

TRINews

Summer 2012

Director's Update- Jan Vescelius



New TRI Fairy Garden!

Things are greening up around The Harold and Kay Peplau Therapeutic Riding Center. Now we are certain that warm weather has arrived to stay: you can find jackets draped all over the farm gates, the bug spray is back at the arena entrance, the arena doors are open, and the winter "blaahs" are finally a thing of the past. We even have a new "Fairy Garden" at our front door!

Spring has brought a lot more than good weather and flowers to us. TRI has a wonderful new addition to its staff – **Ann Zalek** is our new development manager. She joined us on April 15 and has hit the ground running! She is very excited about TRI and our riders. Ann is a social media wizard and has some great ideas about how to put TRI "out there." She will be telling you about herself later in this newsletter. WELCOME TO TRI, ANN!

We will be providing a couple of new programs at TRI this summer. On July 20, a group of children from **The Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired** will come to TRI for a "day at the farm." They will enjoy a tour, a sensory trail, learning about grooming horses, and OF COURSE - RIDING! This visit to TRI will be part of their agency's summer fun and learning program and we are looking forward to giving them a memorable experience!

University of Michigan Milestones- the U of M's pediatric rehabilitation department - has brought riders to TRI for many years. In June they started a comprehensive equine activities program with us. They have

classroom time and hands-on learning opportunities as well as riding time. Together with the Milestones staff, TRI will be able to expand and integrate learning styles using activities both in and out of the arena.

The family of **Joel Greenisen** (see our *Spring 2012 newsletter for the story about Joel and his generous support of TRI*) gave TRI 170 bales of hay, 100 bags of shavings, and a wheelbarrow – things left at his farm at the time of Joel's passing. **Jeremy (Sintic, barn manager), Linda (Bolton, Tuesday/Saturday instructor)** and I went and collected it all at the end of May. Once again we thank the Greenisen family so much for their generosity. As we left for the last time that day, I noticed the quiet beauty of Joel's farm. The grass was green, the flowers blooming, the white fence around the pasture where his beloved horses once lived was shining - and I realized just how much I am going to miss him. To Joel's family – we wish you well and will remember you always.

The first session of TRI's PATH Intl. Equine Services for Heroes (formerly known as Horses for Heroes) was a resounding success.

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Director's Update -

TRI will kick off the 2012 TRI-FECTA Campaign in September. This campaign is driven by our riders and volunteers with all funds raised used to feed and care for our horses. For those of you who are new to TRI, we have a lot of fun with this campaign as donors "bet" on their favorite horse to "win" the race. We all know that our riders are the real winners in this race and I thank you in advance for participating in this

oh-so-important event. Check out the "Heard Over the Fence" article for more information about this important fundraiser.

Have a wonderful summer everyone and I hope to see you around the barn!

Jan V.

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TRI Proud Recipient of \$10K Grant Award

Great news for TRI! In May 2012, the **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF)** awarded TRI a \$10,000 capacity building grant to support the hiring of a part-time development manager.

Why does this mean so much to us? This generous gift, for increased development and fundraising resources, enables TRI to grow, respond to the needs of its riders and create new, innovative riding programs. Ann Zalek, our new development manager, joined TRI this spring to take over many of TRI's fundraising tasks, reducing the workload of our dedicated staff, volunteers and board of directors.

As TRI grows, so do the demands for the creation of new and sustainable fundraising strategies. Since 1984, we have relied upon board members to perform all of the development and fundraising initiatives. Realizing that this model was not sustainable long-term, the board of directors sought out

funding solutions. We are truly grateful to AAACF for once again supporting TRI in our mission to provide therapeutic horseback riding lessons to area youth and adults with disabilities.

About The Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation (AAACF) —

Founded in 1963, AAACF manages a permanent community endowment built by gifts from thousands of individuals, families, businesses and organizations who share a commitment to the future of our local communities. AAACF manages more than \$60 million in assets on our community's behalf and holds more than 425 charitable funds that support local nonprofit

organizations and programs. Since 1963, AAACF has awarded more than \$25 million in grants and scholarships that have touched thousands of lives. To learn more, visit the Community Foundation's website at www.aaacf.org.



