



A publication of the Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program

Main Stay News

Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program, Inc.

6919 Keystone Road
Richmond, Illinois 60071

Phone: 815/653-9374 Fax: 815/728-1224
Website: www.mstrp.org

Summer 2004

Who Survived the Challenge?

Main Stay not only survived—we thrived during this years “Evening in the Country.” The *Cowboy Challenge* began in a most unusual way—the weather was *beautiful!* No hint of rain, wind, extreme heat or humidity—it was an exceptional summer evening.

More than 150 guests enjoyed the evening, from the first appetizer down to the last goodbye. Cowboy games of roping, stick-horse races and horseshoes kept guests laughing, but nothing compared to the *chicken poop plop*. Don’t ask why, but this game was an instant hit with our audience! Betting on when a chicken will *poop* on a square kept people intrigued for over an hour—who said we don’t know how to have fun?

Three of our students challenged the audience to a competition on *real live horses* and six brave souls bid for the chance to show us their stuff. With helmets fitted, volunteers in place and horses ready, the challenge began. Our students proved the theory that nothing is as easy as it looks ... especially from the back of a moving horse! Forgetting instructions, staying balanced and fighting fear were just a few things that kept our challengers from first-time success. Each competitor was a great sport, however, and helped drive the point home that Main Stay is much more than a simple pony ride. A huge Main Stay thank you to all of our challenge riders!

During dinner, the powerful words of Marlene Ryan hushed the crowd. She told us why Main Stay is so important in her son’s life. Acceptance, nurturing, understanding, structured and increasing challenges, but most of all *love* is what makes Main Stay stand out in Marty’s (*and her*) life.

Marlene’s emotional story was a great warm-up for the live auction and the very talented auctioneer Dave Kentner, drove the crowd into a bidding war for a vast array of items. Tables all around the tent were active in the bidding and when the last hand came down the results topped all previous auctions. Dave even succeeded in selling the decorations to the audience!



Reno gives a big “thumbs up” to the crowd during Challenge ride.



A Challenger finds it’s not easy balancing, listening and having good posture.

The great sounds of *The Bart Alonzo Group* played throughout the evening. After the auction, their music forced people out of their chairs and onto the dance floor, closing out an incredible evening.

Thanks to each and everyone that donated their time, talents, energy and gifts to make the night a true success! The Bart Alonzo Group, Dave Kentner, *dozens* of volunteers and everyone who joined us and/or sent a donation—**together we raised over \$24,500!** To make the evening an even bigger success, Main Stay had an anonymous donor send in a matching grant of \$15,000! This enormous gift brought our total money raised to **\$39,500** for a single evening! Thank you is just not enough—you are angels, plain and simple. 🙏

From the Director's Desk

I'm told there comes a time in almost every person's life when he makes a monumental decision on the direction his life will take. It seems that my time has come later than most people's. Well into my 50s I have decided to run away and join the circus. Well not exactly, but almost. For a long time I have enjoyed amateur acting, and for an even longer time I have enjoyed creative writing. After many years of wondering, "What if. . .?", I have decided to find out "what if."

I am leaving Main Stay and trying my hand at my passions: acting and writing.

Interestingly, the decision to go and join the throngs of out-of-work actors and writers wasn't the toughest decision. By far the more difficult decision was leaving Main Stay. Why would anyone in their right mind leave a wonderful program filled with wonderful people to face the unknown?

During my time at Main Stay I have learned so much. I have learned that dedicated and caring people can do the impossible when they believe in what they are doing. I have learned that people with disabilities are "able" in so many ways and I have been inspired by their efforts and successes. I have learned that caring and sharing parents always have just a little bit more to give to their children. I have learned that our volunteers are the best of any organization of which I have ever been associated.

And talk about inspiration! I have worked alongside the most dedicated and caring person you or I will ever meet. Sara Foszcz had a dream and has labored untiringly over the past twenty years to make that dream a reality. She built a program from the ground up that was built on compassion and quality and remains that way today. Yes, she had plenty of help from a loving family, caring friends and dedicated volunteers. While she couldn't have done it without them, it wouldn't have happened without her leadership. Thanks, from all of us, Sara. And from me personally thank you for serving as a role model for my own life.

