

# News From the "Neigh"bourhood

## February



Choose  
your  
favourite  
Val-Equine



## ~ 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  
April 21  
Pub Night Fundraiser

## ~ Stay In Touch ~

[www.pards.ca](http://www.pards.ca)



2017 PARDS Sweetheart of the Year  
**Cleatus**



**Share the love this Valentine's Day!  
Help your favourite equine become  
PARDS Sweetheart of the Year!**

**With a donation of \$5 we will place a Valequine on your favourite equine's  
balloon. By Valentine's day, the PARDS equine member with the most  
Valequines will win 2018 Sweetheart of the Year!**

# ~ Rider Spotlight ~



Roman has been riding at PARDS since the fall of 2017 as a fun and engaging way to support his goals of increasing social interaction, developing his communication skills, following directions and increasing his independence. These areas of development have been affected as a result of his diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. In addition to Roman's riding program at PARDS, he also works with a Speech-Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist. Many children with autism struggle to connect with their peers, but show a heightened empathy and engagement with animals which can result in Equine Assisted Therapy becoming a particularly effective intervention.

When I first met Roman he was very shy and withdrawn, not wanting to leave his mom behind in the viewing area. We fitted him with a riding helmet that was comfortable, put on his safety belt and riding boots and off we went to meet his horse, just like the visual instructions posted in the rider lounge say to do, and he was a natural!

Roman was matched with Encana, a wide based Fjord who was tacked with a surcingle for his first ride. The horse and tack were chosen to help Roman with his balance. This tack also allows the warmth of the horse to transfer to the rider which helps relax tense or tight muscles.

Children with ASD often have difficulty comprehending directions so, after walking our warm up lap, I start by teaching how to brush. Roman likes to copy what I do and say; I pick up the first brush, the curry comb, and start moving the plastic bristles in circles over his horse's shoulder. Then Roman tries it. Next we use the dandy brush with hard bristles in a flicking motion. The last brush we use is the body brush with the soft bristles to make our horse shine. So many different tactile experiences for him to explore! As soon as we are done with the last brush, Roman is holding onto the handles on the surcingle and telling his horse to "walk on!"

Therapeutic riding is teaching Roman how to follow directions, improve his balance and how to communicate with his horse through verbal and physical riding aids to improve his speech. Roman's speech therapist came to visit him at PARDS and gave us some great tools on how we can encourage Roman to use his words during lessons. We use the pictures in the arena a lot. First he asks his horse to "walk on", then he reaches up his horse's neck, picks up his soft purple reins, pulls them back to his hips and tells his horse to "whoa". Once stopped at the picture we talk about it, an example is the monkey; "the monkey is brown and he says ooh ooh ah ah". Then we may go to the frog, "the frog is green and he says, ribbit ribbit". Then to the cat, "the cat says, meow" and so on. Roman also really enjoys the dice game. He'll throw the die and whichever colour it lands on we go find the same coloured hoola hoop or ring and put it on the matching cone. All this fun while learning to use his reins and words to make his horse go and stop! Roman has a real interest in dinosaurs and will sometimes bring a dinosaur toy or book to show his horse. I think this is his way of sharing with his horse.

If you think riding would be a good activity for someone you know with ASD please fill out the Therapeutic Riding forms on our website at [www.pards.ca](http://www.pards.ca) and book a riding assessment today!

**Let's get Ready !**

Or 	<b>Boots On</b>
	<b>Belt On</b>
	<b>Helmet On</b>
	<b>Wait for Instructor</b>
	<b>Walk to Horse</b>
	<b>Hello Horse</b>

~ Robyn Boudreau, CRTII  
PARDS Senior Instructor



Autism, or autism spectrum disorder, refers to a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. We now know that there is not one autism but many types, caused by different combinations of genetic and environmental influences.

The term "spectrum" reflects the wide variation in challenges and strengths possessed by each person with autism.