TRI Test - Graduation Issue

Answers
on page 4.

1. What is it called when a race horse wins their first race?
2. At what age is a horse considered an adult?
3. What is the name of the organization that certifies (graduates) all of our instructors?
4. At what age do riders leave/graduate from TRI?
5. What does a rider have to do to "graduate" to trotting without a leader?



Heard Over the Fence

Garuda:

Hey, Miko. You got a minute?
We wanted to ask you something.

Miko:

(munch, munch munch) Huh? What?
Yea, sure, just let me finish this
mouthful of hay. What's up?

Garuda:

We've been hearing the other horses
talking about TRIF – something or
other. They all seem really excited
about it but Zeeda and I don't know
what's going on.

Zeeda:

Yea, even Ella has been prancing
around talking about "getting into
training". What gives?

Miko:

Oh, you mean TRI-FECTA. That's
right. You new guys weren't here
last fall so you don't know about it.
See, TRI-FECTA is our annual race
around here.

Zeeda:

RACE?????????????
(takes off galloping)

Garuda:

Oh good grief. Never say "race" to
a thoroughbred. She'll be charging
around the paddock for hours now.

Miko:

Oops. Sorry about that. Well, I'll
fill YOU in and you can catch Zeeda
up, uh, when you catch up with
Zeeda. See, TRI-FECTA stands for "TRI
providing riders with Fun, Excitement,
Challenge, and Therapeutic
Adventure". It's also what humans
call a type of bet where they try to
guess who'll come in first, second,
and third in a horse race.

Zeeda:

(off in the distance)
RACE????????????????????
WHEEEEEEE!!!!!!

Garuda:

There she goes again.

Miko:

Anyway, where was I? Oh,
so the humans we work with
came up with this cool idea
for a way to raise money.
That yummy hay I was
chewing, the grain you gobble
up in your bucket, the soft
shavings we sleep on, all that
stuff costs money. So what
the riders and volunteers
do each fall is they go out and get
friends, family, co-workers etc. to
donate money to TRI. But to make
it fun, they don't call it a donation.
They call it a "bet."

Garuda:

I don't get it. What's fun about
calling it a bet?

Miko:

See, every "bet" someone places on
a horse moves that horse closer to
the finish line of the race.

Zeeda:

(galloping by) RACE?????????

Miko:

Sigh. And the riders and volunteers
try to raise the most bets for their
favorite horse so that horse can win.

Garuda:

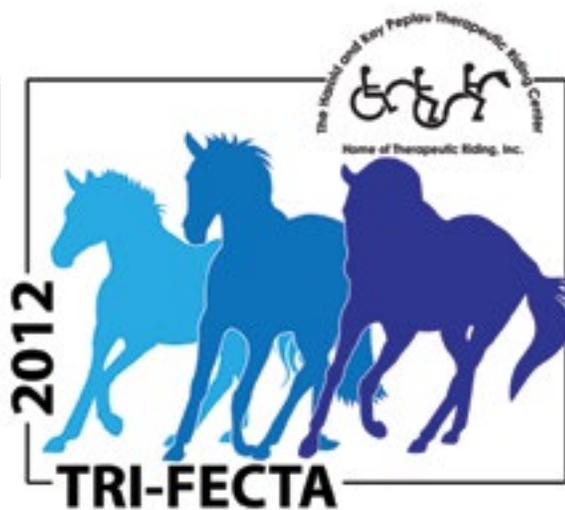
Oh, I see. So what does the
winner get?

Miko:

An awesome day at the spa with lots
of pampering and extra treats. But
we're all really the winners 'cos all
the money they raise pays for our hay
and feed and bedding. And we have
to do our part to help. The riders
and volunteers go out and bring in
the bets but we have to get ourselves
into shape so we can run our fastest.
After all, only the BEST horse can win.

Garuda:

Wow. This is a big deal.
Who was last year's winner?



Miko:

Well, like I said, only the BEST horse
can win (blushing modestly) and
really truly, who is the best horse
here?

Garuda:

You mean Fable won?