To the many people I have met and got to know, believe me you have all made an impact on my life. I wish I could thank you all by name here but that is impractical. I hope to be around in the future helping however I might. I want to stay close to the new friends I have made and certainly to help this wonderful program that has inspired us all so much.

Allow me to share one final thought with you.

I hope you all realize what a treasure you have in Main Stay. Never take it for granted. Spread the word about the incredible work that is being done here. Find new financial supporters for the program. Keep up your support whether that is financial support, volunteer hours, or whatever you can do to keep this program strong and growing. If you need any encouragement just look at the face of any rider—that smile will tell you that progress is being made and miracles are occurring. Work toward a future of even more smiles and more miracles.



Gary M. Stamm

• **Board of Directors**

- *President*
- Sara Foszcz
- *Vice President*
- Joan Rowe
- *Treasurer*
- Dave Wymer
- *Members*
- Sally Beake
- Loriann Dowell
- Ursula Foszcz
- Wendy Marchel
- Sandy Swank Sunseri

• **Advisory Council**

- Patti Klein Manke, DVM
- Tim O'Connor
- Margaret Schulte

• **Staff**

- *Administrative Assistants*
- Joan Castell
- Diane Hesch
- *Program Director*
- Jean Maraist
- *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Roxie Elliott
- *Barn Manager*
- Jennifer Rizza
- *Instructors*
- Jean Maraist
- Sara Foszcz
- Roxie Elliott
- Sandy Barcus
- Lori Cohen

- *Articles and feature stories contributed by Rusty Foszcz, Sara Foszcz, Jean Maraist & Gary Stamm*
- *Photos contributed by Joan Castell*

- *Newsletter layout by BC Edit*

- Main Stay News © 2004
- Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program, Inc.
- 6919 Keystone Road
- Richmond, IL 60071
- www.mstrp.org
- Main Stay is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. The Main Stay News is a periodical publication of the Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program.
- Permission is granted to reprint articles and features provided proper credit is given.



NARHA

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

'You May Say I'm a Dreamer'

by Rusty Foszcz

The French writer Anatole France once said, "To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe...." Earlier this year, Main Stay lost two of its most accomplished "dreamers," Don and Barb Brodie, to separate illnesses.

Don and Barb Brodie believed in what could be accomplished here and were the heart and soul of the Main Stay program throughout its 18 years. When Sara Foszcz and Sandy Barcus had a vision of what Main Stay could become back in 1983, the Brodies were there to help that dream become a reality. Their generous gifts of time, money and unlimited encouragement were evident from the start and continued until their passing earlier this year.

Barbara Brodie held Main Stay's dream close to her heart from the very beginning. In fact, Barb served on the first Main Stay Board of Directors. She worked in the arena, designed our logo, and held various positions ranging from Secretary to President. And, although Barb was a "dreamer," she was also a practical person. Without her fiscal oversight the program surely wouldn't have succeeded in those early years! Barb was a selfless, strong woman filled with boundless energy. That energy and lust for life was evident right to the very end when she fought so valiantly against ALS, the disease that eventually took her away.

Don Brodie, although he did side-walk in the early years, preferred to stay *outside* the arena. He was perhaps Main Stay's biggest cheerleader! Don and his ever-present hearty laugh were always present at fundraisers—from *Bowlathons* to *Evenings in the Country*. If Barb was the practical person in the marriage, then Don was definitely the romantic. He was a sensitive soul who was never afraid to show his



From left to right: Donald & Barbara Brodie, Bill & Maggie Grove and Dean Rowe at Bowlathon 2000

emotions. This endearing quality made it easy to become his friend. And Don made many friends at Main Stay—from the students that he loved so much, to parents, staff, volunteers and Board Members.

The next time you enter the barn take a moment to really *read* the plaque that's fastened to the stall wall. It eloquently states:

The Brodie Barn
In the early years when few understood,
you believed.
When few gave, you gave generously.
When few could foresee a future,
you could see the promise.

