



Main Stay News

Spring 2003

Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program, Inc.

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Richmond, Illinois 60071

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Gone Home

Last spring we said good-bye to a dear friend. Main Stay lost an incredible horse (and 10-year team member) when Casper left us for greener pastures. Although Casper's age (28) had slowed him a bit, he still trotted to the gate every time someone went out to the pastures with a halter on their arm.

Losing Casper meant losing a very good friend and an incredible teacher. Throughout the years almost every student at Main Stay had the privilege of riding Casper. Many students learned to take risks they thought impossible from Casper's strong wide back. From standing and kneeling to cantering their first steps, it all seemed easier with such a capable teacher.

Instructors loved him for his steadfast ways and ability to cope with all types of students. He was the first horse chosen for extremely fragile or at-risk students, but he was also a fantastic independent horse. Casper was the top pick for teaching new volunteer training sessions, as he allowed anyone to lead him and yet he made it easy for an instructor to see each person's strength or weakness.

Volunteers loved to work with him as much as the instructors. He would never toss his head, nip or loose track of where his feet were (relative to yours). He led easily without having to be dragged or pulled. He was a gentleman—always. Anyone who groomed, cared for or worked with Casper came to think of him as an *old soul*. His huge, dark eyes told his story and it was one of wisdom, caring and love.

It may seem strange for some to hear us talk of Casper in such revered ways, but to those of us who had the privilege, it doesn't seem strange at all. He was a unique and incredible horse—one not soon to be replaced and one who will never be forgotten. 🐾

He Was Her Inspiration

Losing Casper touched many of us deeply, but to 17-year-old Liz Wolodkiewicz he became an inspiration. Liz has been a part of the Main Stay family for three years. She has been an active ring volunteer, helped groom horses, attended many fund raisers and celebrations. Casper had easily won the heart of Liz—as he had with so many others.

But Liz proved herself different than the rest of us. Knowing how rare a horse like Casper was, and realizing that replacing him would be incredibly difficult, Liz decided to do something to help our quest. She secretly decided to buy Main Stay a horse! Without telling anyone at Main Stay about her mission she began contacting friends and family, asking them to send her a donation. In her letter, Liz explained how her time at Main Stay had inspired her to begin to find ways to help people. She told her friends how the students she worked with had changed her life and that she wanted to make a difference in their lives. She shared her desire to leave *her mark* on Main Stay when she leaves for college next fall to become a speech pathologist! Her mark would be to find a new horse that embodied the spirit of Casper. Her ambition was to raise \$2,500. She succeeded in raising \$3,000!

Liz will leave her mark on all of us at Main Stay. The horse that her donation will purchase will be a lasting legacy to her determination and dedication to the students in the program. Perhaps more than the donation itself, the selfless act of reaching out to help others will be an even more powerful inspiration to us all. Liz showed us once again that one person *can* make a difference! Our hearts will be forever grateful to Liz! 🐾



Liz presented us with a check for the full amount at the Halloween party.

From the Director's Desk

More than 200 people joined us this past July to celebrate Main Stay's 15th Anniversary. Our anniversary just happened to occur during the Chinese Year of the Horse. Coincidence you might say, but not if you're familiar with Main Stay—the right things just always seem to happen for Main Stay, and this was no exception. A beautiful night embraced all of the incredible people AND horses who have touched so many lives and helped Main Stay achieve this milestone.

In keeping with our Year of the Horse theme, the evening was kicked off with a traditional dragon dance courtesy of Perry Moy of Plum Garden Restaurant, in McHenry, IL. Next, our guests cheered on several equine demonstrations, including two by Main Stay students. First, Ed McGlade brought lumps to the throats of many as he presented a first-class, bridleless reining demonstration (sure glad that they got that gate closed in time!). Spins, slide stops and high-speed charges were timed to "Proud to Be an American."

Main Stay's students then took to the ring and rode together in unison to a Beatles' tune in an eight-rider drill team. Several more students displayed their skills during a vaulting demonstration. Kneeling, sitting backwards, sideways and standing on a horse are never easy tasks, but with 200 pairs of eyes staring at them, the Main Stay students proved that they had performer souls!

