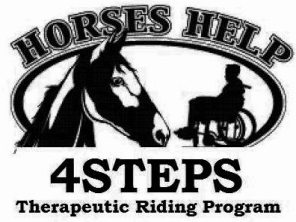


# 4STEPS Therapeutic Riding Program

January 2021



## A LOOK INTO 2021

Greetings!

Each week at 4STEPS we work with children and adults with physical, emotional and behavioral health issues. It is heartwarming to watch as they change in response to our

horses – gaining self-control, building relationships, exercising in the fresh air. It is amazing to see the difference in a client's mood, from depressed and anxious, to general well-being and calm. Not only does being with horses make our riders feel better emotionally, they experience a physical change - in blood pressure, heart rate, and muscle relaxation. Time spent with horses improves the ability to pay attention and focus. *The smiles on our riders faces as they challenge their balance, their strength, and their emotions is priceless! So too is your friendship and support!*

4STEPS Therapeutic Riding Program, 5367 Sixty Foot Road, Parsonsburg, MD 21849  
[www.4stepstrp.org](http://www.4stepstrp.org)

While most of 2020 was difficult to navigate, we still have so much to be thankful for. The support from **Individual and Corporate Donors**, **Civic Groups** and **Community Sponsors** are blessings that we are always thankful for!



Although we continue to face novel challenges, we couldn't be more proud of our **volunteers, staff and participants** who continue to adapt and overcome those challenges.

For many, simply getting out of the house and into the fresh air, barn smells, and sunshine is therapy.

For others, it is *essential* business as usual.

Improving balance - sitting astride on a horse with hands on the reins requires core strength and improves balance.

Increasing range of motion – simply grooming a horse elicits movements that are outside the normal range.

Reducing spasticity - the warmth and rhythm of the horse stretches muscles and reduces tightness and pain.

Improved coordination - getting a horse to do what you want requires proper rein usage, leg aids, use of your seat, gaze, posture etc. Horses are great in that the response to cues can be an immediate reinforcement with coaching from a caring instructor.

Improved self-confidence - being able to control a 1000-pound animal with the skills you have learned in class – priceless!

Patience - horses can have a mind of their own. Riders learn that patience and consistency work and getting frustrated doesn't. They learn that they need to stay calm to get the horse to respond.





## Riding and Reading at 4STEPS.

Participants in 4STEPS *Riding and Reading* program practiced reading, writing and listening and developed their skills as they discovered the local legend of 'Misty of Chincoteague' by Marguerite Henry.

They read aloud to their horses and did creative activities to boost their enthusiasm and increase their literacy. When reading to their horse there was no judgment. They could stumble through a word, read at a choppy rate, or take an extended amount of time to read a passage.

The horse remained a consistent listening companion. Over time, our readers began to feel more comfortable reading aloud. Thanks to our parents and volunteers!



4STEPS  
into  
2021

4STEPS would like to thank our community sponsors for their support and generosity for our program needs and sponsored scholarships. This Spring we will add two special activities.

- The Chesapeake Bay Trust has awarded a grant for a special group of 4STEPS teens to learn about wildlife in the Wicomico Forest (Pocomoke River Watershed). The teens will be on horseback riding to designated snake shelters to observe snake and other reptile species. This is a very unique, one-of-a-kind project for educational enrichment.
- The Choptank Electric Trust has awarded scholarships for our “Riding, Rhythm and ‘Rithmetic’” project offered to our special K-2<sup>nd</sup> graders to gain awareness of the horse’s rhythm and using that rhythm for math enrichment.

I look forward to sharing these unique opportunities with you! To find out more about our special programs or to help, please contact us. We are always looking for volunteers. Our 2021 Spring Session begins March 1st .

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2021!

Sandy Winter, Executive Director



**Do you know someone who is isolated and might need a natural connection?**

Horses connect in a way that is organic and authentic and just might be the connection he or she needs.

Your referral and support enables us to connect horses and people in a profoundly meaningful way.

*4STEPS relies on donations to fund scholarships and operations. Your donation inspires us to continue to enhance and enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities by providing adaptive horseback riding and equine assisted activities. Joined by other local non-profits, we strive to build the kind of community we want to live in.*

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