*Unending thanks to Don and Barb
for their early inspiration, dedication and support.*

"Unending thanks." Though Don and Barb may be gone, their spirit lives on forever at Main Stay. *Belief* is strong medicine. Just look at what our students accomplish everyday at Main Stay. 🐾



Arena Happenings

It's hard to believe the riding season has passed the half way point. As we head towards the fall and the last few months of riding, it's time to shine the spotlight on our students and let them demonstrate their skills. Main Stay will hold a student open house each regularly scheduled riding night the week of October 18 beginning at 4 p.m. The open house is for family, friends and anyone who is interested in watching our students. Performing in front of an audience can be a challenging experience and the open house allows our students a safe environment to practice. It's also a lot of fun for the riders to "show their stuff." We hope you can join us and cheer on our hard-working riders. 🏡



Learning Corner

Main Stay recently hosted a workshop entitled "Horses and Mental Health; Helping Humans Form Healing Relationships." Participants learned how horses communicate with each other and how human interaction can be improved with this knowledge. If you're unfamiliar with horses, you may be thinking, "How can horses help humans learn these things?"

Horses, reliable creatures by nature, can demonstrate how we can become "authentic creatures" in our interactions with others. They also mirror back to us how our behavior affects others. Working directly with the horses allowed everyone to practice activities that may be appropriate when working with mental health and therapeutic riding clients. It also demonstrated how challenging team building exercises can be for all of us! The day and a half was an interactive and thought-provoking experience and gave the attendees a new perspective of horse/human and human/human functioning. Horses offer us so much more than just a back to ride on. It behooves us (no pun intended!) to learn from each other and our equine partners. 🏡



"I love riding this much!"

Born to Shop?

Come out to Fall Diddley and jump-start your holiday shopping while helping a great cause—The Mental Health Resource League of McHenry County. The League has been a tremendous contributor to Main Stay's success and growth and now it is our turn to support them. Shopping at Fall Diddley is an easy but important way you can help both the MHRL and Main Stay. This two-day event is a mecca for shoppers with folk-art, crafts, hand-made and holiday items calling your name. Regardless of the weather you can shop to your heart's content. So come on out and help make it a record-breaking year for the League!

When: October 9th and 10th

Where: Kane County
Fairgrounds, Belvidere, IL

See you there. Don't forget to bring your friends!



Meet the Parents

Main Stay is blessed with many devoted and generous parents. We hope to spotlight as many as possible in our newsletters so that everyone can get to know them. This issue we are proud to introduce **Shawna Egan**, mother of rider Abby.

Shawna lives in Cary along with her other daughter Jillian. That is also where the Children's Center for Autism, which Shawna founded, is located. It is a beautiful around-the-clock residential facility accommodating up to four children. A staff of 17 provides care and education for the children. The center provides 24-hour therapeutic residential treatment (although the children do go home to their families on Saturday and Sunday), training for independent living skills and time for the residents to "just be kids," Shawna explains. She decided to create the center because she could find nowhere in the area that concentrated on the needs of children with autism.

It was no easy task to establish the nonprofit center. Shawna says that she spent three years learning about things such as zoning, licensing, contracts and fundraising from the ground up. But with help from others, particularly Little Friends, she was able to jump through all the right hoops and create a wonderful place for some very special children to live and flourish. Shawna is kept busy as the President and CEO of the Children's Center for Autism, but finds time for her daughters as well as gardening, reading and antique hunting.



Abby Egan on Woody

Abby has been riding at Main Stay for three years. Shawna says that the therapy that she has received on the back of Dolly and at the hands of instructors Anna and Jean have made a remarkable difference in Abby's strength, balance, attention span and her verbal skills. She adds, "Seeing her smile and hearing her laugh while riding Dolly with such pride is an experience I will treasure forever. It's the one hour a week I look forward to nine months a year. These are moments when I can watch Abby truly enjoy where she is at that particular moment in time—happily content."



The losses for Main Stay families this year seem to be greater than usual. Two of our students have lost their fathers to battles with cancer. Our hearts go out to Connie Bach and her family for the loss of her dad, Carl Bach. Chelsea Alliveto also lost her father, Frank Allivato. We extend our sympathy and prayers to both families. Both men loved their families and were tremendous supporters of their daughters. They leave behind lasting legacies of love.

