



**PARDS**  
THERAPEUTIC CENTRE

News From the  
"Neigh"bourhood

# November

## Dates to Remember

### December

December 15  
Public Lessons  
Session 2 Begins

December 17  
Therapeutic Lessons  
Session 2 Begins

December 22 - January 1  
Office closed

December 23 - January 6  
No Lessons

### January

January 1  
Office Closed

January 5  
Public Lessons resume

January 7  
Therapeutic Lessons resume

### February

February 16 - 22  
No lessons

February 18  
Family Day Office Closed

February 24  
**Winterval**



## Stay In Touch



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# 2018 Dine & Dance

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# Rider Spotlight



## Reeghan Funk

Reeghan is a twelve year old girl who has been riding in the PARDS program for eight years. Reeghan has CP and it effects her ability to stretch out her legs and arms and prevents her from walking. Reeghan looks forward to coming to PARDS each week to ride. Beyond having fun, she understands the benefits of how riding helps her stretch out and relax her muscles as well as work on her core strength. This happens through the horse's body heat warming the muscles to help them relax and also the movement of the horse which mimics the movement we make when walking, which in turn moves Reeghan's hips. Reeghan has a team of two side walkers and a leader to assist her in her lesson. The sidewalkers give her a secure thigh hold support for balance, while also adding an ankle hold to keep Reeghan's legs extended as much as comfortably possible.

When Reeghan was born, her parents were told she may never be able to sit up on her own. One of the things her family says she has benefitted from with coming to PARDS is her ability to sit up straight from the core strength she works on while riding. One of Reeghan's goals in the future is to move to a team of one sidewalker and a leader so that she can be more independent in her riding.

She looks forward to continuing to ride in horse shows such as the ParaEquestrian Video Competitions put on at PARDS through Equine Canada. Reeghan is a five time winner in her class for the video competitions.

Reeghan's favorite things to do while riding is 2 point and trotting. Although her disability effects her ability to stretch her legs fully out to support herself in a post, she is able to sit any trot wonderfully from her years of riding experience. Working on her 2 point has strengthened her core muscles to also help her sit her trot, as well as "its just fun!" she says.

Reeghan has recently needed to change horses due to her growing taller. She has started riding Montney and even though it can be hard to change your horse, Reeghan has adapted to the change well and already seems to have a fantastic bond with her new horse. Both Reeghan and Montney are excited to start their lesson every week and always have fun.

McKayla vanNieuwkerk  
PARDS Instructor





# Community Champions



This month we spotlight Community Champion Big Stick Rentals for their generosity & creativity over the years. Owner Kevin Bjornsen became involved with PARDS many years ago when he was the Building Manager for PARDS new facility while working for Southwest Design & Construction. Kevin has been very supportive of PARDS through donations, networking with others and his creative fundraising ideas! You may remember in July 2016 when Kevin collected pledges from his personal and business contacts while raised 125' up in the air on a boom lift where he vowed to stay until he raised \$10,000 to give PARDS a helping hand

on the last push into our new home. With nothing but a water cooler and cell phone in hand, Kevin began making calls for support; and just for a little added excitement, he challenged anyone on the ground who came for the BBQ to shoot him with paintballs for \$5/shot. Kevin raised \$11,000 before coming down to be greeted and thanked by PARDS Executive Director, Jennifer Douglas with hamburger in hand. Kevin has since sponsored 4 stalls in the PARDS barn, naming them after each of his children. Big Stick Rentals is always there to loan us equipment from zoom boom's to skid steers to light towers; saving on equipment costs while getting our operations running in PARDS New Facility. Kevin says it has been truly eye opening to get to know more about PARDS and the many riders, volunteers and staff that make up the organization. When given the opportunity, he immediately jumped on board to be PARDS "This is Our Story" sponsor at PARDS Grand Opening in September.



Big Stick Rentals has been the 'Mane' Event co-sponsor of PARDS Dine & Dance for many years and this year was no exception. Kevin shared his enthusiasm and brought on Iron Sun Construction, owned by his brother Robert Bjornsen and Adam Hutchingson to co-sponsor with him! Their speech was filled with passion for PARDS and lots of laughs. The evening didn't stop

