

News From the "Neigh"bourhood

January



~ Dates to Remember ~

February

February 17
No Public Lessons

February 19
Family Day - Office closed

February 19 - 22
No Lessons

March

March 5
Therapeutic Session 3 begins

March 9
Friday Programs Session 3 begins

March 17
Public Lessons Session 3 begins

March 30
Good Friday - Office Closed

March 31
No Lessons

April

April 2 - 5
No Lessons

~ Stay In Touch ~

www.pards.ca





Happy New Year from the Staff & Board of Directors at PARDS!

We want to take a moment to thank all of our volunteers and donors for their continued support throughout 2017. From leaders and sidewalkers, ticket sellers to event volunteers, program Gift-In-Kind donors to Triple Crown event sponsors; your support makes a huge difference in the lives of PARDS Riders!

2017 was a big year for us here at PARDS with the move to our beautiful new 55 acre home and it is YOU who made the move possible with your generosity. You are making miracles happen in our arena and helping to change lives!

Thank you again, we loved working with you in 2017 & hope you continue to work with us in 2018! Here's to a happy and healthy year ahead!

~ Rider Spotlight ~

Alvin Beaver

Alvin is a gentle man of few words but when we asked if we could write about him in our Rider Spotlight, he was very excited and eager to be involved. He expressed that he was honoured to be chosen and shared that years ago he was looking for a healthy recreational activity that was fun, social and helped him get exercise but felt his choices were limited given his interests and disabilities. This led him to PARDS and now, at 43 years old, Alvin has been riding at PARDS for 7 years. Alvin was born with FASD which for him presents with characteristics of Pervasive Development Disorder. (PDD).



When Alvin joined PARDS he was in a mounted riding program and has now transitioned to the cart driving program with his driving pony partner, Hot Wheels. Alvin's 6'2" frame dwarfs Hot Wheels but, even though there is much bending and stooping on Alvin's part, he truly enjoys the hands on time he spends with Hot Wheels grooming and tacking. His gentleness and engagement forged a connection with Hot Wheels when on the ground but it was in the cart where this connection was truly cemented. Alvin's hand movements when manipulating the reins started out exaggerated and rough but through perseverance and determination Alvin learned to communicate with Hot Wheels with a gentle rein. Now driving



independently with direction Alvin gives Hot Wheels appropriate instructions using different pressure and lead directions on the reins to turn, halt and accelerate. To support Alvin to succeed in achieving his riding goals, he receives instruction in small steps with time given to process the instructions and to ensure understanding. One of Alvin's favourite things to do when cart driving is trot! His wide grin and intermittent bursts of laughter are evidence of the enjoyment he experiences in his lessons. His ever increasing engagement with Hot Wheels and the instructors show that he has also found the social interaction he was seeking. PARDS strives to provide a welcoming, safe

environment and, according to Alvin, we have succeeded right along with him.

We look forward to seeing Alvin continue to grow and develop his horsemanship skills and continue to have fun!

Abelone Peterson ~ PARDS Instructor

FASD is the umbrella term used to describe a range of disabilities that may include physical birth defects and health problems including developmental delays, learning disabilities, memory problems, as well as difficulties in communicating feelings and understanding consequences.

(<http://fasd.alberta.ca/get-to-know-fasd.aspx>)

The diagnostic category of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) refers to a group of disorders characterized by delays in the development of socialization and communication skills.

(<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Pervasive-Developmental-Disorders-Information-Page>)

~ Volunteer Spotlight ~

Gerri Ward

Gerri Ward joined the PARDS' volunteer team last year. Since joining, she has been a very active and committed volunteer. She can be found helping out in areas such as lesson leader and side walker, barn help, cleaning, grooming and tacking horses as well as helping with fundraising events.

Gerri has a background working with special needs children as an EA for the Grande Prairie Public school district. She really enjoyed working with children and seeing their progress, however, Gerri decided to change career paths after an injury. Her love of working with children and the special needs community was a big factor in why she decided to start volunteering with PARDS; the horses were just a big bonus.

Gerri started volunteering with us with very limited horse knowledge. She was eager to learn everything she could to best help in all areas. Her enthusiasm and willingness to try new things is a welcome energy in the PARDS barn. In the past year Gerri has learned so much; she is now able to groom the horses, tack them up and lead them in lessons. Seeing the benefits and enjoyment that the riders had she recently joined our lesson program, taking another step herself as a rider.

Seeing the progress the riders make and being able to be part of that is very rewarding for Gerri. She is always upbeat and engaged with the riders and in the lessons. She greets all riders and staff with a big smile every day she is in, which is a lot! Gerri currently is volunteering 4 days a week. She has said it is amazing to not only be able to see the riders benefit from the programs but, as a side walker, to be involved first hand and to feel the riders muscles relax and melt as if they become part of the horse.

Gerri has expressed many times that PARDS and the horses are one of her go to happy places. There is one horse in our herd that she is particularly fond of and can be found sneaking apples to. Ace joined our herd around the same time Gerri joined our team. She has watched and worked with him as he developed into the steady therapy horse he is today and because of this she feels a bond with him as they learned a lot of things together.

Gerri was surprised and pleased to learn about all the programs that PARDS offers and the wide range of disabilities we help in the programs. When initially hearing about therapeutic riding she thought it was specifically for those with physical disabilities; she was thrilled when she learned that our programs reached beyond this demographic to include developmental delay, mental illness and a wide variety of other diagnoses as well.