Returning to the tents our guests enjoyed an elegant dinner catered by Plum Garden. The tables were beautifully decked out with flower arrangements donated by Chapel Hills Flowers in McHenry. Music by Bart Alonzo and the Hushpuppies played during and after dinner, giving our guests reasons to dance on the candlelit drive. The drawing of the cash raffle and a live auction of wonderful gifts helped us wrap up the evening.

I think our guests, our families and even our event committee were surprised at how incredibly beautiful the farm looked that night. White tents, beautiful flowers, stars and candlelight, transformed Main Stay into a wonderland.

Once again I was struck by what truly made the evening magical—more than all the decorations, food and music, it was the smiles and spirit of our students, their families, our Board, staff and guests. And this year, when thunder echoed threateningly in the background, I didn't worry. I knew nothing would spoil this enchanting evening, because the sun (or moon) always shines on Main Stay. Again I felt the magic that people always talk about—the magic of Main Stay. Again I was honored to be a part of something so good. I thank all of you who gave of yourselves to be a part of that special evening and helping us make the dreams of Main Stay continue to burn brightly.



Board of Directors

- *President*
- **Sandy Swank-Sunseri**
- *Vice President*
- **Ursula Foszcz**
- *Secretary/Treasurer*
- **Diane Hesch**
- *Members*
- **Sara Foszcz, Dennis Portell,**
- **Joan Rowe**

Advisory Council

- **Jim Homola**
- **Patti Klein Manke, DVM**
- **Tim O'Connor**
- **Margaret Schulte**
- **Reid Sunseri**
- **Dave Wymer**

Staff

- *Executive Director*
- **Loriann Dowell**
- *Administrative Assistant*
- **Joan Castell**
- *Program Director*
- **Sara Foszcz**
- *Volunteer Coordinator*
- **Karen Portell**
- *Barn Manager*
- **Jennifer Rizza**
- *Instructors* **Anna Whitworth,**
- **Jean Maraist, Sara Foszcz,**
- **Roxie Elliott, Sandy Barcus**

- *Articles and feature stories*
- *contributed by*
- **Loriann Dowell, Sara Foszcz**
- **Diane Hesch, Sandy Barcus**
- **Desi Craig, Jean Maraist**

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NARHA

North American Riding for the
Handicapped Association, Inc.
Premier Accredited Center

Loriann Dowell



Arena Happenings

Howdy, partner! Main Stay students gave themselves new names and became cowboys/girls during the month of October. Students spent four weeks learning about the important role horses played in helping cowboys in the Wild West. They participated in many activities including learning how to set up camp, communicating with others on the range, and playing rodeo games such as barrel racing and trying to rope a steer (a plastic one mounted on the arena wall, not the four-legged kind!). Everyone had fun and we look forward to another exciting theme month in the 2003 riding season. 🐾



'HIP'potherapy Happenings!

by Sandy Barcus, PT

Main Stay's first hippotherapy session was a great success! The nine riders who participated experienced a new freedom of movement on the horse as well as having a lot of fun. As the therapist, I had the best time facilitating the horse's movement to impact a rider's movement patterns. One of the goals of hippotherapy is to develop basic posture and movement skills that allow the rider to know his or her "center" (staying in the middle) of the horse. The multiple sensory input from the horse's movement, size and body warmth helps make changes in the neurological system of the riders.

One technique frequently used in hippotherapy sessions is to have riders move in and out of various position changes on the horse. Our riders rode prone (on their tummy), backwards, sideways and yes, even forwards! Using these different positions is one way to challenge the body to stay "centered." Minimal tack was used (usually a saddle pad and surcingle) in order for the riders to experience the maximum amount of sensory input and be able to change position. One student rode bareback, greatly impacting her ability to remain "centered."

Definite changes in balance, tone and sitting posture were observed in all the riders. One student, who was unable to sit erect at the start of the session, had his team in tears as he sat "centered" on his pony by the final week. Other significant changes observed were eye convergence,

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Volunteer Corner

The Spotlight is on Wendy Marchel.