there for them as they kept everyone on their toes at the event, continuously surprising everyone. The 1st surprise of the evening for the audience and one lucky PARDS family came in the form of a prize. Kevin had purchased a week at Don Whiteford's Fairmont Condo in the 2017 Dine & Dance auction and was unable to use it, so he decided to give it to a PARDS Rider and their family to enjoy. There had been a contest offered to all PARDS therapeutic riders and Kevin announced the winner at PARDS Dine & Dance, surprising the Bienert Family with this generous gift of a family vacation. The Bienert's were in the audience and were blown away by Kevin's generosity, as was everyone else. Kevin then announced that he would be continuing this type of contest yearly to a family of PARDS offering a variety of prizes. Kevin had already brought his brother Robert on board as co-sponsor of the Dine & Dance, but after hearing the family speak about their children's involvement with PARDS and the need for hay, Robert discussed with Kevin about putting together a "Hay Drive" and then shared the idea with us and has been working on this ever since to help ensure PARDS herd have full bellies of high quality hay. And just to top off the evening, at the Live Auction Kevin was the highest bidder on a Kids 12V John Deere Gator at \$1025 but it didn't end there! City Councillor Chris Thiessen had agreed to be a spotter at the event and Kevin pulled Chris off to one side just before his bid was accepted. Chris put a Time Out on the Auction and then announced that Kevin had agreed to up his winning bid to \$1500 if Chris agreed to shave his beloved curls on Facebook Live. Chris agreed! On November 21, Kevin joined Chris at Haircraft along with Leah, one of their stylists who had been at the Dine & Dance and had offered her expertise free of charge to shave Chris' locks when she heard Kevin's offer. The video is available on PARDS Facebook page where you can hear Kevin explain why he chooses to give to PARDS, "I know the organization is well managed and 100% of our funds are going to the program and riders", and see him help shave Chris' head!



We are very thankful to have community champions like Big Stick Rentals who consider themselves fortunate to be aligned with an organization like PARDS Therapeutic Centre and support PARDS Riders with their time, networks and fundraising ventures. It is thanks to generous community members like them that PARDS high quality equine assisted therapies are available to Peace Area residents. Big Stick Rentals specializes in industrial aerial lift solutions from skid steers to scissor lifts and more so if you are looking to rent one please keep Big Stick Rentals in mind.

Jenn Ash, Community Engagement Coordinator

# Volunteer Spotlight

## PARDS 2018 Volunteer of the Year



### Della Morrison

It is said, “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” “Many hands, make light work”, and “it takes a village”. In all of these statements, at PARDS, it is our volunteers that makes them all true.

We see over 14,000 hours of time given each year by our volunteers. This comes in many forms, from leading and side walking in lessons, helping in the barn, sitting on committees or our board, helping with events such as Dine & Dance, helping at FUND Ride in our carnival and selling tickets for Dream Home or one of our raffles or even crocheting dish cloths! Everyone has something to offer. Volunteering at PARDS is not all about helping with lessons and horses, but in the end, it IS all about making therapeutic lessons accessible to our riders. Each year PARDS recognises one volunteer out of the many who give of their time.

This year we chose Della Morrison as our Volunteer of the Year. Della came into volunteering with no expectations other than working with the horses, something Della missed from her earlier years, and helping others. What Della didn't expect was how much she would love the clients and the rewarding experiences at PARDS that keep her coming back each week. Something that has been a highlight during her time at PARDS is the progression and successes she sees in the riders throughout their lessons.

Everyone you speak to says Della is a joy to work with, she has a very positive attitude and a soft spoken, gentle manner and she makes our riders feel comfortable and valued.



As for her volunteer work with us, Della does EVERYTHING including, but not limited to, leading and side walking in lessons, barn chores and helping with the FUND Ride Carnival. As well, as the owner of her own cleaning company she knows the hours it takes to keep a building such as PARDS clean. Knowing the limited time of staff, Della took it upon herself to clean the facility during the day she volunteered and asked nothing asked in return. She even reached out to Spring Fresh to secure dust mats for the facility by donation!

Her leadership qualities saw her mentor one of our clients with her own volunteer work of cleaning in the rider lounge. Oh, and as she comes through the door each week, not only do we love to hear her cheery voice and see her smile, but some weeks, the smells of the fresh baked muffins she bakes and brings us is a delicious added bonus!

A favorite story is about when Della ran into one of the clients she works with at PARDS while 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. For both of them the experiences didn't end at the PARDS door.



Thank you, Della Morrison! It is an honour to recognize and celebrate you as PARDS 2018 Volunteer of the Year! Your ongoing generosity and support is significant, appreciated and makes PARDS a better organization.

~ Jennifer Wolf, Volunteer Coordinator





# Season of Giving



PARDS 'It Takes A Community' Christmas campaign focuses on the Giving Season and how it takes a community to ensure PARDS high quality equine assisted therapies remain accessible for Peace Area Residents. Giving Tuesday kicked off the campaign on November 27 which will run until December 31<sup>st</sup>. PARDS is hoping to raise \$2500 for PARDS Programs. We will be decorating PARDS Christmas tree by recognizing all monetary or Gift in Kind donations made to PARDS therapeutic programs with a Blue Bow. By December 24<sup>th</sup> we hope our tree will be decorated in a sea of blue, thanks to the generosity of many! As part of this campaign the hard working PARDS herd have written their letters to Santa asking for PARDS Wish List items that they would like for their riders and barn such as new helmets & boots, as well

as items for their therapeutic programs such as lesson aids, new tack and vet supplies. You can see these letters and PARDS Wish list posted at any of our 4 participating retail partners; Keddies Tack & Western Wear, Greenhawk Equestrian & Harness Supplies, Peavey Mart and UFA or on PARDS Facebook page. You may also make monetary donations via PayPal or Canada Helps on PARDS website; [www.pards.ca](http://www.pards.ca), by clicking "donate" on PARDS Facebook page or by calling the PARDS office at (780)538-3211. Every donation makes a difference!



