

News From the "Neigh"bourhood

February

~Dates to Remember~

March

March 2
Youth Leadership session 4 begins

March 6
Therapeutic Session 3 begins



April

April 8
Public Riding session 5 begins

April 13
Youth Leadership session 5 begins

April 14
Good Friday - Office Closed

April 15 - 21
No Lessons

May

May 22
Victoria Day - Office Closed

"I'm a Great 'Neigh'bour" Campaign

To become a Great 'Neigh'bour please visit the PARDS office or one of these participating businesses

Beachcomber Hot Tubs &
Home Leisure

Bear Creek Animal Clinic
Beaverlodge Butcher Shop

Coffee Crave

Commandeur Mechanical

Country Club Animal Clinic

Countryside Motor Sports

Daddio's Pizzeria

D. Luxe Style

Grains Bakery

Grande Prairie Coffee Co.

Greenhawk Harness &
Equestrian Supplies

Home Hardware
Downtown

Home Hardware West

Keddies Tack & Western Wear

Mama & Papa's Café
in Clairmont

Peace Fuel
Distributors(2012)

Peavey Mart

Tip Top Barber Shop

UFA

West County Animal Clinic

~Stay In Touch~



~Rider Spotlight~

Ashleigh Wowk ~ By Anna Kittilsen, Therapeutic Riding Instructor



Meet Ashleigh, a positive young lady with a bubbly personality, who began riding at PARDS in 1995 at the age of 5. Ashleigh was diagnosed with Autism at an early age and her goals at PARDS have focused mainly around independence and confidence, physical activity and to have fun!

Autism can effect many areas of a person's life, such as social interaction, communication, behaviors and, in Ashleigh's case, coordination.

To address her goals of increased confidence and coordination, Ashleigh's program originally included the support of a horse leader and two side walkers in her lesson. These supports were put in place to ensure a safe lesson, as well as give her a sense of security and community through taking a team approach to her riding lessons. Through consistency, determination, shared goals and ongoing program adaptations, Ashleigh has progressed to riding completely independently at a walk and at the trot. This has taken much hard work on Ashleigh's part, over many years. It has been very important to recognize and celebrate Ashleigh's steady progressions through the years to keep her on track and motivated to continue to work toward her goals.

When working with Ashleigh, her instructors have employed a number of strategies to help her progress. Communicating in a clear and concise manner and offering instruction in small, easy to follow bits, are instrumental in insuring that Ashleigh fully comprehends what she is being asked to do, whether it be riding a pattern, correcting her technique or learning a new skill. Recently, Ashleigh's lesson goals have included achieving proper positioning on the horse, holding her head high and learning to use her eyes to direct her horse; all of which increase her core strength and posture and in the end positively impact her overall balance. A horse responds to a rider's body language and level of confidence in the saddle; by giving Ashleigh the tools to direct her horse, she builds her confidence which increases her control of her equine partner. Ashleigh joined the program with a fear of losing control of her horse, so building confidence to where she no longer needed the support of two side walkers was the original goal. When she reached this milestone, the next strategy employed was for her instructor to remain in her line of sight giving her a focal point and a goal; to guide her horse to reach her instructor. In the beginning, her leader would move away, perhaps for only the length between 2 letters in the arena, and then return; a huge accomplishment which increased her sense of independence and control. Ashleigh has achieved other independent skills over the years such as mounting and dismounting from a mounting block, leading her horse into the arena for her lesson and riding totally independently and increasing the distance she trots.

Ashleigh has had many equine partners over the years; each being chosen for a different goal. Currently she is partnered with Risley. This is a great match for Ashleigh for her goals of independence and confidence. Risley's steady, smooth gate and his willingness to do as he's asked, makes Ashleigh feel secure and at ease while riding independently, thus continuing to build on her level of confidence.