- Autism Speaks Canada



# ~ Volunteer Spotlight ~

## Judi Harker

Judi has been volunteering with PARDS since the beginning of 2014 in lessons, both leading horses and side walking with clients. When asked why she comes to PARDS each week, Judi answered in her typical comical nature, "because you guys still haven't abused me enough!". But in truth, she says "PARDS lets me satisfy my horse addiction" and she continues, "1-3 hours a week just about feeds my need." Judi is originally from Ontario where her family fostered rescued horses and owned Percherons.



Before coming to PARDS Judi knew little about people with disabilities but has learned a lot from the riders and the instructors at PARDS. Judi has a quiet and understanding nature which allows the riders and horses she works with to feel comfortable. This enables both riders and horses to build relationships with her and have fantastic lessons. Judi changed her hair one day and a client didn't recognize her and was sad thinking she wasn't there in their lesson. When she heard Judi's voice and realized "it's still Judi", she were overjoyed and gave her the biggest hug!



Judi enjoyed volunteering so much that she took on a second day throughout the week. Her husband Don said he never saw her any more so Judi said, "well come with me!". So now both Judi and her husband, Don, come out Monday evenings to lead. Another opportunity Judi is eagerly up for are the birthday parties, sharing "the kids are so cute and excited and it is just a fun time".



When Judi returned to work at her administrative job on Wednesday's, (the day she comes to PARDS) she approached her employer, Jamie Rich of Ruskin Construction, asking to continue her Wednesday time with the riders at PARDS. Judi conveyed her passion and the feeling of wellbeing she gets while here at PARDS and she was given the go-

ahead to continue. Thank you so much, Jamie for supporting both Judi and her riders!

Ironically, Judi is allergic to horses. In PARDS' old facility the closed spaces of the barn made it difficult for her to help with grooming and tacking for any length of time. With the openness of PARDS new facility Judi is able to assist the instructors and riders with grooming and tacking the horses for lessons any time. We can't thank Judi enough for the time she gives our riders and horses!



~ Abelone Peterson, PARDS Instructor

# ~ Community Champions ~



The Grande Prairie Petroleum Association (GPPA), also known as the GP Oilmen, is celebrating their 40th birthday this year as a non-profit social organization that aims to build community spirit and engage in work of a moral, benevolent, charitable, philanthropic and community service nature. They encourage and support athletic events while promoting fellowship in conjunction with philanthropy. For many years, the Petroleum Association has hosted a number of annual events with their Summer Golf Tournament and the Curling Bonspiel both in their 40th year! They also host a Spring & Fall Mixed Golf Tournament, a Fall Hockey Tournament and a Clay Shoot.

The Oilmen's Clay Shoot is the largest one-day shoot in Canada seeing over 300 people every May. In partnership with the GP Chamber of Commerce they host the Grande Prairie Petroleum Show every two years, which sees Evergreen Park's Entrec Centre and parking lots filled with local companies highlighting their products and equipment. One of the most significant charitable events they host is the Stars Hangar Dance. The Oilmen have been hosting the event for 8 years and have raised a combined total of a whopping 1.4 million dollars for the local Stars Air Ambulance. GPPA members spend countless hours every year organizing all of these tremendous events for the community and say their great sponsors make everything possible. All of their efforts help the organization to invest in the community where their members live and work; already this year they have made donations to these local initiatives: Big Brothers & Big Sisters, Alberta Summer Games, the School Lunch Program and the Hospital Foundation.