All PARDS staff are thankful for all the time, energy and commitment Gerri has given towards our cause, but no one is as appreciative as all of the riders she helps and supports in their programs. We all look forward to continuing to work with her as part of our amazing team in the future!

Sarah Gunter ~ PARDS Instructor



~ Community Champions ~



Friesen Bain Chartered Professional Accountants is a local accounting partnership consisting of four Chartered Accountants serving Grande Prairie and surrounding areas including Dawson Creek, Peace River and a part time office in Tumbler Ridge. They provide a full range of accounting services from bookkeeping to tax returns and everything in between! As a smaller firm, they maintain a hands-on and cost effective approach to deliver exceptional customer service.

Friesen Bain believes in giving back to the community. This is why in 2011 they created the

Paying It Forward (GP) Foundation. Through this foundation, Friesen Bain chose to host a gala to raise funds for the SPCA as their first benefitting charity. The SPCA was then given the task of Paying It Forward by selecting another local charity for the foundation to help the following year. Fast forward to 2016, when Friesen Bain held a Monster Ball for the Rainbow Society who in turn elected to Pay It Forward to PARDS. Each fundraising event is unique and the benefitting charity has the option of taking over the event as their own fundraising initiative in future years. On December 10, 2017 Friesen Bain Chartered Professional Accountants hosted the 'Fire & Ice Winterval' in support of PARDS Therapeutic Centre.

Friesen Bain employees spent hundreds of hours throughout the fall months creating



awareness for PARDS at community events and local retailers selling 50/50 tickets as part of the Fire & Ice Winterval. Their hard work paid off with a total of \$45,015 in raffle ticket sales! The Fire & Ice Winterval event was a great success seeing hundreds of children come out to PARDS arena to enjoy games, wagon rides, the Hula Hoop Circus fire show, bouncy castles, pictures with Santa, cotton candy and the list goes on! Entrance to the Winterval was by donation with community members

purchasing items from PARDS' Wishlist to fill a horse trailer. Friesen Bain worked hard gathering sponsorships for the event and between Friesen Bain, the sponsors and generous community members they raised an additional \$17,851.42 in gift in kind donations! They went above and beyond their goal of filling the horse trailer as they also filled the PARDS Feed Room with 3 pallets of grains and minerals as well as 3 horse shelters for our new paddocks!

We would like to thank Friesen Bain Chartered Accountants and all of their employees for the many hours of work they put into raising \$40,358.92 in cash and gift in kind donations, their highest fundraising total for a Paying It Forward event to date! PARDS has chosen to Pay It Forward to Camp Tamarack and we can't wait to see the unique event Friesen Bain has in store for our community in 2019!



~ Our Equine Partners ~

Ace is a 16 year old quarter horse who stands 15hh high. He was donated to PARDS in October of 2016 by the McNabb family.

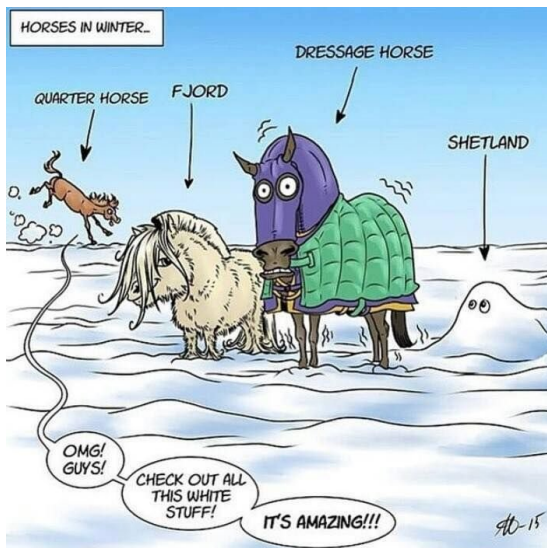
Ace was a little too energetic out on the trail for the family to ride but he had always been very good in the arena. Their youngest daughter rode in the PARDS therapeutic riding program; so seeing where Ace's heart was (the arena) they decided to donate him to PARDS where he could excel and help others.

Usually a horse coming into PARDS goes on a 30 day trial and undergoes a training program to see if they are a good fit for PARDS programs. Ace struggled a bit with the requirements of being a PARDS Therapeutic Program herd member, but the instructors saw Ace's potential and worked with him for almost 90 days to get him trained to the standards necessary. In that time it all began to make sense for him and he has since settled nicely into the program.

Ace is considered one of the "go to" horses when choosing a horse for new riders, especially our younger riders. Ace is known for bringing laughter and joy to all of his lessons. He has a quiet rhythmic walk which is good for young and newer riders and is very calming to our riders with emotional disabilities that need an easy, consist pace. Ace is also great for our more intermediate public riders who are looking for a horse to help them advance their skills and have fun while doing so.

Our volunteers enjoy working with Ace while leading and side walking and has won over the hearts of many with his silky black coat and velvety muzzle .

PARDS would like to extend another big thank you to the McNabb family for their generous donation.



~ Just Horsin' Around ~

Music is a language that involves pitch, tone, frequency and volume. These elements of sound are what horses and other animals use to communicate with; they also help animals assess their environments for survival purposes. In clinical research over the past ten years, it has been observed that horses prefer being in a barn with music as opposed to one without. Playing music helps balance equine behavior because it helps mask outside sounds and vibrations, such as tractor engines, high-pitched tools, thunder, and other intense sounds.

Horses respond best to music with short melodies and strong rhythmic patterns. If you're looking for a style that fits this criteria, classical or country played at a low volume will have a positive effect and help calm horses while they're resting, eating, being groomed in the barn and/or during vet or farrier visits.