Where would we be without the likes of our very special volunteers ... We all know the answer to that is ... we'd be nonexistent! This issue we would like to introduce someone who makes life at Main Stay much easier.

Wendy Marchel is a very active ring volunteer as well as helping in several other areas of Main Stay. Generally, you can find Wendy out in the barn three days a week. She is the first to come early to groom and stays late to ensure each horse's safety and comfort. Her easygoing manner endears her to horses, students and coworkers alike.

Wendy is up to the challenge of every task asked of her—grooming, sweeping, cleaning, ring work, party decorations, committee member, kid "herding." Ask Wendy and she says, *YES!* My favorite is watching her load her car with dirty, stinky tack (and saddlepads)—only to have them returned clean and smelling fresh!

This past year when asked what she wanted for Christmas, Wendy asked that a gift be given to Main Stay. With *Wendy's Christmas present*, Main Stay purchased a beautiful western saddle that is enjoyed by many of our students. The correct saddle is an absolute necessity for both horse and rider, so we were thrilled to receive such a gift. Not only does Wendy give her time and energy to the program, but she forgoes her own holiday present for us. Now that is giving from the heart! Our thanks to Wendy (and all our volunteers) for going above and beyond the call of duty! Wendy, we are so fortunate to have you as part of the Main Stay family. Wendy's latest accomplishment at Main Stay is joining our Board of Directors. Congratulations, Wendy!



Wendy (at right) working with one of Main Stay's students. 🐾

A Photo Gallery of 2002 Events



We love our volunteers! (And we couldn't operate without them!) About half our volunteer crew was able to come out to the farm for a Volunteer Appreciation lunch held in June 2002. Some of the Main Stay students were on hand to help distribute gifts to the volunteers. These gifts ranged from T-shirts to jackets, depending on the length of service given to Main Stay. Everyone had a great time visiting, eating and square dancing. Our program is blessed with a wonderful bunch of people and we're so thankful for the time, energy and love they give.



(Left) Main Stay students and volunteers helped "Make a Difference" at Children's Hospital by donating art supplies and small toys to the Pediatric Department for Make a Difference Day on October 26. Karen Portell, volunteer coordinator, dropped off approximately \$500 worth of materials that kids can use during their inpatient stay to make the time go a little faster. Our thanks go to everyone who donated items and to Wal-Mart for donating money toward this worthwhile project.



(Right) Main Stay's 15th Annual Bowlathon was another smashing success, raising more than \$20,000 this year! Those bringing in the most money were Sarah Patterson, Kaleigh Foszcz, Marty Patterson, Kathy Campo, Troy Rothschild, Rusty Foszcz, Janelle Foszcz, John Whalen, and Cooper Foszcz. Thank you Palace Bowl in McHenry for the use of your wonderful facilities.





(Left) Main Stay sponsored a workshop last fall entitled, "The Neuro Connection," presented by Nancy McGibbon, MS, PT, HPCS. The workshop explored topics related to the human nervous system including information on the different areas of the brain and the functions they control, changing motor behavior, and high and low tone. Practical applications for therapeutic riding instructors and therapists working in this setting helped participants apply theory to practice. Increasing our knowledge in this area helps instructors understand the tremendous impact therapeutic riding has on the nervous system.

(Right) Kiana, riding Shasta, was one of two students who represented Main Stay at the annual Hooved Animal Humane Society's summer picnic.



(Above) Students, families, volunteers, and staff came to celebrate Halloween and the last party of the Main Stay riding season. Although the weather was a little chilly, there were plenty of ghosts and goblins enjoying themselves on hayrides, eating delicious food, making spooky crafts, and showing off their costumes in the Main Stay parade. Our thanks to Rich Jacobson for donating the hay wagon for the day, the Stade Farm for once again contributing pumpkins, the Halloween Party Committee and everyone else who helped make the day such a success.



(Above) A big thank-you to Don and Judy Reinboldt for creating the lovely gardens we enjoyed throughout the summer and fall. You helped make this special place even more beautiful.



