Reflections on 2020

Our last newsletter came to you in winter of 2020. It contained a calendar full of exciting events planned and session dates mapped out. Then March arrived and the world stopped. Jennifer was the only one from Dream Riders that traveled to the Region 3 conference in High Point, NC on March 7 & 8. It was a wonderful time of learning and socializing with other therapeutic riding enthusiasts, but all the while news of COVID-19 was looming. It was on Monday March 9th that everything closed down including Dream Riders. It has been a long haul for all of us and we have been challenged to recreate how we provide our services, but when there is a will there is a way. We developed a phased reopening plan and started back with Phase 1 in September. While we miss having all of our riders and volunteers on board this has been a fantastic opportunity for the riders that were ready to become independent, but needed one on one instruction to get there. We have seen these individuals soar with their riding skills. For the time being we are thankful to be able to provide our services in this capacity and remain hopeful we will be able to move on to phase 2 and 3 within the near future.
April

April came and we waited hoping things would return to normal. We washed everything we could, kept the horses exercised and carried on. April came and it went with no change in status.

May

We entered May unsure of what the future held. Keeping our focus on Dream Riders continuing its legacy we geared up for fundraising. Midlands Gives was on Tuesday May 5th and our supporters showed up in a mighty way! Finishing the day with $22,060.00 in donations and matching gifts reassured that things were going to be okay and Dream Riders was going to make it through this pandemic. We are so thankful to everyone that helped make this event such a huge success!

Normally we would have hosted a benefit open horse show in May, but had to cancel due to the risks it entailed. We continued on through May waiting to see what was next.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

It was the summer of Kubota repairs. Our very important farm vehicle started to show its age this summer. The water pump left it stranded at the top of the driveway, thankfully that was the top of the hill and it could coast down to be repaired. The universal joint separated breaking the axle. Thanks to Mr. Dyer coming to the rescue again it has been mended and on the go for now. It was a hot and trying summer, but we continued to persevere knowing better days were yet to come.

We spent August writing a phased approach for reopening, setting up COVID-19 policies and procedures and cleaning everything to prepare to reopen our doors in September. It was the moment we had been waiting for and were looking forwards to having activity back on the farm including the cat!
SEPTEMBER

We kicked off Phase 1 of our reopening process on September 14th. Riders came one at a time down the side-walk excited to see their favorite horse and their favorite horses were just as excited to see them. Phase 1 included the riders that we classified as emerging independent riders. They were right at the point that with one on one guidance they could make that transition to being completely independent. One to two volunteers would come to help get horses ready, put them up and sanitize everything in between and after. So we all masked up and got back to doing what we do!

OCTOBER

Our emerging independent riders were well on their way to becoming independent, making progress every ride! The horses were doing great and loving this new style of lesson!

October 30th Dr. Mike Cissell with Mid-Atlantic Equine Dentistry spent the day examining our horses teeth. He was fantastic and we are thankful he took the time to perfect their dental issues! Happy mouths help make happy horses.

On October 31st Jennifer was invited to judge an in house schooling dressage show at Emerald Spring Equestrian Center. Instead of paying her she asked them to make a donation to Dream Riders. Owner and trainer Laura Trumbower turned the show into a benefit for Dream Riders which was a wonderful surprise. We are extremely grateful to her and all of her riders and their parents for the tremendous support!

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

We continued on in out of cold days. Riding is something that the riders really look forwards to so we just kept on going. The out pouring of support at the end of the year was a wonderful Holiday blessing. We closed the year with warm hearts and much hope for the future.
May 22 we will be hosting our benefit open horse show and working equitation ease of handling ride a test. We plan to host a full working equitation show in the future as the interest grows. You can find details about what working equitation is at usawe.org

Jennifer & Dash and Miranda & Simba learning the Working Equitation Obstacles.