In the 22 years that Ashleigh has been in the PARDS therapeutic riding program she has made tremendous progress. Ashleigh has realized many benefits as a result of her riding program outside of the arena as well. Through her experiences working with her instructors and volunteers, she is more accepting of social interaction in all aspects of her life. Her overall skills in comprehension, communication and focus have all increased as well, allowing her to be more engaged in many situations she encounters. Ashleigh refers to her time at PARDS as "her PE time" as, yes, riding is a very physically demanding activity, and she has fun!

Ashleigh is always a joy to teach and puts a smile on everyone's face. We have loved having her ride with us for so many years and hope to get to watch her progress and grow through our therapeutic riding program for many more years. Her dedication, love and bond with her horse are truly heart warming.

~Donor Spotlight~

Global Pet Foods

Sandra and Barry Straza, owners of Global Pet Foods have shown huge community involvement since opening their doors for business in Grande Prairie in November of 2008. From the first time Carol Balcome, a PARDS volunteer and loyal Global Pet Foods customer approached Sandra for an auction donation for PARDS annual Dine & Dance fundraiser, PARDS has been a charity of choice to receive ongoing support from Global Pet Foods. Barry and Sandra have prioritized community giving within their business model and many local organizations benefit from their commitment. They have embraced the opportunity to learn more about the many organizations they support and PARDS is proud that they see the value in what we do and want to be a part of our rider's success.

Sandra and Barry have a strong love of animals, which is easily seen when one of their 4 furry family members greets you when you come through the door of their store. Barry is proud to be the only certified Canine Master trainer in Grande Prairie. Sandra owned horses growing up and Barry was lucky enough to have one in the family for a short time, so both understand the benefits and enjoyment of animal assisted therapy from not only horses, but dogs, cats and even hamsters and guinea pigs. This along with their view of "Give back to the community, otherwise there's no point of being here" is why they have chosen to be such huge supporters of PARDS Therapeutic Programs.

Over the years PARDS relationship with Global Pet Foods has grown and today we see them donating to many of PARDS initiatives. They are long time donors to PARDS Dine & Dance silent auction, collect recyclables for PARDS 'Dime At A Time' campaign, and last year sold tickets for PARDS Gator Raffle; for which they went above and beyond just selling by purchasing a commercial to promote ticket sales on 93.1 FM Big Country. They also ensure PARDS feline staff members, Miss Howell and Gus and canine staff member, Jade have very full bellies by supplying them with dry food all year!

PARDS is very thankful for all of the support Global Pet Foods has given over the years and we look forward to continue partnering with them for the benefit of our community far into the future!



We are Canada's Healthy Choice For Pets!
Global Pet Foods Grande Prairie

~Volunteer Spotlight~

Della Morrison ~ By Anna Kittilsen, Therapeutic Riding Instructor

Growing up in the country, living the farm life, Della felt drawn to volunteer at PARDS to escape from city life and get some much needed quality time with horses. Della has been a volunteer at PARDS for the last four months and joins us a couple of times each week. She came into volunteering with no expectations other than working with the horses. What she didn't expect was how much she would love the clients; even developing special bonds with some of them. When Della was on a break between lessons, she took it upon herself to mentor one of our clients who volunteers to clean the lounge and office each week. Della owns her own cleaning company, so working along side to support and teach came naturally to her.

Della doesn't limit herself in how she engages as a volunteer. She does everything from leading and side walking in lessons, barn chores, cleaning in the lounge, right down to making the staff delicious baked goods (this is not an actual volunteer position, but hugely appreciated none the less! 😊). Della says what she enjoys most about her time spent at PARDS is interacting with the clients and instructors; "everyone is always so positive and upbeat, making it a joyful and fun place to be". What motivates her to continue coming back each week is that she loves helping others and finds her experiences at PARDS very rewarding. The highlight of volunteering for her has been all the growth and successes she sees the riders make throughout their lessons.