Angels Among Us

On a cold January evening, social service agencies from McHenry County gathered together to receive their 2003 funding from the Mental Health Resource League of McHenry County. This year the League provided \$205,611.50 in grants. Main Stay was extremely fortunate to be included in their incredible generosity. To date, the MHRL has awarded more than **\$2 million** in aid to McHenry County organizations! Their grant to Main Stay amounted to \$20,120.00! The League has long been one of Main Stay's most generous funding sources. We owe much of our success and numerous facility improvements to their generosity.

This year the funds will be used in several areas with the largest amount providing 42 students with partial scholarships. A portion will be used to improve the ventilation of the indoor arena by adding windows and fans to the existing building. Two student programs will also be funded through the MHRL, the first being a repeat of last summer's eight-week hippotherapy program. Second, a pilot program with Head Start children will be offered during the spring and fall sessions. Few of these programs would be possible without the commitment and support of the League.

Once again the MHRL proved itself to be a unique organization, driven by an astonishing group of people. The small number of dedicated people involved with the League proves over and over that anything is possible once you make up your mind! Main Stay (along with many other agencies) salute the MHRL and its members for another outstanding year! We thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts! 🐾

Main Stay Staff News

Welcome to our new staff

★ **Jennifer Rizza**, Barn Manager ★ **Roxie Elliott**, Instructor

Congratulations!

Sandy Barcus, PT, has been involved with Main Stay since its inception and recently became a certified therapeutic riding instructor.

'HIP'otherapy Happenings!

Continued from page 3

improved motor planning, which allowed a student to use both hands to imitate signs, and decreased abnormal muscle tone, which enabled a young lady to trot. The rhythm and repetition of the lessons also organized the attending skills of the riders, allowing them to follow increasingly complex instructions.

The sessions would not have been as successful without the help of a wonderful group of dedicated volunteers. The team was often left in awe of the powerful changes the hippotherapy session made in the bodies and minds of our challenged riders. Main Stay is planning another hippotherapy session this summer. We're looking forward to another opportunity to experience the power of the human/horse connection. 🐾



One Man's Treasures

After living through days of early spring highs of 80/90 degrees, the morning of the first Main Stay barn/estate sale dawned with a predicted high temperature of 55. While the barn was cold, the atmosphere quickly warmed up as our first buyers showed before the sale even began. Days of preparation had filled the indoor arena with many wonderful items for sale. From an antique stove, to bunk beds, a marble sink, stuffed bunnies, bicycle helmets—the list went on and on. A steady stream of people braved the cold winds and found treasures to take home.

Over 40 volunteers helped with setup, pricing items, loading large items, parking cars and of course, cleaning up. Three days of nonstop work proved worthwhile as the sale raised \$5,700 for programs at Main Stay! An added benefit was the number of people who inquired about how to become involved with Main Stay. While people waited in line at the cash register or stopped for a cup of warm coffee, they watched the Main Stay video and talked to parents, volunteers and staff members. Many made the comment, "I never knew this place was here, but what a wonderful cause!"

Thank you to all who donated wonderful items for the sale. Thanks as well to the volunteers who helped price and move items—this sale couldn't have happened without you! A special thank-you to Tom Thennes at Ed's Rental in McHenry who donated tables used during the sale! 🐾

Closing Thoughts

2002 was a year jam-packed from start to finish with blessings, surprises and lasting memories. We celebrated the successes of over 50 students throughout the year. More than 100 volunteers shared their lives with us on a regular basis to help our riders meet their goals, make our facility more beautiful and drive our fundraisers to succeed. Educational workshops challenged staff and volunteers to continue to learn, grow and reinvent themselves.

With the local and world news wearing us out each day with frightening and threatening reports, Main Stay continues to be a bright spot—a sanctuary for many of us. When all we hear is bad, you need only to step into the barn to be reminded that the world is full of potential. We are witness to all the good that people have to offer. We are witness to the strength and courage of the human spirit. We are witness to the compassion and kindness that people have within—the hope that lives in all of us!