Sandy Barcus (our physical therapist and co-founder) lost her 21-year-old son Collier on July 8. Collier was killed in Iraq. Collier, his big brother Micah and younger sister Jessa, have been a part of the Main Stay family since day one. No one who has ever met Collier will forget his dazzling smile or passion for playing soldier as a young boy. Collier spent time in Wyoming on a ranch during his late teens and became an avid lover of horses. In some ways horses gave Collier a chance to grow into the man he became—strong, caring and afraid of nothing. He died doing what he believed he was compelled and honored to do—serving his country.

Our hearts break for all of these families. Main Stay has information in the office for anyone who would like to help any or all of these families.

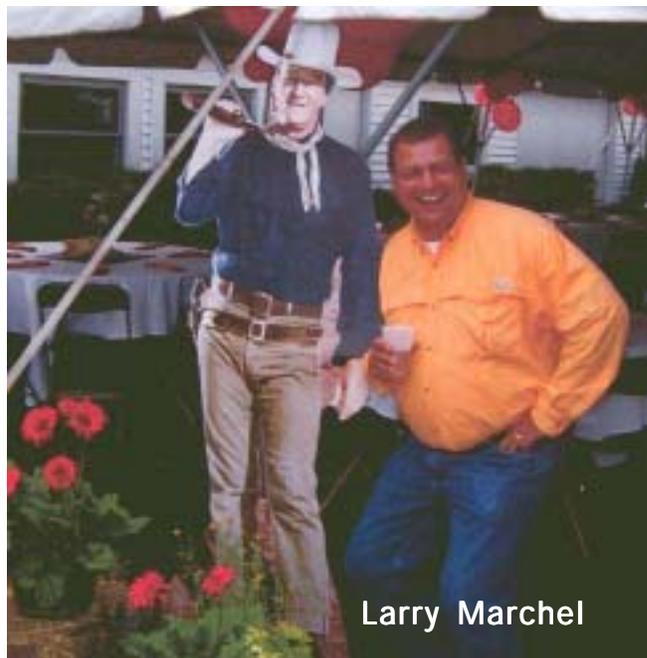
Volunteer Spotlight

Main Stay would like to introduce you to a few of the very busy and very appreciated “behind-the-scenes” volunteers who make the program run smoothly and safely. Main Stay has a few folks who show up when the students are gone, who receive no smiles or hugs from grateful riders and yet give of themselves time and time again. These are the project volunteers.

At the top of the list keeping Main Stay in tip-top shape is **Jeff Foszcz**. Families and staff may not see Jeff at the farm, but he plays a key role here as a member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. This committee is responsible for helping maintain the facility and grounds and reports to the Board of the Directors. The committee’s projects range from repairing glass in the barn and screens on the house to making recommendations to the Board on a new watering system for the horses. Infrastructure may not be glamorous, but it sure is a necessity.

Jeff is not directly involved with horses himself, but that doesn’t stop him from helping at the farm. He has been a valuable member of the Main Stay team for over three years and has even made it a family affair. His son, Max, volunteers in the ring and helped with the screens on the house. His daughter, Kaleigh, has pitched in for special events (although it certainly helps that wife and mom, Ursula, is a member of the Board!). Even though Jeff doesn’t see the students or horses on a regular basis, he’s glad that they have a safe environment in which to work and play. Main Stay is a better place because of Jeff’s *behind-the-scenes* work.

Phil Walkington from Walkington Electric in Woodstock stepped up and gave generously of his time and talent over the past year. Phil has installed new electrical outlets throughout the barn so we can clip, cool and heat things without running miles of extension cords. He also installed the new paddle fans in the indoor arena. The fans (purchased with funding from the Mental Health Resource League) have allowed us to teach on days that would have caused us to cancel because of the heat. The volunteers, students and instructors send Phil and the League a huge thank-you—on hot days we now conveniently *whoa* under a fan to play a game or change positions!



Larry Marchel

Larry Marchel is from Twin Lakes, Wisconsin. During the past several years he has given up countless hours, donated material and more important, his talent, to help with several work projects. Larry (assisted at times by wife and ring volunteer, Wendy) has worked on the following projects: installing two huge exhaust fans in the indoor arena (purchased with funding from the Mental Health Resource League), building an accessible ramp to the new tack room and building benches with built-in storage in the new tack room. Besides working on projects, Larry and Wendy are always supportive at Main Stay events. They usually bring along friends and family and are always willing to raise their hands, whether it is for a live auction item or to volunteer for yet another project.