Miko:

NO!!!! I WON the race!!!!!!

Zeeda:

huff, puff, huff, puff, race!!!!.....
(trots off slowly)

Garuda:

Zeeda, wait up. I have to talk to you
about this TRI-FECTA thing, and get
some training tips. Thanks for the
info, Miko. See you at the finish line!

*Who will this year's winner be? Will
Zeeda use her thoroughbred training
to an unfair advantage? Will Miko be
able to retain his title? Or is there
another, DARK horse who might
surprise us all? Help make the
2012 TRI-FECTA an exciting event by
donating in support of your favorite
horse. You can either donate via a
volunteer or rider directly, mail a
check to us at 3425 E. Morgan Road,
Ann Arbor, MI 48108 or use your
credit card on our secure website at
<http://therapeuticridinginc.org>.
Every dollar raised in TRI-FECTA goes
directly to the feeding and care of
our horses.*

What's green and white with geese all over?



TRI's front lawn!

TRI Test Answers

Test on page 2

1. *Breaking his or her maiden*
2. *At age 4 a filly (female) becomes a mare and a colt (male) either becomes a gelding if castrated or a stallion if not castrated.*
3. *PATH, Intl. – The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship Intl.*
4. *Trick question! We don't have an upper age limit. As long as the rider is enjoying the experience and the various doctors/PTs say things are still safe, they can ride. We have several riders who are well into enjoying their Senior Citizen discounts!*
5. *Be able to trot – sitting or posting – without using the hand hold.*



4 Jan Vescelius and Summer Poplin

Congratulations to Our Special Olympians!

Two of our Monday night riders recently competed in a Special Olympics track meet. They both brought home several medals along with lots of pride in themselves and their accomplishments. **Dani White** is relatively new to Special Olympics as she started just this past spring. Just as she can't wait to get to riding on Monday nights, she couldn't wait to get to the track on Thursday nights. **Robert Graham** has been competing for a bit longer but is no less enthusiastic. Both enjoy the opportunity to learn new events, spend time with old friends, and meet new ones. In May's event, Dani took 1st in the long jump, 2nd in the 50 yard dash, and 2nd in the 4-person relay. Robert won 2nd place in the 4-person relay and he got 3rd place in both the running long jump and the 100 meter dash. Congratulations to both our athletes. We are very proud of you.



Dani White



Robert Graham

I'll Have Another – Another Derby Gala That Is!

May 5th marked the 138th running of the Kentucky Derby and the 3rd Derby Gala hosted by Therapeutic Riding, Inc. This year the event was held at **Fox Hills Golf and Banquet Center** where 88 guests - women wearing their finest Derby hats, of course - sipped on Mint Juleps as they watched the race and whooped and hollered for their favorite horses, cheering winner "I'll Have Another" as he crossed the finish line in a dramatic finish.

Ruth Schekter, Jo-Anna Featherman, and Karl Couyoumjian held tickets for the Win, Place and Show finishers and

walked away with fabulous prizes in the Race Results Raffle. Dinner was followed by a short video showcasing Halloween week at TRI. (Sigbjorn's zebra "costume" was a big hit!) One of our youth riders, **Summer Poplin**, was our guest speaker for the evening. She and Director Jan Vescelius talked about her favorite moments and memories of her time at TRI, and yes, Halloween is one of her favorite times of the year, too!

The telecast of the race was provided courtesy of **TeL Systems** and we thank **Ann Arbor State Bank** for their generous donation to underwrite costs of the event. TRI thanks Board Treasurer **Marcia Mullen** for her countless hours of hard work to put together such a wonderful event.



Volunteer Spotlight

In honor of the end of the school year and the 2012 graduates, I chose a very special graduate of our own for our Volunteer Spotlight. **Michael DiGiovanni** joined TRI in 2008, having waited patiently until he turned 14 and was finally old enough to join his sister, **Emily**, on the volunteer squad.

