



January 2021 Issue 5

CHEFF CENTER VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

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Volunteer Spotlight: Dia Panzer-Biddle



Dia and Tess

Dia became a Cheff Center volunteer eight years ago, bringing with her a unique background of growing up with horses and competing in youth and amateur rodeo in her native southwest Kansas.

She participated in rodeo events like Pole Bending (weaving poles at top speed) and Trail Course (working against the clock to complete an obstacle course). Interestingly, these events are similar to things Cheff clients sometimes work on in class: weaving poles and cones, and navigating our own obstacle courses.

Dia also competed in Breakaway Calf Roping, where the rider attempts to lasso a running calf. About the only event she didn't do was Barrel Racing because she didn't have a horse suited for it.

After college at Kansas State University, Dia made a decision to focus on her career, which meant she no longer had time for horses. She works for the German company J. Rettenmaier & Söhne, a global operation that produces, as Dia describes it, "the A-Z of plant-based, dietary fibers" for many different industries like food and petfood.

Dia's job took her from Kansas to New Jersey for six years, and then for the past eleven years to Michigan, where J. Rettenmaier's U.S. operation, JRS USA, is headquartered in Schoolcraft. Dia worked some years in sales and is now in management as the Vice President of Sales on the food side of the company.

Dia had been in Michigan a few years when she learned about Cheff from a friend at church. It sounded like a good opportunity to get involved with Therapeutic Riding, which she had not previously known about, and a chance for a regular

“horse fix”! Since then, she’s volunteered on several different days of the week, typically during the after-work evening block of classes. She’s also part of the New Volunteer Orientation Team.

What are some of the highlights and surprises of volunteering at Cheff? Dia said she is impressed by all the Cheff horses she’s met over the years and their ability to be calm and not show reactions. “It’s amazing to be around,” she said. In comparison, Dia noted that her own horses may have shied at their own shadows.

Belle and Tess are two favorites that Dia has worked with most recently. “I’ve always been infatuated with Clydesdales,” she said, so was pleased to meet newcomer and second Clydesdale, Willy. Dia also bonded with Moe, a tall, handsome Paint with a goofball streak, who many volunteers may remember. Moe left Cheff a while ago to return to a private owner.

A special benefit of volunteering for several years is “you get to know some of the same clients well, to know where to push a little and where to back off,” Dia said.

Another highlight is witnessing the breakthroughs clients make. Dia described an example that has stuck with her from a Cheff class where speech therapy was integrated with riding. The clients were autistic and nonverbal. By the third session, some of the riders were speaking the word “go” to their horses. It is sometimes “more therapy for me than for the kids,” Dia noted.

Thank you, Dia, for your long-time dedication to Cheff and your wonderful work with so many clients and horses. We look forward to seeing you in the barn and arena as soon as possible!

Note to readers: If you are curious about the rodeo events mentioned above, you’ll find some short and medium-length videos on <http://youtube.com>. Sample searches to try: “[youth pole bending](#)” or “[rodeo trail course](#)” or “[horse trail class](#)” or “[youth](#)

[rodeo breakaway roping](#)”. Interesting and exciting to see a few clips from practice runs and competitions.

January Fun Fact

In 1872, Leland Stanford, former governor of California and racehorse owner, made a bet that at some point in the gallop all four of a horse’s legs are off the ground simultaneously.

On 15 June 1878, Photographer Eadweard Muybridge proved him right by using a series of 24 cameras set up with tripwires that triggered as the racehorse Sallie Garner galloped past, each of which would capture a picture for a split second as the horse ran past.



Horse of the Month: Garrett



January's Horse of the Month, Garrett, is another recent addition to the herd at Cheff, arriving in September of 2020. Garrett, aka "Gary", is a handsome 18 year old Thoroughbred/Warmblood Gelding with a very expressive face. Garrett is a big boy, at 16 hands (5' 4" at the shoulder) and 1100 pounds!

In his previous life, Garrett used to be a hunter jumper, but was retired from his previous show life due to breaking his elbow. After a successful surgery at MSU and a full recovery, his mom felt that jumping wouldn't be in his best interest and graciously decided to donate him to Cheff...thank you so much!

Garrett is still settling in and does not know what to think of Star and Archie yet, but his best friend (at the moment) is Tess. Garrett's favorite things are

being groomed, and he loves to eat, especially his favorite snack, carrots.

Garrett would like his own fuzzy dressage girth size 28 or 30, a Back on Track English pad and he is on a joint supplement to help with arthritis.

Several people have asked about how best to fulfill some of the items on our horses' wish list. You can either purchase the items yourself and bring or send them to Cheff, or you can donate funds for Cheff to purchase the item. You can contact Sara Putney-Smith for more information at (269) 731-4471 x119 or sara@cheffcenter.org Thank you!



Volunteer Opportunity!
Cheff is looking for creative fund raising ideas, if you'd like to join in this effort, please contact Sara Putney-Smith at (269) 731-4471 x119 or sara@cheffcenter.org



January Birthdays

Ben A
Rhianna B
Hailee L
Jessi R

Taylor B
Matalynn E
Andee M
Lacey R

Lisa B
Julie G
Shari O
Linda S

Isabella B
Amira H
Bonnie P
Christen W

Kari B
Nate K
Kristie P
Claudia W



Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system where the immune system attacks cells in the brain and spinal cord. In the US, there are more than 200,000 cases per year.

The exact cause of MS is not known but is suspected to be an immune system malfunction where the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the myelin sheath of the nerve cells, damaging or destroying it and causing inflammation. Genetics and environmental factors may also play a role.

The myelin sheath is a protective covering around the nerve cell which helps in the transmission of signals. Once the myelin sheath is damaged, signal transmission becomes slow or blocked; sometimes nerve damage may also occur. When myelin is damaged or destroyed, it becomes harder for neurons to communicate with each other quickly and effectively. The neurons themselves can also be damaged in MS.

