



April 2017

Grace Lake Ministries Newsletter

Rider Spotlight

Kim, the mom of not one but two Grace Lake riders recently shared about her beautiful children and their experiences at Grace Lake. Autumn, age 5, and Andrew, age 4, each face their own struggles but both have benefitted greatly from their riding therapy.

Autumn tires easily and struggles with fatigue. When she began riding last fall, she was only able to ride for half an hour. Today, in her second riding season, she can ride for the entire hour! Her core has strengthened so much that she is now able to participate in a one-hour gymnastics class. A Harvard

University article explains the core muscles are needed for basically every activity from walking to sitting, twisting, bending, and lifting, not to mention your overall balance and stability. "Weak, tight, or unbalanced core muscles can undermine you in any of these realms." (health.harvard.edu) By increasing the core muscles through riding, Autumn's overall stamina has increased. Kim says, "Everyone has noticed Autumn's increased strength."

Kim went on to explain that prior to riding, Autumn was undecided about which hand should be dominant. Autumn would switch hands back and forth while performing tasks such as handwriting or coloring. Once the right hand reached the center, the left hand would step in and take over.



Neither hand would cross the midline to the other side of the page. The fun games played while riding require the riders to cross the midline which helps the brain establish stronger signals with muscles and nerves. Autumn has determined that she is a lefty and now easily crosses the midline with her left hand during activities.

Andrew's struggles are associated with gravitational insecurity. Different than a fear of heights, it is a lack of ability to know where one's limbs are in space, technically referred to as proprioception. It is a lot like your foot falling asleep and trying to walk. Getting off the ground for any reason was difficult for Andrew. Even sleeping in his own bed was difficult because "his bed was too high up in the air for him," Kim explained. Andrew has also been riding since last fall and "he now sleeps in a bed and can swing on a rope in gymnastics," his mom reports.

A study from the Journal of Physical Therapy Science conducted by Hyeon Su Kim, et, al. concluded that "horseback riding may result in functional improvement and increased stability, and it may stimulate proprioceptive sense input in neurological terms." Basically, it helps the mind locate the limbs and respond to them as well as helping the muscles respond to the brain's signals. More muscle development means quicker limb response. For Andrew, he can now tolerate being off the ground and riding an elevator and escalator. It seems a tiny feat but imagine taking the stairs all the time!



Autumn and Andrew both love Doc! Andrew loves to touch the horses, and Autumn loves to trot. Kim loves the progress her children have made from last year to this year. "It is so incredible," Kim explains, "every time we see the kids mount the horses. The benefits are too great to put on paper, and often too subtle to notice on a daily basis." She encourages other families to just give Grace Lake a try. Grace Lake "is such a gift from God."

(Article written by Cynda Felini. Thank you!)

Grace Lake Board of Directors

We have gained a couple of new board members so we thought this would be a great time to introduce all of our board members to you.

Randy Christopher, President/Board Member



Randy Christopher is the Senior Plant Operations Manager for a large Skilled Healthcare Company located in 12 States. Randy has served in Healthcare for over 22 years in over 200 centers. Randy received the USAF Fire Protection Specialist Certification while at Reese Air Force Base as a civilian Fire Fighter. Randy is a member of the National Fire Protection Association, The American Society for Healthcare Engineering.

Areas of service at Grace Lake: Current President on the Board, facility maintenance, rider, and volunteer

Chris Lowe, Secretary/Board Member



Chris is a professional with over 20 years of experience serving attorneys and other legal professionals. She has a Bachelors Degree in Liberal Arts and a Masters Degree in Education and Kinesiology/Exercise Physiology. Chris is a Licensed Message Therapist and Instructor serving children and adults with specialized abilities including autism, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, Lesch-Nyhan Syndrome, lymphedema, microcephaly, muscular

dystrophy, paraplegia and quadriplegia.

Areas of service at Grace Lake: Current Secretary of the Board and legal support

Kate Lundgren, Board Member



Kate is Clinical Director and Owner of Cutting Edge Pediatric Therapy. She has B.S. in Occupational Therapy and a Master's Degree in Business Administration. She is an adjunct profession for the Graduate School of Occupational Therapy at Texas Women's University.

Areas of service at Grace Lake: business planning, marketing, fundraising, and parent of rider with Autism

Ted Robinson, Board Member



Ted is a husband/father/grandfather; retired foreman/quality control specialist and God's servant.

Areas of service at Grace Lake: financial management, facility maintenance, and rider/volunteer support

Suzanne Creel, Board Member/Past President

Suzanne is an avid equestrian, wife/mother/grandmother, retired sales manager, gardener, and God's servant. Suzanne works at The Home Depot in merchandising.

Areas of service at Grace Lake: horse trainer, public relations, facility maintenance, and rider/volunteer support

Each Spring, Grace Lake holds our annual Meet the Horses/Open House event. This year we are ramping it up a bit! In addition to an Open House, we will offer a Horse Show for our riders. This will be a very special event for riders to show off their abilities and accomplishments to their family and friends as well as the public interested in learning what

we do! We hope that you will join us for our First Annual Horse Show / Open House event on May 13 between 10am and noon!

GRACE LAKE HORSE SHOW & OPEN HOUSE



Free
Admission

May 13th 10am-12pm

9611 FM 1827, Anna, TX

Join us in celebrating as our riders
showcase their skills!

Come meet our horses, see our facility, and
learn more about our therapeutic riding
program.

In case of rain, check the Grace Lake
Ministries Facebook page.

www.gracelakeministries.org

Dates to Remember:

5/13 Horse Show & Open House (10am-12pm)

6/3 Summer Session Begins

7/8 Facilities Work Day (8am-10am)

www.gracelakeministries.org
