from a larger stride or more active trot. Annie offers both new strides and a new perspective for some of our students curious to get to know her both in the aisle and in the saddle.

She is patient with our students and stands beautifully for extended periods of time for grooming in our Pony Partners and mounted game play in Therapeutic Horseback Riding programs. She is a wonderful teacher at the walk for our beginner students who are developing their basic skills like steering, and at the trot for our more advanced riders developing their posting rhythm and diagonals.

Annie has grown fond of her stall neighbor Thor and often nickers to him upon his return from teaching his students. She always has a welcoming soft nicker with perked-up doe-like eyes whenever visitors make their way to her stall.

Welcome sweet Shyann! We are so glad you have become a part of our Friends For Tomorrow family!



## NOW ENROLLING Pony Partners Spring Session Classes begin April 5

An empowerment group for girls between 8 -11 years of age using equine-facilitated learning  
**Friday afternoons 3:30 - 5:30 pm starting April 5 - June 14**

Pony Partners is appropriate for able-bodied girls who have a love of animals and are struggling socially, personally and/or academically.

For more information about Pony Partners and our other program offerings, visit our website:

**[www.friendsfortomorrow.org](http://www.friendsfortomorrow.org)**  
or email Lucy at [lucyfcornish@gmail.com](mailto:lucyfcornish@gmail.com)



# Theme Weeks - A Closer Look

At Friends For Tomorrow, we believe having fun while learning is key to growth and success. It is clear many of our students enjoy playing the different games we prepare for them on a weekly basis. We strive to gently guide students toward success in all the different forms they take - our Theme Weeks are a seamless way to transition between learning fundamental riding skills and making a lesson plan engaging and teachable without being overwhelming.

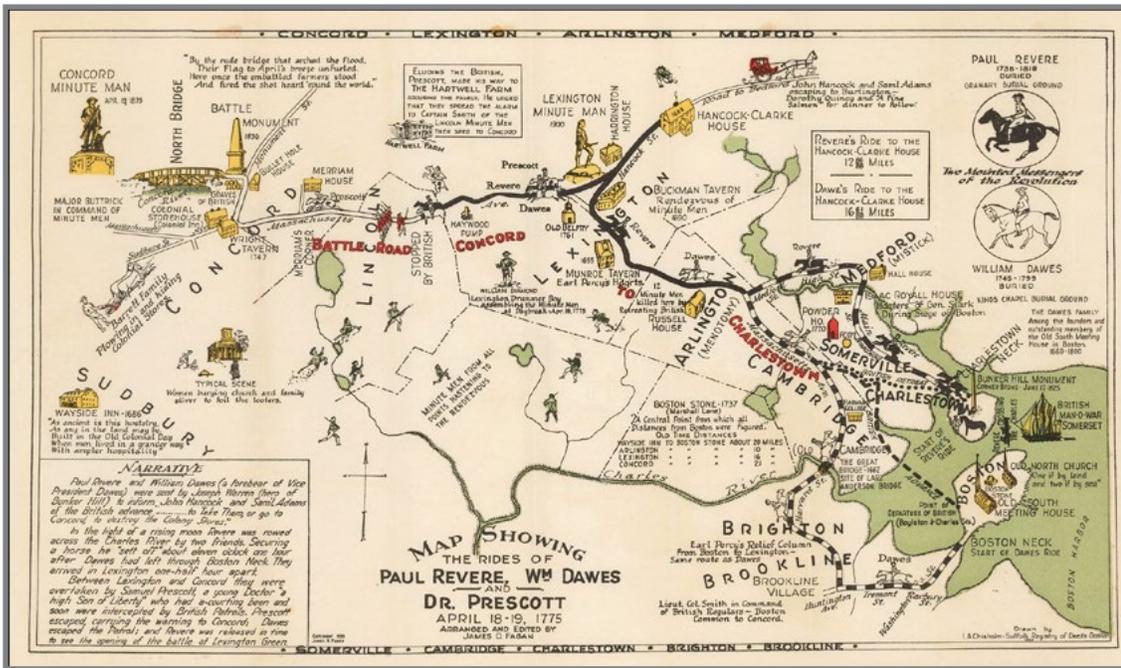
“When I became a new instructor to a long-time student, one of the most important things we could bond over was looking forward to an upcoming Theme Week. Learning them together has created a much deeper relationship and a stronger combined mutual trust for one another,” said Holly. Head Instructor Lucy Cornish says, “Theme weeks help capture and hold our students’ attention. They allow us to help strengthen skills such as crossing their midline, muscle building, balance, hand/eye coordination, motor planning and reasoning skills while engaging in a fun activity. These skills translate far beyond the riding ring.

There are many physical benefits of themed games on horseback:

1. Reaching for a target, steering through an obstacle course, throwing a ball off both sides of their horse and often participating in peer-to-peer games develops and improves many skills including fine motor, gross motor, social, balance, coordination all while building muscle and core strength.
2. Therapeutic Horseback Riding leverages the natural movement of the equine to assist in opening up tight muscle groups, naturally aides in proper postural alignment and gently engages core muscles as the student directs the horse at the walk and trot.

Mounted on their horse, in our indoor arena, students learn about Paul Revere’s route by following a map with strategic stops along the way where they can practice certain skills. First, using practiced-motor planning;

eyes, hands, arms and legs for steering, and decision making students direct their horse over to the lanterns, count the number of lights, and decide which direction to go to reenact Paul Revere’s perilous ride that night. Next, in jumping position they cross the Charles River - don’t want to get wet! Then using hand/eye coordination, steering and balance they circle the swamp. Using more hand/eye coordination, posting at the walk, steering and motor planning they weave through



Theme weeks also helps us teach our students about the larger world around them whether it is a certain holiday, local annual event or a national election. Students often retain what they experience and ask for certain theme weeks again and again.”

Our Theme Weeks often directly tie into nationally observed holidays or events. For example, during the week of Patriot’s Day, we bring Paul Revere’s Midnight Ride to life using multiple senses to help teach the story of what happened on that day and its importance to our country. It also becomes a fun opportunity to practice riding skills!

the rocky New England woods. Practicing balance and proprioception, they stop to hug their horse pretending to duck out of sight from the Redcoats.

Finally, they arrive in Lexington where they have a water gun fight, hitting targets on their left and right sides requiring the use of more hand/eye coordination and crossing of the midline. The Redcoats are close now! So they must go fast - a posting trot down the long side of the arena but then Paul Revere gets captured. Luckily he escapes before the final standoff in Concord - another squirt gun fight and the Redcoats are defeated!



# Friends For Tomorrow, Inc.



*Friends For Tomorrow, Inc.*  
PO Box 213  
Lincoln, Massachusetts 01773  
p. 781.259.8909  
[www.friendsfortomorrow.org](http://www.friendsfortomorrow.org)

