



Harmony Acres Equestrian Center

July 2023 Update

My Why – Therapeutic Riding

Morgan Kareus

Something I say a lot is that life is short. A good friend of mine often reminds me that each moment in life can be very long. My role as a Therapeutic Riding Instructor at Harmony Acres has shown me the depth of these moments.

I am so fortunate to call a passion that I have, my job. To me, there are only a handful of other places I'd rather be than in the arena, connecting people with horses. These moments are when life truly slows down and precipitates what is important. People often ask me; how do horses help people? I simply believe that horses are capable of connecting with people in the moment, and this connection leads people to feel that they are capable, strong, and worthy. This is what I witness, time and time again. I also see a whole lot of happiness in the arena; smiles from the accomplishment of a task, and giggles from riding the trot for the first time, just to name a few.



For some of my clients, riding is HARD. Getting on the horse can be a huge challenge, and they have to trust me, our team, and the horse. What I experience in sessions that are challenging, is a strong sense of camaraderie, perseverance, and optimism through encouragement. It is a unique atmosphere, where we can support an individual in their journey, whether to be more independent in their everyday life or to simply learn a new skill set. Some sessions bring big challenges, and our team must work very closely together to safely support our client.



Meet Zave!

Animal Handler & Mentor

Who is your favorite Harmony animal and why?

My favorite Harmony animals are Geronimo and Cotton. I first started working with Geronimo doing mental health sessions at Harmony; he helped me gain confidence and was so kind and willing to be part of my journey. Cotton claimed my heart from when I first met her when I was cleaning pens.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most about this job is that I get to see the transformation that happens when a client works with a horse. I also enjoy working with such an amazing team. They are willing to teach and help me when I need it and are not afraid to show me new things. I am still learning - every day I learn something new, and I always have a smile on my face when I leave!

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

If I could travel anywhere, I would travel to Florida. I want to go see my sister and her kids; they moved there about two years ago. I would want to go and see the ocean and ride horses down the beach with my sister.

(Continued page 2)

("My Why" from page 1)

Again, these moments remind us of some very important things - staying present, remaining calm, communicating clearly, staying positive, and coming together as a team to support a person who needs all our support. These sessions also put my horsemanship skills to the test, and help me grow, personally.

Therapeutic Riding is not just my job, I am a part of people's growth, and this is very special to me. I am endlessly grateful to play a part in these long moments in time alongside the horses and our clients.

("Meet Zave" from page 1)

What is your favorite ice cream flavor?

My favorite ice cream flavor is mint chocolate chip. I also love vanilla.

What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

I love working in my shed on my days off. I make wood projects and am currently working on a bench. I made a chair for Harmony Acres to thank them for what they do and how much of an impact they have made in my life. Harmony has truly transformed my life and my heart.

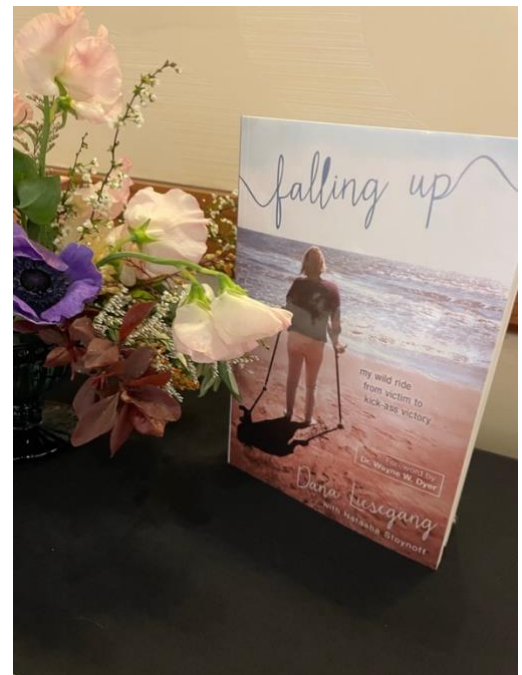
Making an Impact

On April 25, Harmony Acres hosted its first Impact Luncheon. Christy and Morgan provided an overview of the impact Harmony Acres made in the community in 2022 along with a presentation by keynote speaker Dana Liesegang. Dana, a Navy Veteran, shared her inspiring story of recovery following a traumatic event that left her quadriplegic.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Impact Luncheon in April! We are grateful for the contribution of your time and participation, as well as your financial support. Through this event and others, Harmony Acres is able to serve individuals like Dana in 2023 and beyond.



Thank you to our premier event sponsor!



Sonny Dispositions

Morgan Kareus

Patty Roos is 37 years old with a smile and a personality that lights up our entire barn. Patty was born with cerebral palsy, and despite her



challenges, Patty is an ambassador for focusing on the things that she is ABLE to do, like ride a horse! Enter Sonny, Patty's favorite horse at Harmony Acres. Sonny is a 24-year-old gaited horse. He is a beautiful bright yellow color, and he loves people, especially Patty.

Patty has also been diagnosed with two seizure disorders, so for her safety, her Therapeutic Riding Team includes her Instructor, a Horse Handler, two Side Walkers, and easy-going Sonny. This team is well organized, motivated, and energetic; they follow Patty's lead with her positivity and unstoppable, upbeat, can-do attitude. During their sessions, Patty works on the mobility of the left

side of her body, (she has contractures in her left arm and left leg). She can steer and stop Sonny, as well as guide him through several different obstacles, including our outdoor obstacle course.

Patty approaches obstacles at the barn as she does in life, putting her best self forward; she volunteers for other non-profits including the Junior Service League and Kids Aid. She loves physical fitness and enjoys Zumba classes as well as water aerobics. Patty's approach to life is one that Harmony wants to share with others. Doing things independently looks very different for each of our Therapeutic Riding clients, and Patty demonstrates that with positivity, obstacles are simply opportunities to do more. Patty and her mom tell us that Harmony helps her with many things: the use of the left side of her body, stabilization of her mood, a decrease of her anxiety, and it dramatically improves her self-esteem.

Patty's sessions are full of laughter and storytelling. She and Sonny find humor in just about everything, and her sessions bring a feeling of endless possibilities, and of course, pure joy.

Thank you to our Therapeutic Riding program sponsors!



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