There are several different types of MS, mostly determined by how the disease progresses over time and how often symptoms and relapses are experienced:

- **Clinically isolated syndrome (CIS)** is a first episode of MS symptoms that lasts at least 24 hours. A person may experience a CIS but not go on to develop MS.
- **Relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS)** is the most common form of MS (almost **85%** of people with MS are initially diagnosed with RRMS). People with this type of MS experience relapses followed by periods of partial or complete recovery.
- **Secondary progressive multiple sclerosis (SPMS)** usually follows RRMS. With SPMS, the function of the central nervous system gradually gets worse and leads to additional disability.
- **Primary progressive multiple sclerosis (PPMS)** PPMS is characterized by worsening neurological function from the very onset of MS. Both relapses and remissions are rare.

RRMS – the most common disease course – is characterized by clearly defined attacks of new or increasing neurologic symptoms. These attacks – also called relapses or exacerbations – are followed by periods of partial or complete recovery (remissions). During remission, all symptoms may disappear, or some symptoms may continue and become permanent. However, there is no apparent progression of the disease during the periods of remission. RRMS can be further characterized as either active (with relapses and/or evidence of new activity on an MRI over a specified period of time) or not active, as well as worsening (a confirmed increase in disability following a relapse), or not worsening.

The disorder is most commonly diagnosed between ages 20 to 40, but it can be seen at any age. Approximately 5000 children and teens are living with MS in the US. Children with MS exclusively have a relapsing-remitting course, which means there are clear attacks (relapses) of symptoms that subside (remit). During the periods of remission between attacks, there is no progression of the disease. Even though children may experience frequent relapses (possibly more than typically seen in adults), studies have shown that children also seem to have very good recovery that is often more rapid than that of adults.

There is no known cure for multiple sclerosis, but treatments can substantially improve the symptoms. Treatment includes medication, plasma exchange and rehabilitation. For those individuals who choose rehabilitation, an

option may be to work with a Physical Therapist who is trained in how to utilize the 3-dimensional movement of the horse to help them achieve their therapy based goals, formerly called hippotherapy.

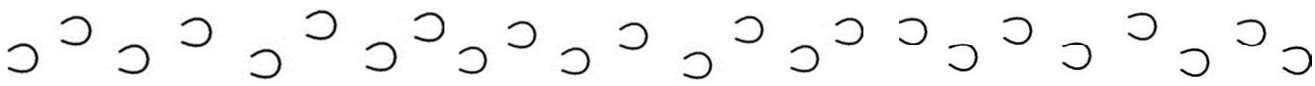
So far, research on the benefits of this option has been extremely limited but promising:

- In a small 2005 Swedish study by Ann Hammer and her colleagues at the department of rehabilitation medicine at Orebro University Hospital, 10 of 11 people showed gains—primarily in balance—after weekly Therapeutic riding sessions conducted over 10 weeks. Some participants also demonstrated improvements in pain relief, muscle tension and ability to perform activities of daily living.
- In 2007, a Central Michigan University study conducted by Silkwood-Sherer showed that among 15 adults with MS, the nine who underwent weekly Therapeutic riding treatment for 14 weeks demonstrated a significant improvement in balance versus the control group. Later in 2012, Silkwood-Sherer directed another 14-week pilot study in which three people with MS participated in weekly Therapeutic riding sessions and two with MS received no treatment. Those who rode showed significant improvement when tested in balance and mobility.
- In a 2017 study done in Germany with 70 people with MS, those receiving Therapeutic riding along with standard care, improved balance, fatigue, spasticity and quality of life significantly more than controls not receiving Therapeutic riding.

In Therapeutic riding, the horse’s pelvis mimics our pelvis and in turn the horse’s walk simulates the way we walk. As the horse walks, its center of gravity is displaced three-dimensionally with back and forth, up and down, side to side, and rotational movements. The horse's movement has a therapeutic effect on the patient with a precise, repetitive pattern of movement very similar to the movement of a person's pelvis during normal walking. Additionally, the movement of the horse produces sensory input to the brain and the nervous system of the patient. In a typical 45-minute Therapeutic riding session, a horse steps about 2,000 times.

For more information on this rehabilitation option, and detail on the studies that have been done, check out these websites:

[MS Mindshift | Making Healthy Choices in MS](https://medlineplus.gov/multiplesclerosis.html)
[https://medlineplus.gov/multiplesclerosis.html](https://www.medicinenet.com/multiple_sclerosis_ms/article.htm)
[https://www.medicinenet.com/multiple_sclerosis_ms/article.htm](https://patient.info/brain-nerves/multiple-sclerosis-leaflet)
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[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17558361/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17558361/Benefits-Multiple Sclerosis (pathintl.org))
[Benefits-Multiple Sclerosis \(pathintl.org\)](#)
[Effects of Hippotherapy on Postural Stability](#)
[Study-of-Therapeutic-Horseback-Riding](#)
[German Study Journal findings](#)



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To find out more, visit: <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about>

And if you really want to help, ask your friends and family to do the same!!!! We thank you in advance, as every penny counts for us!

Harding's

For those of you who shop at Harding's, if you join their Community Rewards program and select the Cheff Center as your organization of choice, we will receive a rebate based on your purchase amounts. For more information, click on the link below.

<https://www.hardings.com/savings-and-rewards/community-rewards/>

Again, we thank you in advance, and please let your friends and family know—every little bit helps!!!

Questions/comments? Please contact Sara Putney-Smith, Volunteer Administrator, sara@cheffcenter.org or (269) 731-4471 x119.

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If you have suggestions for future newsletters, or are interested in submitting articles, please contact Sara Putney-Smith.

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