



EQUINE-

ASSISTED THERAPY

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DECEMBER 2024 ISSUE

Letter From Lulu

*Executive Director
Equine-Assisted Therapy*

Dear EAT Friends and Family,

How can we even begin to say "Thank You" to everyone who helped with and participated in our 2024 Hoedown for Hope? What an amazing event, with so much love and support for our organization, our animals - and of course, for our participants and their families.

At the Hoedown, we unveiled our new logo and mission statement, and we are all so excited for the next 20 years. Our beautiful rebranding with new colors creates a warm feeling to our look and our mission.

I am so honored to be a part of such a wonderful community and family, and the work that we all do here. It takes every single one of us to make this happen and I cannot thank you enough.

We are so grateful for all of your friendships, your support, and your trust in EAT over these past 20 years and into our future. Our team and our entire organization are so excited to take this next journey with all of you.

Our hearts are still heavy with the loss of our beloved donkey Spuds and our soulful Odin last month, but we know they are watching over us.

As a reminder, we will be closed from December 22 to January 5. Classes will resume on January 6, 2025.

Lulu

- Lulu Bogolin



Our Updated Mission Statement

"At Equine Assisted Therapy, we are all about heart to hoof connections. We believe in the power of horses to open doors to personal breakthroughs for individuals facing emotional, physical, and mental challenges. It is our mission to create life-enriching horsemanship experiences that uplift and empower our participants to enhance their well-being."





Letter From a Parent

Lenore Roach

Equine Assisted Therapy holds an incredibly special place in our hearts. Our daughter, Lenore, began her journey with therapeutic riding at just three years old, back in February 2018. It was her first-ever extracurricular activity—something we signed her up for even before we knew she had Rett Syndrome, a rare neurological disorder that limits her ability to control her body the way she wants.

In her daily life, Lenore depends on her family and caregivers for most tasks. With her wheelchair, stander, and walker as constants throughout her day, opportunities to fully engage and strengthen her muscles can be limited. That's one of the areas where equine therapy has made a profound difference.

From the very start, equine therapy has helped Lenore build strength, keeping her body strong and healthy. After her diagnosis, we knew therapies would play a constant role in her life, but we wanted to ensure she also had an activity she could truly enjoy—something that would light up her world every week.

That's when Lenore met Dusty, a Missouri Fox Trotter, chosen specifically for his smooth gait. Understandably, we were nervous, even scared, to put our little girl on a horse! Lenore needed significant adaptations to make riding possible. Her saddle was outfitted with extra pillows to keep her upright, and even then, she struggled to hold herself steady, barely able to sit up or keep her head up. It was a challenge, and at times, it left her frustrated or upset.

But the bond she formed with Dusty was nothing short of extraordinary. Watching her face light up as she interacted with him and felt the rhythmic motion of riding was incredible. Over time, equine therapy became one of the most transformative experiences in Lenore's life.



Through E.A.T., Lenore has been exposed to a variety of new activities and has been given opportunities to try things that once seemed daunting. This exposure has helped her develop a newfound trust in others, making her more open to tackling challenges that might feel frustrating or scary—whether at school, in the community, or with her peers. The confidence she's gained has been transformative, and it has made her more self-assured in social and academic settings.

The physical benefits have been equally remarkable. Through riding, Lenore has developed greater strength, balance, and coordination. She started with a thigh hold, progressed to an ankle hold, and now, after years of practice and perseverance, she's even riding independently at times, holding her reins. Each milestone has propelled her physical skills forward, including walking and catching her balance.

Working closely with Lenore's instructor has been an invaluable part of this journey. Together, we've learned effective strategies for communication, ways to reinforce her progress at home and school, and even creative ways to integrate her riding goals with her IEP! The collaboration has been instrumental in supporting her overall growth.

Equally important are the emotional and social connections Lenore has made. She's found a sense of independence and accomplishment that's hard to replicate elsewhere. The friendships she's formed, like her bond with Mr. Simon, one of her dedicated side-walkers from the very beginning, have been priceless. Mr. Simon has built a deep trust with Lenore—a connection that's rare and incredibly meaningful. We love Mr. Simon and all of the other volunteers. We are so grateful for the care and support they've shown our daughter.

Going to E.A.T. each week has become a family activity we all look forward to. Mom, Dad, and Lenore's brother are there to cheer her on as she reaches milestones we once weren't sure would ever be possible. Watching Lenore beam with pride as she accomplishes new goals is one of the greatest joys we've experienced. Each year, she even gets to show off her progress at the horse show, impressing the public and other family members with her achievements.