Our sincere condolences go to one of our Main Stay students, Erik Hoary, and his family on the loss of his father, Al. Al was a wonderful human being and always willing to help with whatever was asked of him. We'll greatly miss his enthusiasm and energy. A fund has been established to help with Erik and his sister's educational costs. Contributions can be sent to the Erik Hoary Education Fund, 510 Brookwood Trail, McHenry, IL 60050. 🏠

None of us live in seclusion or retreat from the harsh realities facing the world today. We realize that although we need to think globally, we can act locally. We can make a difference in the lives of our students—brighten their world, erase their fears and frustrations (if only for a while), and as a result, do the same for ourselves.

As we gear up for the 16th riding season at Main Stay we hold on to the thought that making even one life a little brighter is a worthy cause and worth the fight! It is our hope that each of you finds yourself in a good place, surrounded by people and efforts that inspire you. If you need help, you can always join us for inspiration!

Love and peaceful thoughts,

Sara
🏠



Participation Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

<i>Join the Main Stay Team!</i>	
Leg-Up Club	\$1–\$99
Bronze Stirrup Club	\$100–\$249
Silver Stirrup Club	\$250–\$499
Gold Stirrup Club	\$500–\$999
Platinum Stirrup Club	\$1,000–\$4,999
Grand Prix Club	\$5,000+

I'd like to contribute to the program fund. Enclosed is \$_____.

I'd like to support the monthly upkeep of a horse. Enclosed is \$_____.

I'd like to become a volunteer.

*Thank you for your support. Your contribution is tax-deductible.
Please return to: MSTRP • 6919 Keystone Road • Richmond, IL 60071*

Hay, Ring Volunteers! Riding's right around the corner!

We need you! Main Stay cannot operate without our wonderful volunteers. Join us for a returning volunteer training session or, if you're not currently a volunteer, come to a new volunteer training session.

**March 10-15
Monday to Friday**

6 - 8 p.m.

*Returning Volunteer In-service
at Main Stay*

March 24, Monday

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

*New Volunteer Training
at Main Stay*

“A helping hand,
Their smiling face.
Confidence and freedom,
In an exciting place.

“The volunteers of Main Stay,
Smiles and high-fives they share.
Friends to all who ride there,
Someone to really care.

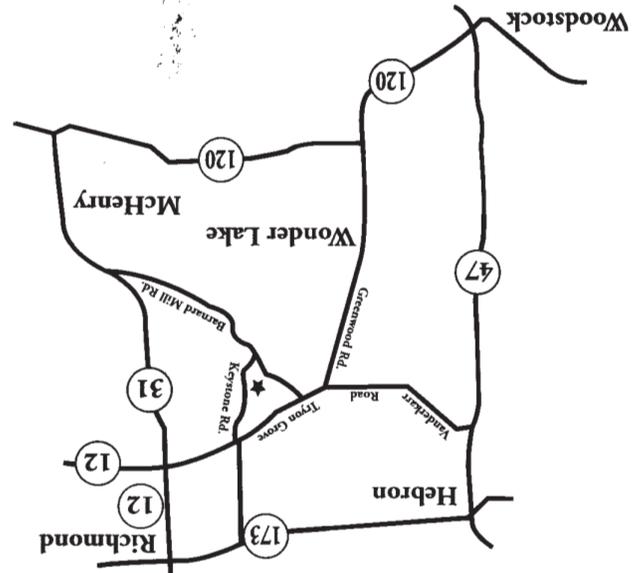
“They take time from
their schedules,
Their busy day-to-day.
My gratitude is so deeply felt,
I know not what to say.

“Those heroic individuals,
There to encourage and
give a cheer.
Main Stay volunteers,
We hold you all so dear.

“Though it may not seem so,
You play such a large part.
I simply want to tell you,
Thank you, from my heart.”

The Main Stay volunteers are an indispensable part of the chain that holds the organization together. These people can put all the fears of the rider at rest with a simple encouraging word. I have been riding at Main Stay for almost 14 years, and I know that I would never have gotten to where I am without the help of these caring people.

This poem was written by *Desi Craig* in honor of our wonderful Main Stay volunteers.



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