Main Stay once again thanks these three men and all the other project volunteers who give so generously to keep our program and facility safe, beautiful and running smoothly! We are a much better program because you share your gifts with us. Thank you! 🐾



Closing Thoughts

Dear Friends,

Assembling this issue has forced me to reflect once more over the losses we've experienced in the past year—both at a personal and a program level. To say we've had a lot of changes is an understatement. All of us go through pain and loss—that's part of life. We mourn, we remember, we cherish and somehow we move on—we have to—and we want to.

I struggled with trying to write about my parents, Don and Barb Brodie. They didn't like the limelight and they lived fairly quiet, but very full lives. I doubt they would appreciate these words of praise. They would make them uncomfortable, so I apologize to them for that.

But, I realized that people need to know when you witness the program, you witness the two of them. Their love for their children, humanity and community were lessons they taught every day they lived on this earth. From birth, they *showed* us that making the world a better place was our duty as citizens of this planet. Whether it was volunteering an hour or spearheading a project, they gave back continuously. Making the world better could be as simple as being nice—they personified nice.

You should know that my Dad was not fond of horses (actually disliked them for many years) and often wondered when I would grow out of this "phase." Only when I combined horses and people with special needs did he finally see a purpose for, and believed in the magic of, the horse (he even volunteered a short time as a sidewalker)! Mom, on the other hand, carried the *horse crazy* gene. She passed it on to me and loved being in the barn whenever she had time! She was my first teacher about the power of the horse.

So you see, Main Stay is simply an extension of all the *good* in my folks. Without them, there may never have been a program. No words can ever say enough or describe them fully, for they were exceptional people.

Whatever we pass forward are simply gifts that we have received from them. I will be forever grateful.

With Much Love and Gratitude,

Sara



Participation Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Join the Main Stay Team!	
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*

Ready, Set – *STRIKE!*

Main Stay's bowlathon is just around the corner—are you ready to join a winning team? On **October 3, the 17th Annual Bowlathon will take place at Palace Bowl in McHenry, IL, at 12 noon.** Bowlers and nonbowlers alike will compete for their pride, prizes and Main Stay. Last year's event brought in over \$22,000 and we hope to do even better this year.

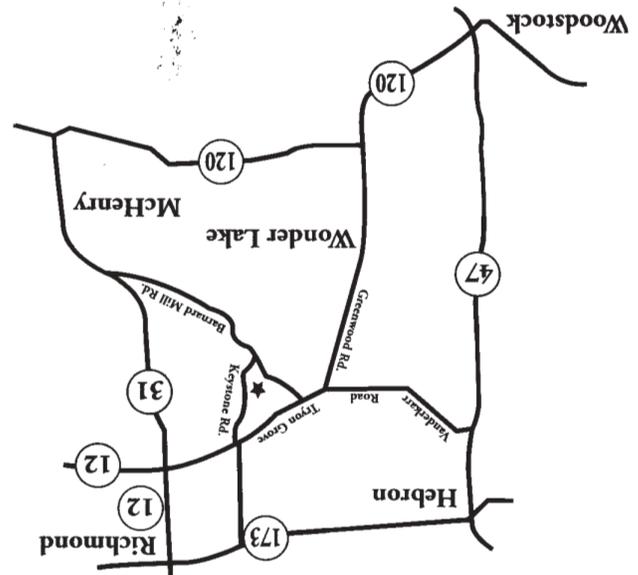
The real talent of the day does not belong to the bowlers, but to those people who raise the most money. Last year the single adult winner raised over \$1,200! All you need to do is ask friends, family and co-workers to pledge you and you can make dreams come true for Main Stay and our students.

Remember, if you can't join us, you can still be part of our success by sending a pledge or donation to the farm and we will put it toward the Main Stay student team(s).



Janet and Erik Hoary encourage you to come out and "strike it" rich for Main Stay!

Thanks in advance for joining us on the winning team!



6919 Keystone Road • Richmond, IL 60071

Main Stay Therapeutic Riding Program, Inc.



First Class Mail

1st Class
 AUTO CR
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Crystal Lake, IL
 Permit No. 64