Thanks to the financial support we've received, Lenore has been able to continue this life-changing therapy, even as our family navigates the challenges of daily life.

Now, nearly seven years later, Lenore's progress is nothing short of inspiring. Equine therapy remains the highlight of her week, and her growth—both physically and emotionally—has been extraordinary. Watching her take pride in her accomplishments fills us with joy and gratitude. It's hard to believe how far she's come, and we know this journey is far from over.

For anyone considering equine therapy for their child, you will never regret it—for the confidence it instills, the physical benefits it brings, and the joy it inspires.

From the bottom of our hearts, we want to thank all the volunteers, staff members, fellow riders, donors, board members, and everyone else who helps make Equine Assisted Therapy one of the most beautiful places in the St. Louis area.

Equine therapy has changed Lenore's life in ways we never could have imagined. It's given her strength, independence, confidence, and joy. For our family, it has been a beacon of hope and a source of countless cherished memories.

Equine Assisted Therapy truly is a magical place, and we are forever grateful for the role it continues to play in Lenore's life.

Sincerely,
Adam, Heather, Ivan, and Lenore Roach





Odin and Spuds

It is with heavy hearts that we share the unexpected loss of two cherished members of our EAT family: our beloved donkey Spuds, and our oldest herd member, Odin. Each of them touched countless lives in their own unique way.

Spuds, with his gentle nature, brought joy and comfort to everyone he met. His impact extended far beyond our immediate community, touching the lives of visitors to Wildwood and everyone he met on field trips.

Odin, the wise elder of our herd, was a steady presence over the years. He taught us lessons in patience and respect for the rhythm of life that is very, very steady for those who were fortunate enough to know him.

We are so grateful for the time we had with them, and we feel truly blessed to have known these remarkable souls. Their spirits will continue to inspire and guide us in the work we do every day.



Volunteer Spotlight

Dana Garner

Dana is a proud South City St. Louis native and Cleveland High School alum. She loves living close to her daughter, Jamie, and her 91-year-old mother, who still lives independently. Though her two younger sisters are out of town, they stay close, and Dana enjoys her role as “Grammy” to Jamie’s dogs, Artie and Scarlett. At home, she spends time with her rescue Lab/Boxer, Ziva, enjoying walks, hikes, or relaxing on the couch. Family time often includes vacations, games, and indulging in St. Louis favorites like Ted Drewes, toasted ravioli, and Imo’s pizza.

Dana found her way to EAT in late 2017 after returning to STL. Always a horse lover, she was inspired to volunteer when she remembered a college roommate who had served there years earlier. After observing just one Monday night class, Dana was all in. She started as a sidewalker, and from that very first experience, she was hooked. Over the years, Dana has taken on more and more responsibilities, completing leader, tacking, and grooming training. She now supports Wednesday evening and Friday morning sessions, pulling tack, prepping horses, and leading multiple classes. Beyond the arena, Dana pitches in for special events like retreats, the annual Hoedown, and community celebrations.

Her dedication doesn’t stop there—Dana facilitated the donation of an additional AED in early 2018, ensuring both facilities are equipped. She continues to maintain the AEDs and first aid kits, making safety a top priority. Dana is also proud to sponsor Ace, one of EAT’s cherished horses, and has done so for several years.

Dana’s connection to horses goes way back. Summers spent at pony rides, Girl Scout Horse Camp, and family trail rides planted the seeds for her love of equines. Today, she finds great joy in her time at the barn, whether she’s riding weekly in the Silver Saddles program with Hollywood or leading classes with the other EAT horses. While Ace holds a special place in her heart as one of the first horses she worked with, Dana has a soft spot for all the EAT horses and their unique personalities—it’s impossible for her to pick a favorite!

For Dana, volunteering at EAT is more than just giving back. It’s deeply rewarding and therapeutic for her, too. Seeing a young rider hold the reins for the first time, confidently say “walk on,” or sit independently in the saddle brings her incredible joy. She considers EAT a community that has enhanced her own life as much as it does for the riders she helps.

Her advice to new volunteers? Jump in with both feet. Take the training, learn from others, and stay open to EAT’s unique way of doing things. The more you give, the more you’ll gain in return. Grateful for the experiences and connections she’s made, Dana is proud to be part of EAT’s mission to change lives “one hoof print at a time.”





Hoedown For Hope

This year's Hoedown for Hope, held on September 28, 2024, was truly unforgettable! Sponsored by Kennedy Capital Management, the event exceeded all expectations, raising essential funds to support participant scholarships, equine care, and property upkeep. With over 100 silent auction items, there was something for everyone.

