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Volunteer Spotlight: Nick Whipple



Nick and Art

When Nick arrived in Kalamazoo to attend Western Michigan University, he was also looking to volunteer in some way with people and horses. He

googled “equine therapy”, discovered the Cheff Center and has now been a volunteer for over a year.

Nick’s first experience with horses came as a teenager. He’d gotten into a bit of trouble and, as a result, took part in a program that joins young people with horses that have been abused. For a city kid from Metro Detroit, this was a unique experience, to say the least.

The program involved working with the horses on the ground, rather than riding. The kids experienced how their own body language, emotions and energy affected their horses. They learned to become a team with their horse partners. Nick developed an interest in the human-horse bond and in equine therapy more generally. His desire to help others, especially kids, became an ongoing passion.

At WMU, Nick studies General Psychology, with minors in Holistic Health and Family Studies. He’s working toward becoming a therapist, with plans for a counseling career that hopefully includes equine therapy services.

A former football player, Nick is still a football fan and also a video gamer. He’s a devotee of live music in Kalamazoo. If you want to know what’s going on in the house music scene, he’s the person to ask. (Or if, like the writer of this article, you don’t know what the house music scene is, he can explain it to you!)

At Cheff, Nick is a member of the orientation team, where current volunteers help Cheff staff train new volunteers, plus works with therapeutic riding classes.

Art and Awesome are two of the horses Nick frequently teams up with. He and Art started close to the same time, so they were newbies together. He appreciates Awesome's disposition, which can be sensitive and a little nervous, as you may know. Conveying a sense of calm and security, which Nick first practiced in the youth program some years ago, is particularly helpful to Awesome.

What are some of Nick's favorite things about volunteering at Cheff? For one thing, as a psych student, it's interesting to see things you've studied be applied in real life.

He finds all the volunteer duties rewarding, from working with clients to barn tasks to cleaning out the back paddock. "You know it's all for a good cause," he says, and adds, "This place does more for me than I do for it."

Thank you for being a Cheff volunteer, Nick, and for the positive spirit you share with all of us!



October Birthdays



**Megan K
Ellie L
Erin R
Vicki K
Maddie H
Patty S
Terri L
Linda M
Melissa E
Isabell N
Grace W
Collin K
Nina P
Deven S
Hailey B**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Horse of the Month: BELLE



October's Horse of the Month is the beautiful mare Belle. Belle was a fifteen year old Thoroughbred when she arrived at Cheff in the spring of 2013 from the MSU Polo Club.

Belle has the sweetest face and is one of our go to horses. She can be the most "Steady Eddy" you have ever seen, however, she does have a feisty side to her, especially when being turned out!

Belle can stand for hours and just be loved on and brushed, but she is not particularly fond of having her girth tightened for trail rides! Can you blame her?

Belle loves any and all kinds of treats, but she is especially fond of carrots!

Our lovely Belle suffers from Kissing Spine and is wishing for a Back on Track All Purpose Pad to help keep her comfortable while being ridden. She is also hoping for some Back on Track Polo Wraps to help support her legs!



OCTOBER EVENTS

October 3 – Ride-a-Thon 2020
(see pp. 6-7 for more information)

October 31, 10am-1pm
New Volunteer Orientation

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is defined as a “group of disorders that affect a person’s ability to move and maintain balance and posture”. The word “**cerebral**” refers to the brain, and “**palsy**” refers to weakness or problems with using the muscles. CP is caused by abnormal development of the brain or damage to the developing brain, and most people with CP are diagnosed in infancy or early childhood.

CP is more common in boys than in girls, and in African American children more than Caucasian. The symptoms of CP vary from person to person, and although CP itself does not get worse over time, the person’s symptoms may change throughout their lifetime. Many people with CP may have related conditions such as *intellectual disability, seizures, vision, hearing or speech issues, and spine or joint issues*.

There are several types of CP:

Spastic Cerebral Palsy

Approximately 80% of people with CP have spastic CP, making it the most common form of CP. Spastic CP involves increased muscle tone, meaning affected muscles tend to be stiff, making movement awkward.

1. ***Spastic diplegia/diparesis***—Muscle stiffness is mainly in the legs, with little or no affect in the arms. These people generally have difficulty walking as their muscles in the legs and hips are tight and cause the legs to cross, turn inward or pull together.
2. ***Spastic hemiplegia/hemiparesis***—Only affects one side of a person’s body, and usually the arm is more affected than the leg.
3. ***Spastic quadriplegia/quadruparesis***—The most severe form of spastic CP, this affects all four limbs, the trunk and the face. People with spastic quadriplegia cannot walk and usually have some form of intellectual disability as well as other disabilities mentioned above.

Dyskinetic Cerebral Palsy

People with dyskinetic CP have problems controlling the movement of their hands, arms, feet and legs. Movements are uncontrollable and can be slow and writhing or rapid and jerky. If the face is affected, the person may have difficulty swallowing, sucking, or talking. The muscle tone of dyskinetic CP can change from very tight to very loose not only day to day, but during a single day.

Ataxic Cerebral Palsy

People with this level of CP have problems with balance and coordination. Quick movements and movements needing a lot of control are often difficult, and they may be unsteady when they walk. They may have a hard time controlling their arms and hands when reaching for something.