Michael has always thought that volunteering was important and had tried several other volunteer opportunities before he came to us. Why did he stay at TRI? Michael told me, *"I keep working with TRI because I enjoy it. I love being able to help people and watch how they grow. I get to see people walk better, learn how to ride, speak better, and see them always try their hardest. I love their pure commitment and I hope to try and mirror their actions. I love the relationships I form with my riders and when a rider specifically asks for me."*

Michael is part of the tight knit Saturday crew and enjoys hanging out in the lounge in between classes, participating in the lively discussions about the merits of various books or movies, politics, and anything else that sparks their interest. However, once in the arena, Michael is completely focused on his riders. In the years he's been with us, Head Instructor Jan Vescelius has increasingly entrusted him with the care of more fragile riders, knowing that she can count on him to make sure they stay safe, and, just as importantly, that they have FUN while they are riding.

At the beginning of May, Michael came to me and asked for a sub for an upcoming Saturday, explaining he was "graduating from high school and college." The blank look on my face



Michael, along with fellow volunteers Aubree Kugler and Elizabeth Langley, makes sure Gillian Van Singel has a great lesson on Miko.

made it clear that an explanation was in order. "I joined the Washtenaw Technical Middle College program in my sophomore year. I passed out of all my high school classes freshman year and skipped a few classes because of some tests I took. Then the next couple of years I took college classes, earning an Associate's Degree in General Studies of Math and Natural Science and a Certificate in Business and Marketing. So, I will graduate from college and then from high school."

WOW! In light of those accomplishments, I can only say "Look out, University of Michigan! You have an amazing young man headed your way." Most importantly, Michael remembered the rule we impose on all our youth volunteers. It's fine to go to college, in fact we encourage it, but you have to go to a **local** one so you can continue to volunteer with us. Congratulations on your achievements, Michael. We are very proud of you.

*Tracy Boyle –
Volunteer Coordinator*

We Couldn't Do This Without ...

The **Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor** has been a staunch supporter of TRI for eleven years. They have been active in Ann Arbor since May 1921 and their 175 members and over 100 volunteers from the Washtenaw County area are dedicated to serving the children of our community.

Their generous grants have been used to purchase saddles, helmets, special assistive devices, and this year, cabinets! OK, so that's not as glamorous as a saddle but those cabinets are being used to store lesson materials, talking devices for riders who can't speak, and books for visitors to read and enjoy. All things that had been tucked on shelves or sitting in boxes since we moved in as we didn't have a place to put them. Now we are organized and riders can easily find the things they need (and so can the instructors!)

For more information on the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor, visit them at <http://a2kiwanisfoundation.org/>.

Art Van Furniture continued their commitment to supporting local non-profits, including TRI, through the **Art Van Million Dollar Charity Challenge**. As a result of this program, Art Van has raised over \$10 million for charity since 2009. Their goal for 2012-2013 is to nurture partnerships with the previous Million Dollar Charity Challenge recipients. They decided to do this by providing us with an additional grant of \$1,000. No grant writing needed, no forms to fill out, just support from a very generous business owner who believes in the importance of the work local non-profits are doing. Our thanks to **Mr. Van Elslander** and his employees for all they do to support TRI and our community.

Staff Update- Submitted by Fable, Senior Mare, TRI

Who's the New Rider?

You know the saying – “Never judge a man until you’ve walked a mile in his shoes?” We have our own twist on that here at TRI. **Kendra VanWasshenova**, PT at the University of Michigan Milestones (pediatric rehab department)



Kendra demonstrating her “Hands Free” technique, with volunteers Louise Moore, Pat Whitworth, Kathy Emery and Sigbjorn

took that saying to heart when she donned a helmet and became a “student” for the day. Kendra participated in class right alongside the other

Milestones students and got a new appreciation for how the movement of the horse both challenges and encourages her clients to rebuild lost skills and improve current ones. Her one complaint when she got off? Well, let’s just say she would have preferred riding in the Cashel softsaddle!



The kids are right. Jan (Vescelius, instructor) is picky!