Our live auction, led by former Blues player Reed Lowe, thrilled guests with a surprise set of Blues Alumni Box tickets, while the Wildhorse Creek Band kept energy high with lively music and dancing. Guests enjoyed a delicious catered dinner by Candicci's, an open bar, the Reptile Experience, a caricature artist, exclusive items from Kendra Scott, the Color Coded Chef, and stunning photography by John Kaddouri.

A heartfelt thank-you to the Hoedown Committee for making this incredible night possible!

“Overall, a super great event, great job EAT!” “Very organized” “Best Hoedown yet”

“Such a well done event” “Great band, loved auctioneer, and food so very tasty” “The band was amazing”

“The feeling in the room was heartwarming” “Great event!” ”

Spotlight Family

Meet the Belyews

Thank you to everyone who warmly welcomed the Belyew family on Hoedown night! Each year, we celebrate one of our incredible riders and their family, and this time, Hunter Belyew was the star. He brings so much joy to all of us with his bright smile, artistic talent, and love for chicken fingers!

Hunter is loved by everyone here at EAT. Thank you, Belyew family, for sharing your story and letting us be part of Hunter's journey.



Thanksgiving Dinner

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers!

We cannot express enough gratitude to our volunteers here at EAT. They truly are the foundation of our organization, and we couldn't achieve our mission without each and every one of them. EAT's riders eagerly look forward to seeing all of the volunteers each week, and it's heartwarming to know that the feeling is mutual.

Whether you are a sidewalker, leader, barn buddy, part of the maintenance crew, or contribute in any other way, you are all part of our family. Every year, we host a Thanksgiving dinner to show our appreciation for our volunteers. This event includes a delicious turkey dinner, trivia games, awards, and much more. It's our heartfelt way of saying thank you to the people who make everything possible.

This year, we honored some of our exceptional volunteers with special new awards!

Carol Ailor - Skeleton Award

the person who works themselves to the bone

Nancy Ade - Honey Award

the person who is sweet and hardworking

Sue McCluskey - Sunshine Award

the person who brightens everyone's day

Shawn Wilding - Bridge Builder Award

*the person who connects people
and fosters collaboration*

Keith Repa - Duct Tape Award

the person who can fix anything

Robyn Mikes - Whisk Award

the person who is un'beat'able

Kate Lytle - Eggs-cellent Award

the person who always does it just right

Julie Jacob - Mad Hatter Award

*the person who wears so many hats they could
join the Mad Hatter's tea party*

John Robinson - Breaking News Award

the person who always keeps us in the loop

Tammy Bader - Mama Bear Award

the person who takes everyone under their wing

Horse of the Year

One of the traditions at Thanksgiving dinner is awarding the Horse of the Year. Our volunteers cast their votes, and this year the winner is...

HERO!



Updated Applications Due for 2025

Volunteers and Participants, a reminder that new applications for 2025 will be due in January. (If you filled out your application midway through the year, yours will not be due until June)

New applications are available on our website at eatherapy.org



Happy Holidays

HOLIDAY BREAK

Break begins on **December 22nd**, and we'll be back in the saddle on **January 6th, 2025**.

Happy Holidays from the EAT team and our four-legged companions! Your support has been the highlight of our year, and we can't thank you enough. Wishing you and your loved ones a fantastic holiday season!

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

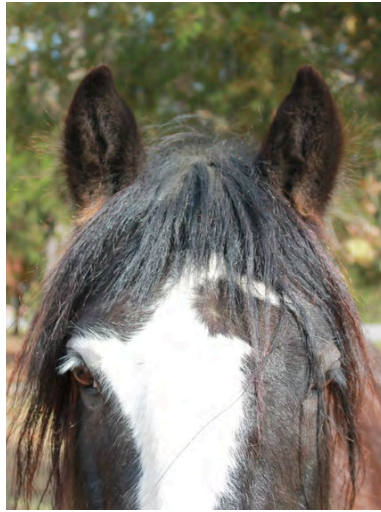
We require all our volunteers to attend at least one training a year. Trainings will be held regularly on the second Wednesday of each month and sporadically throughout the year as well.

Please contact the office to sign up for a training. Sign up is required as space is limited.

GIVING TREE

Every year when we put up our Giving Tree, the love and support from our community flows in. Each ornament offers a way to contribute to EAT's mission, whether it's a pack of paper towels or a new helmet for our riders. Every single donation is deeply appreciated and plays a vital role in helping us operate smoothly. Grab an ornament next time you're at our Wildwood Location. Thank you for making a difference and being a part of our journey!