The Petroleum Association also chose to donate \$10,000 toward supporting PARDS therapeutic programs. President, Rob Petrone stopped by for a tour of the new facility and was truly wowed by what he saw. "PARDS' facility speaks for itself" says Rob, "I am fascinated by the amount of equipment and your set up for people of all abilities". This is not the first time the Petroleum Association has chosen to support PARDS or Rob's first cheque presentation to our programs. President of the organization for 15 years now, in 2007 Rob presented then Executive Director, Sheri Cramer, with the Oilmen's biggest single donation to date, \$15,000! He has since presented many generous donations to PARDS Executive Director, Jennifer Douglas, for both Therapeutic Programs and the new PARDS Therapeutic Centre. The Grande Prairie Petroleum Association is the proud Sponsor of a Paddock at PARDS facility from their 2011 & 2013 contributions. In total, they have donated \$22,120 to PARDS therapeutic programs and \$17,955 to the construction of our new home. Through all of these very generous donations, it is clear that the GPPA is committed to including all community demographics in their charitable efforts. "This is a great facility for the disability community and a phenomenal organization; it is great to have such a beautiful facility in the Peace Region" Rob continued. "What PARDS does fits very well with our giving objectives and we are glad to be a part of supporting it."

We have had the pleasure of hosting a number of the GP Oilmen at our Annual Dine & Dance event as well. In addition to their contributions at the fundraiser, many have also supported our efforts through filling their tables and donating items for our silent auction. It is easy to see why the GPPA's efforts are so successful with a membership who are also personally committed to the objectives of their organization. We truly appreciate the continued support of the Grande Prairie Petroleum Association and their members!



# ~ Our Equine Partners ~



Polly is an 18 year old Quarter Horse mare on lease from PARDS volunteer, Joan Thors. This is Polly's second year working at PARDS and the second horse Joan has leased to our program.

Polly was mainly a trail riding horse before she came to PARDS but was also used in an arena setting where she and Joan attended riding clinics with a special interest in Natural Horsemanship.

This lovely mare is the ideal therapeutic lesson horse. She has a quiet temperament, is well mannered and has a low flight response. She is accepting of enthusiastic riders and her 3 dimensional rhythmic walk will move a rider's pelvis almost identically to the human stride in a smooth gentle manner. Quarter Horses, like Polly, have a wide base with smooth gaits that are less challenging for riders to balance on than a narrow choppy horse. These traits make Polly ideal for clients wanting to improve balance, build trunk control, relax high muscle tone and can offer the freedom of movement for an amputee. Independent riders of all abilities are able to ride Polly, from being slow and steady for the nervous first time rider to a nice smooth transition into the canter for the more advance rider. Polly is definitely the horse of many hats. Thank you, Joan for sharing your amazing horse with PARDS riders!



~ Robyn Boudreau CRTII, PARDS Senior Instructor

Fun Polly Fact  
She lost a tooth!

## ~ Just Horsin' Around ~



## ~ Interesting Horse Facts ~

### The Real "Tooth" About Horse Teeth

- ◆ A horse has between 36 and 44 permanent teeth. If he's a gelding or stallion, he has 44 permanent teeth, while a mare has 36 to 40
- ◆ Just like you, a horse has two sets of teeth throughout his lifetime. Their deciduous or "baby" teeth (called caps) should all be pushed out and replaced by permanent teeth by about 5 years of age.
- Front teeth, called incisors, are designed to shear off grass and other forage. A horse has six upper and six lower incisors.
- ◆ Back teeth, called molars, are designed to grind food into a digestible form. A horse has 12 upper and 12 lower molars.
- ◆ A gelding or stallion has two upper and two lower canine teeth, which are remnants of "fighting teeth" once used by ancestors for protecting the herd. These teeth sit in the gap between his incisors and molars, known as the bars of the mouth. Rarely will mares have canine teeth.
- ◆ Because a horse uses their molars to grind food, these teeth continue to erupt from their gums throughout their lifetime. This helps to ensure that they have plenty of grinding ability as they mature.
- ◆ A horse's incisors also continue to erupt throughout their lifetime. In a natural grazing environment they'll be worn down as they're used to tear grass and other forage. However, a stall-kept horse won't use their incisors in this fashion, which can result in overgrowth. If a horse's incisors become too long, they'll actually prevent their molars from contacting one another, compromising their ability to chew effectively.