Through her involvement at PARDS she feels her community awareness has been broadened; seeing just how many people our programs reach and how widely supported we are throughout the community. Della is positively impacted by observing and being a part of the full and complete acceptance of each and every rider at PARDS, along with the appreciation from friends, family, and everyone within the PARDS family for her volunteer efforts. Della is a joy to work with; her positive attitude and soft spoken, gentle manner make her riders feel at home and comfortable.



One of my favorite stories Della shared with us is when she ran into one of the riders she works with here at PARDS, at the East Link Centre. Together they walked laps, had races, and talked and laughed together. The next week, in his lesson they had so much to talk about and were so excited to share in that memory together.

We look forward to sharing many more lessons, experiences and goodies with Della!

~Volunteer Opportunities~

Our riders need you!

Many riders wouldn't be able to participate in lessons without the support of caring and committed volunteers. We invite you to join our team of volunteer "Superheroes" by completing a Volunteer Registration Form which can be found on our website at www.pards.ca

Volunteer Orientation

Tuesday, February 21 - 6:00 p.m.

Volunteer Orientations are mandatory for volunteers and are held throughout the year. During the orientation you will:

- Learn about Volunteer Opportunities
- Meet other volunteers
- Be given a tour of the facility
- Introduction to barn/ arena care and maintenance
- Introduction to lesson practices
- Practice in mock lessons

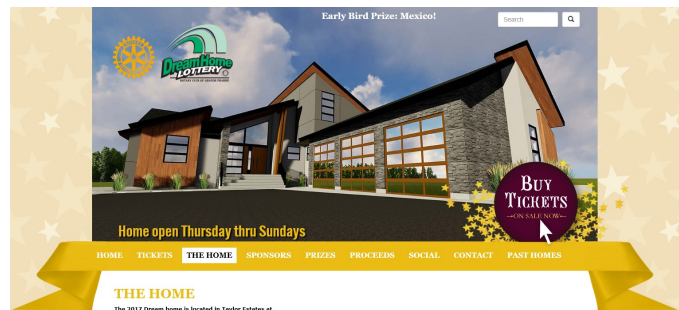
Orientations are held at the PARDS facility at 8202 84th Street, Grande Prairie

Call 789-538-3211 or email lessons@pards.ca to register

~Fabulous Volunteers~



Rotary Club of
Grande Prairie



PARDS is again partnering with the Rotary Club of Grande Prairie for Dream Home Lottery ticket sales. This partnership provides PARDS with a cash donation in return for the hours of volunteer time donation. We still have spaces to fill throughout the month of March.

If you would like to help out as well, please contact the PARDS office at 780-538-3211. Bring a friend!

We would like to thank the following volunteers who have filled shifts or signed up to fill future shifts so far:

Shirley Kyle	Rose Sandvold	Larry Bentley
Lenna Scammell	Michelle Sandvold	Eunice Bentley
Dave Perks	Debbie Leibbrand	Linda Duval
Crystal Potter	Kathy Makin	Mort Timanson
Lorry Landry	Ellen Adam	Ashley Heft
Merle Drysdale	Mavis Breikrentz	James Holton
Lil Pigeau	Donna VanVeen	Sarah Gunter
Chris Stetsko	Robyn Wells	George Malcolm
Larry Brown	Emma Costley	Maureen Haglund
Janet Brown	Kolby Braseth	Carol Balcome
Marge Elliott	Nicole Crowley	Lynda Brown
Barb Wald	Kassandra Hudson	Ellen Archibald

~Upcoming Events~

Pledge Packages are ready!



32nd ANNUAL FUND RIDE & COMMUNITY CARNIVAL

Saturday June 10, 2017

*RIDE, BIKE, or HIKE!!!
Collect pledges to Win Prizes!*



Fund Ride Participants:

9am Pancake Breakfast

10am Registration

5pm Appreciation Supper & Prizes

**Games, Archery, Face Painting,
Glitter Tattoos and more!!**

General Public Activities:

11am - 3pm BBQ Lunch & Carnival



Call 780-538-3211 or visit www.pards.ca for more information

~PARDS Sweetheart of the Year~



PARDS held its first Sweetheart of the Year campaign and our herd was feeling the love!