Sponsor-A-Horse

Sponsor one of EAT's horses today!

We spend more than \$100,000 a year on the care of our therapy animals. This includes feed, hay, supplements, hoof trims/horse shoes, chiropractic treatment, and vet care. Our Sponsor-A-Horse program allows you to sponsor one of our therapy horses (or donkey) for a period of time.

Visit eatherapy.org for more information!

2024 Calendar

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February 25 Cornhole Tournament

March 23 Easter Egg Hunt at T&C

April 27 Volunteer BBQ/ Car Show at WW

May 19 Horse Show



EVENT DAY



NO CLASSES

September 28 Hoedown for Hope at WW

October 5 Fall Festival at T&C

November 23 Volunteer Thanksgiving Dinner

2025 Calendar

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March 9 Cornhole Tournament at WW

April 12 Easter Egg Hunt at T&C

May 3 Volunteer BBQ at WW

May 18 Horse Show at WW

September 27 Hoedown For Hope at WW

October 4 Fall Festival at T&C

November 22 Volunteer Thanksgiving Dinner at WW



Event Day



No Classes

Thank You

Thank you to each and every one of you who helps make EAT's mission possible!

- Alicia Weaver
- Alan and Paula Lowery
- Andrea Cannon
- Ann George
- Anna Vatterott
- April Sauter
- Barak Green
- Bo Matthews and The Eureka Chamber
- Brenda Weber
- Brenna Race
- Carole Schmidt
- Carrie Crago
- Catherine Lantz & Campbell Families
- Cathy Connell and Carrie Steele
- Charles Schwab
- Christine Morlock
- City of Wildwood
- Colton's Cause
- Connie Kallaos
- Connie Roessler
- Courtney Becker
- Creve Coeur Women's Club
- Cynthia Fancher
- Cynthia and Jim Linek
- Dana Brown Charitable Trust
- Daniel and Bailey Laughlin
- Diane Pilgrim
- Dr Shannon Baker, our amazing Vet
- Dr Terry Surtin - ECS
- Elle Vatterott
- Enterprise Mobility
- Flavors Indian Cuisine
- Fred and Lucinda Moore
- Gail and Gary Abbott
- Gaile Kennen and Mike Wegmann
- Gopika Patel
- Grace Cochren
- Heather Graham
- Horses Help
- Jackie Hoyt
- Janet Liefso
- Jared Jones and Woodard
- Jay and Linda Kridel
- Jessica Laughlin
- Jessica Smith
- Jim and Sharon Patton
- Jim Jones
- Joan and Roger Lester
- Jody and Tony Delf
- John Lesh
- Joy and Steve White
- Joyce Wallace
- Julie Cohen
- Julie Harris
- Julie Schryver
- Kathy Yamaguchi
- Keith and Brenda Bussen
- Kim and David Berndt
- Knights of Columbus Council 1364 - St. Clement
- Kimm Gines
- Larry Kendall
- Labadie Community Assoc.
- Lana and David Delf
- Laura Dickey
- Lauren Hadfield
- Lindsey McMahon
- Linda Pleimann
- Lyle and Bill Seddon
- Lochmueller Group
- Lore and Chris Passiglia
- Magnolia Soaps in Wildwood
- Maria Tucci
- Maria Viehman
- Mark Cox
- Mary Neal and Maggie Charity Danis and Family
- Maryville University
- Maureen and Jay Echenlaub
- Michael Curry
- Miss Becky's Salsa Shack
- ML Schlegel and RA Boomer-Schlegel
- Mr. Thomas White
- Nancy Hood
- Nancy Rosenstock
- Nancy Rosenthal
- Nancy Ziech
- Pam Wilson
- Patty Rudd
- Piere and Katie Ziadeh
- Rich and Helen Race
- Robyn Mikes
- Ron and Linda Chitwood
- Sandy Schultz
- Safety National
- Scott and Kristin Ritchie
- Scott Russon
- Scott Smith
- Simon Bolster
- Stan and Julie Clark
- Teresa Struttman
- The Auffenberg Family
- The Cochran Family
- The Eureka Lions Club
- The Kulawic Family
- The Powers Family
- The Scheffel-Anderson Charitable Family Fund
- The Scroggs Family
- The Spencer Family
- Tom Adams, our wonderful Farrier
- Tom and Lynda Karez
- Tom and Peggy White
- Tom Bunn
- Tony Kancjanic
- William R. Orthwein and Laura Rand Orthwein Foundation
- World Wide Technology