Dear Santa,

My name is Tory. I'm 10 years old and I'm a Chestnut Mare Miniature Horse. I've been working so hard in the Cart Driving Program! I really love this job, it's so great to work with all my riders.

I'm not really sure what my Christmas wish is yet, but I would like to ask for new cowboy boots for the Little Pony Motricity riders. Their feet are so small and cute, we always need to keep them safe! I think the barn girls would like some extension cords. If you could please bring our hard working volunteers bedding forks and brooms to make their jobs easier that would be fantastic! And well those office girls, I haven't gotten to spend much time with them lately but word around the barn is they like paper! Printer paper, coloured paper, toilet paper...doesn't seem to matter what kind, they just like paper!

Please give my love to Mrs. Claus, the elves and all the reindeer. I'll leave my brushes out for the reindeer so they can look extra good for the rest of their flight! Stay warm & fly safe Santa!

Love Tory



To see more letters to Santa visit PARDS Facebook Page

# Giving Card

Please use this card to make your generous gift to PARDS Riders!

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Legal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

My Company Will Match My Donation \_Y\_N

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_ Annually \_\_\_ One-Time

\_\_\_ My Check Payable to PARDS is Enclosed

\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ Mastercard

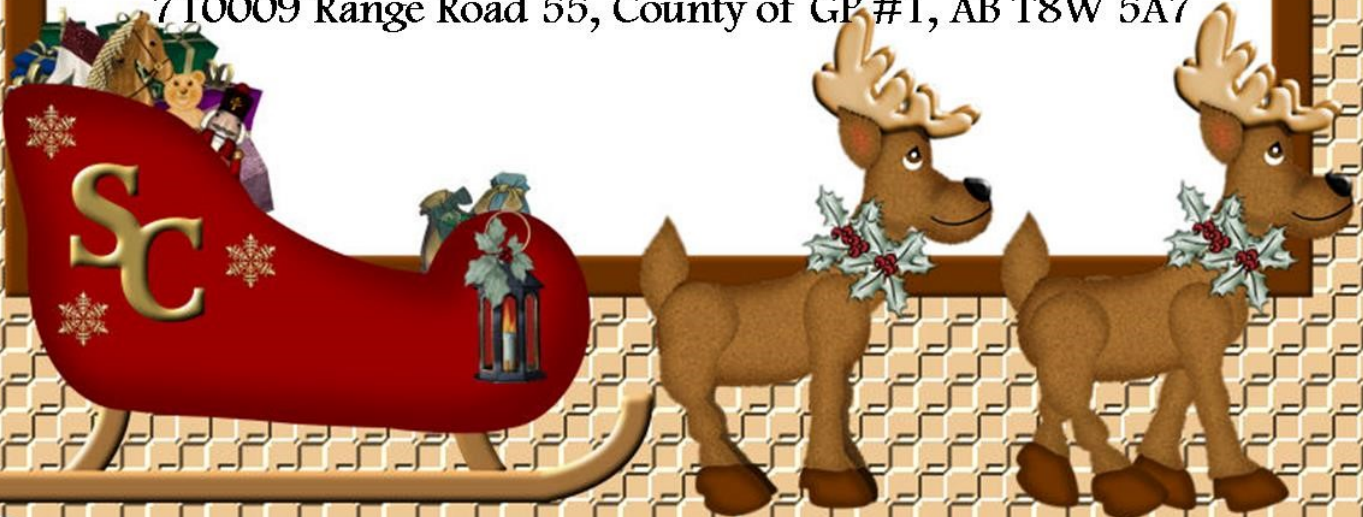
Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your card by Email to [volunteer@pards.ca](mailto:volunteer@pards.ca)

Or by Mail to:

710009 Range Road 55, County of GP #1, AB T8W 5A7





# Instructor Spotlight

## McKayla Van Nieuwkerk



McKayla started working for PARDS in 2015 and returned to the team in the fall of 2017. Her background is filled with horses and competitive training in Dressage over the past 8 years in the Peace Country.

McKayla's knowledge and personable approach makes her excel in all of our programs offered. She is currently involved in the Equine Canada Rider Level Program certified at Rider 3. This allows her to pursue her Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association certification while she mentors with our Senior Instructor to ensure high quality equine assisted therapy.



## Horse Facts

During the winter months horses require extra feed to keep warm. Horses don't chew their cud like cattle do. Instead, the tough cellulose is broken down by symbiotic bacteria in the large intestine and cecum. This process is called hindgut fermentation. Naturally, this process produces a lot of heat and in fact it is this heat from digestion that helps keep the horse warm. Horses heat themselves from the inside out. If you have or know anyone that has hay available and would like to donate/sell to our "Need for Feed" Campaign, please contact the PARDS office at 780-538-3211.