We would like to announce that this year's winner is Cleatus.

Thank you to everyone who purchased a Valequine for their favorite Equine friend. You helped raise \$405.00 to support PARDS Therapeutic Programs.



~Just Horsin' Around~



Q: What did the horse say when it fell?

See below for answer

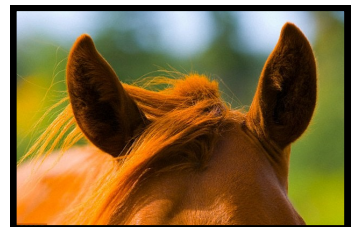
DID YOU KNOW?

Forget neighing! Horses also communicate with their ears!

Horses have very mobile ears; there are 16 muscles in each ear, which allows them to rotate their ears 180 degrees.

Horses use subtle body language to communicate their thoughts. When a horse is interested in something, it pricks up its ears and swivels them towards whatever has caught its attention. Most of the time, wherever a horse's ear is pointing is where the horse is looking with the eye on the same side. If the ears are pointing in different directions, the horse is looking at two different things at the same time. When a horse's ears are flopping down, it means they are relaxed, but pinned back, the horse is expressing anger.

A study revealed that just like humans, horses read each other's faces. But, unlike us, horses gain important information by specifically examining the ears; and the ability to read each other's interest level is disrupted when the ears are covered up, the researchers found. This movement is so important that, if its ears are covered up, another horse struggles to know what it is thinking.



Information taken from article written by [Fiona Macrae for the Daily Mail](#), 4 August 2014

A: I've fallen and I can't giddyup!

~New Facility Update~



Our sincerest thanks to the Rotary Club of Grande Prairie for their most recent donation of \$100,000 in support of PARDS' New Facility! Their support has taken us a giant step forward in reaching occupancy this summer!

Over the past 5 years, our capacity to serve the children and adults within the disability community has reached a critical stage. We have found ourselves having to turn away many who need us. In an effort to remedy this situation, we broke ground on our new facility in 2013 and, thanks to the Grande Prairie Rotary Club and many other generous organizations, individuals and corporations, our riders will be engaging in their therapeutic programs for their fall riding session from their new barn and arena. This facility takes away all barriers to growing, expanding and serving those in the Peace Region that experience physical, developmental, behavioural and social challenges.

This has been a long time coming and we appreciate the support and encouragement we have received.

As the construction schedule allows, we invite all of our project partners to come out for a tour to see first hand the impact your contribution has made to the project and to all the riders that will benefit.

Thank you so much to all of our project partners who have gotten us so close to realizing the dream of building our capacity to serve all who need us. There are still many opportunities to get involved through work-bee volunteering, donating or sponsoring. Please call Jennifer at 780-538-3211 for more information on how to get involved.



**Rotary Club
of Grande
Prairie**

**Robert & Ruth Finch
Tom Brown 1000 Mile Ride Dean & Sheilah Swanberg**



SOUTHWEST
Design & Construction Ltd.



Bowes Family

Karen Blais



**Rotary Club of
Grande Prairie
Sunrise**



☞ Glen's Graders ☞ McLeod Family ☞ Sanjel Corp. – Staff Fund ☞ 1266823 AB Inc. ☞
 ☞ Diamond J Equine Services Ltd. ☞ Shepo Fencing ☞ Roy Bickell ☞
 ☞ Evaskevich Family ☞ Joe Peskunowicz ☞
 ☞ St. Gerard School - Leaders of the New World ☞
 ☞ AccuPro Real Estate Appraisal & Consulting ☞ Bryan Tink & Family ☞ Roy Borstad ☞
 ☞ Charlie & Marilyn Cramer & Family ☞ Wade Mayer ☞ DTA Christmas Carollers ☞

Thank you!