It is my pleasure as senior mare to introduce you to a new member of our equine staff. **Garuda**, an 18 year old Friesian gelding, has been staying with us for a few months now, getting to know everyone and interviewing for a position with TRI. Not that it had any relevance to our final decision, but the general consensus among the volunteers and my junior mares is that he is a very good looking gelding – if you go for that tall, dark, and handsome type of thing. More importantly in my opinion is his gentle, easy going nature, smooth gaits, and willingness to work with our human co-workers. He and **Zeeda** have become quite good friends and Jan is gradually introducing him to her students and staff and the other horses. Our heartfelt thanks to his human companion, **Ruth Stein**, who rescued him from an unfit environment, nursed him back to health, and then generously allowed him to come to TRI and join the staff here. Welcome **Garuda**.

One of the burdens of being in charge of the herd is that I sometimes have to be the bearer of sad news. This is one of those times. I am sorry to tell you that **Tug**, after much hard work and soul searching, came to me and said

that he just wasn’t comfortable with the role of Therapeutic Equine. He said the responsibility was too much for him and he asked if he could please go home. I contacted his owner **Julie Stevenson**, and she said “OF COURSE!” I was very touched to see how, when she came to pick him up, she walked right up to him and kissed him on the nose. Clearly there is a lot of love there so I know he will be happy. Tug, thanks for giving this job a try. It’s not for everyone but we enjoyed the chance to get to know you. Stay in touch and let us know how you’re doing, and we’ll take good care of Zeeda for you.

Speaking of staffing changes, **Robbie**, our thoroughbred sport pony, has also expressed a desire for a career change. Robbie is the cousin of **Theodore O’Connor**, the famous “Bionic Eventing Pony” ridden by **Karen O’Connor**, and feels he would be much happier with a job where he could run and jump. Having seen him in action, I have to say he has a gift and should be using it. So if anyone would like to interview with me for the possible role of new human companion for Robbie, please get in touch with my office staff at 734-677-0303 or at therapeuticriding@earthlink.net.

Fable, Senior Mare – TRI

Fable’s TRI Wish List -

Please contact Fable’s office staff at 734-677-0303 or therapeuticriding@earthlink.net if you can help with donating any of these items or with working on any of these projects.

Projects around the farm

- Run out sheds for the paddocks and pastures
- Water and power lines to pastures
- Finishing the metal siding inside the stall barn and arena.
- Building or purchasing a gazebo and/or picnic table

Shopping!

- gift certificates for use at Cutler Dickerson for horse feed,
- gift certificates to use at Saline Veterinary Clinic
- first cutting hay
- gift certificates for Meijers, Gordon Food Service, Sam’s Club

You can never have too many power tools or heavy equipment

- a box grader
- a front end loader for a Case IH DX 55
- a farm air compressor

Rider Spotlight

We want you to meet one of our many riders, to learn what TRI means to him, and to hear how important it is in his life. Every donation we receive helps to make it possible for us to provide Josh and all our riders with an amazing experience.

In keeping with the graduation theme in our Volunteer Spotlight, we would like to introduce you to **Josh May**, one of our riders who graduated from high school this year.

Many people at TRI have never met Josh. He rides in a private lesson with Jan each week and is often gone before the other riders and volunteers arrive for the evening. Those who did meet him when he started riding with us eight years ago probably wouldn't recognize him now! I asked him if he would mind introducing himself and telling us a little bit about how he came to ride at TRI and he kindly sent me this.

My name is Joshua May. I am 19 years old and I have been riding with Therapeutic Riding, Inc. for about 8 years. It has been an amazing privilege to get to ride and be with such great people. Ten years ago I was run over



Josh May

by a car, literally run over, the car was on top of me. Twenty surgeries and countless hours of therapy later, here I sit as a graduating high school senior. TRI has always been a great place, even at the beginning when I wanted nothing to do with horses or the act of

riding them. The people here are such great, kind hearted people for what they do, and I thank all of you. Most of all I'd like to thank my instructor and close friend Jan. She's always been so great to me and I thank her for putting up with me. Thanks also to the horse I ride, Dakota. After high school I am going to Eastern Michigan University on a full ride scholarship, pursuing a film major in hopes of becoming a horror film director.

Those of us who have known Josh since he was just a little guy of 11 are thrilled to see him spread his wings and fly. Congratulations, Josh, and all the best to you as you pursue your dreams. Or should that be, as you pursue our nightmares?