Mixed Cerebral Palsy

It is possible to have more than one type of CP—the most common type of mixed CP is *spastic-dyskinetic Cerebral Palsy*.

Early diagnosis of CP is incredibly important to the well-being of the child and his/her family, and typically diagnosed within the first 2 years of life. This is usually done beginning with *Developmental Monitoring*—tracking a child’s growth and development over time. There are many developmental milestones pediatricians look for—rolling over, sitting up, crawling, etc., and if there is a concern, the pediatrician may do developmental

screening and make referrals for developmental and medical evaluations.

After an assessment and diagnosis, a treatment plan will be made. Plans may consist of any of the following or combinations of several: Medicines, surgery, braces, physical and/or occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Plans will be customized to the individual patient and may change over time to help the child reach his/her full potential.

How does Therapeutic Riding help CP clients?

While on a moving horse, a rider experiences rhythmic movement similar to the human gait. This can activate the part of the brain that controls movement. During the 30-40 minutes a rider is on a horse, the horse makes 2000+ repetitive movements. Not only does riding the horse passively warm up the muscles, but repetition creates muscle memory. This, in turn, helps develop core strength, improvement in balance, and changes in the chemistry of the brain. Within 10 minutes of riding, the brain has started releasing serotonin--the key hormone that stabilizes mood, feelings of well-being and happiness, and enables brain cells and other nervous system cells to communicate with each other.

The emotional benefits of Therapeutic Riding are many—besides serotonin being released and enhancing their mood, being able to accomplish a physical activity can boost confidence and self-esteem of the rider. Also, horses are incredibly perceptive, and often understand their riders' needs. (You have probably seen this first-hand when our horses are around our clients—they are incredibly gentle and seem to know just how low, for example, to put their head while waiting to be mounted so the rider can pet them). I'm sure you have also noticed the smiles and moods of the riders as they dismount and leave the lesson! It's remarkable and very gratifying to see and experience, and is exactly why we do what we do! 😊

To find out more about Cerebral Palsy, you can go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/cp/facts.html>

<https://www.yourcpf.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/cp/features/cerebral-palsy-11-things.html>



Cheff Center's Annual

RIDE A-THON



October 3rd, 2020

AUGUSTA, MI

* CLEARED & MARKED TRAILS * AMAZING PRIZES * SILENT AUCTION * LUNCH *
* RAFFLE * MORE! * \$50 MIN. PLEDGE * FREE SHIRTS FOR 4H & PONY CLUB *
* 8AM-NOON * RAIN OR SHINE * REGISTER AT CHEFFCENTER.ORG *

We're Riding for a Reason



With your participation in this event, you are sharing the gift of horses with those who need it most. This is one of the largest annual fundraisers for Cheff and its success is critical to programming. An average of over 120 individuals with physical, cognitive, and emotional special needs visit Cheff each week and participate in therapy services that they depend on to enhance their lives in ways most of us could never imagine.

Please know that in addition to getting a great ride, lunch, prizes, etc., you will also go home knowing that you've had a hand in changing lives-and we want you to feel great about it! This October 3rd, we're riding for a reason!

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.CHEFFCENTER.ORG/RAT



CHEFF THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER
8450 N. 43RD ST. ■ AUGUSTA, MI 49012
269-731-4471 WWW.CHEFFCENTER.ORG



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2020

Start from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

RAIN or SHINE!

The Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center
44th Annual Ride-A-Thon

\$50.00 minimum donation to ride**/ \$75.00 includes T-shirt

(We ask that all donations be turned in the day of the Ride-a-Thon)

REGISTRATION / CONSENT:

Name: Phone: E-mail:

Address: City: St ZIP

**4-H or Pony Club Member? (receives free t-shirt) Yes Club Name:

Rider's Age: 20 & Under 21 - 40 41 & Over

Horse's Name: Negative Coggins verified: Yes No

Participants under 16 must be accompanied by an adult, who is also registered

In consideration of the Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center (Cheff TRC), Battle Creek Hunt Club/Skyline Stables, Pine Meadows and all adjoining property owners who have granted permission to participate in this special event, I hereby waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages which I may have against the Cheff TRC and all other property owners, the location at which the event will take place, as well as any other person connected with the event, for any and all injuries which I may suffer for taking part in the event as a result thereof. I have read and understand the above statement.

Rider Signature Parent/Guardian Signature*

*Anyone under 18 must have the consent signature of a parent/guardian

PLEASE PRINT. MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO "CHEFF CENTER"

Table with 6 columns: Sponsor Name, Mailing Address, City, State, Zip, Pledge Amt, Matching Gift, Total Amt. Pd. Includes a GRAND TOTAL row.

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So many people order online from **Amazon.com**, but did you know that the Cheff Center can receive benefits when you do? Go to smile.amazon.com and register—we are one of the 1000's of Charities that you can choose from, and we will get 0.5% of your qualified purchases!

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,
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Contributions by: Kim Berggren, Emily Kalin, Ann Lindsay, Sara Putney-Smith, Marianne Stier

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

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