Ann Zalek

Meet Ann Zalek . . . TRI's New Development Manager

I am an entrepreneur at heart (for 23+ years), I started my first business at age 20 and continued working in the area of communication (video production, event planning, marketing, communication, graphic design, editing, writing, publishing, instructional design) for over 18 years. In a mid-career shift, I went back to school (nine years ago) and became a nationally certified massage therapist, certified pediatric massage therapist, reiki master/teacher and a continuing education provider for the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork (NCTMB). I found great happiness in

helping people (including those with disabilities) with chronic/acute issues through treatments and classes. After 8 years as an MT, I closed my practice due to a shoulder injury.

I came full circle back to the field of communication, but with a twist. My desire was to work with passionate organizations (especially small businesses and nonprofits) to develop creative and sustainable programs. I continued this path via my consulting business and in my work with the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (Nursing Home Transition). Then I learned about TRI and I knew this was a match for me.

Heart centered work that results in a positive impact on the quality of life of others inspires my creativity and

fuels me to do the best job possible. I am thrilled to share my skills and experience as the new development manager for Therapeutic Riding, Inc. I bring to TRI an open ear to listen, a willingness to learn all I can, and a passion to discover and design new opportunities for organizational growth and prosperity.

I encourage TRI supporters to contact me to share your ideas and comments at ann@therapeuticridinginc.org.



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TRI Tales- A Regular Feature, From Fabulous Fable, Your Field Reporter

Therapeutic Riding, Inc.
 3425 East Morgan Road
 Ann Arbor, MI 48108

To give you an idea of what I've been working on since our Spring 2012 newsletter, I am actually DREAMING about fencing. Whew, it has been a busy few months supervising the fencing of our new turn-out pastures. I am pleased to say that **Adrian-Tecumseh Fence** has finished the pasture fencing on TRI's 12 acre parcel on the west side. There are

Still on the topic of fencing, I was so pleased with Adrian-Tecumseh Fence's work on the pasture fencing that I have arranged with them to come back and add some finishing touches to our outdoor arena also.



Our wonderful new pastures.

just a few finishing touches to do but I've spoken to Jan and Jeremy about them and they are on top of it. Then Jan and I will figure out which horses are going out where and with whom for some good grass munching and running time! The horses have been putting in their bids for who they want to have turn-out time with and even I am looking forward to some delicious fresh grass and a little space to kick up my heels – in a dignified fashion of course!



Look at all that space.

One of the things to be finished up is the creation of an access path for us to use to get to the north pasture. Come to think of it, the last time I saw **Bruce (Robinson)** was when he was walking into the forest-like tree line with a chainsaw. The mosquitos are pretty big out there. I sure hope he made it out.



Bruce went that-a-way!

They will add a gate on the east side, where there is currently just an open space, and make a safe, contained pathway for our mounted riders and volunteers to travel from the indoor arena to the outdoor so that they can enjoy outdoor riding.

Even a mare of my caliber can't tackle everything on my own so I was most grateful to volunteer **Adrienne Nemura** for her help with a few beautification projects I had my heart set on. Grass is lovely – you'll never catch me turning down a nice patch of grass – but it wasn't quite enough. Adrienne graciously bought and planted many native trees and flowering bushes at TRI. She even made sure they were



They may be little now, but they are going to be beautiful.



properly mulched, which has been important in this dry weather. My thanks to volunteers **Dana Jones, Ashley McLaughlin** and **Gail Nicklowitz**, along with Jan and Jeremy, for assisting Adrienne with the planting! Thanks also to Board Member **Mike Hommel** for providing the water bags and taking on watering duty so our trees make it through this dry spell. Beautiful growing things for a beautiful facility.

Lest you think this fencing work marks the end of the projects around here, I have created a "Wish List" (pg. 6) of both projects and materials that would be most helpful. I know we have some very skilled and generous supporters out there – can you help me finish my "To Do List?"

Until next time,

Fabulous Fable,
 your Field Reporter

*I'll go look for Bruce,
 just open this gate.*

