Special Olympics 2014

Main Stay’s second year attending the Illinois State Equestrian Special Olympics games included more riders and more wonderful experiences for riders, families, volunteers and staff. Jen K., Anna J., and Flynn M. made us proud during the games held October 25-26 in Poplar Grove. Jen, the experienced veteran, was a great role model and mentor to the newer competitors and encouraged her teammates throughout the weekend. Anna and Flynn rose to the challenge and along with Jen rode like true champions.

Flynn’s mom, Beth, shared that Special Olympics gives Flynn an opportunity to show off what he’s capable of achieving and his sense of accomplishment was evident as he entered the ring. Flynn loves competition and it showed as he rode Pistol in the Stock Seat Equitation and Working Trail classes. He was confident, in charge and proud of himself as was his family and Main Stay crew. Beth especially enjoyed seeing Flynn as part of something bigger than himself, a teammate, and a member of the entire Special Olympics community, a place where he can be with peers, be himself and be successful. Main Stay plans to compete again in the Fall Equestrian Games in October bringing even more riders than last year and maybe Flynn will be the experienced veteran, who will help his new teammates feel that same sense of achievement!
“New Year = New Challenges = New Opportunities”

New opportunities abound for the upcoming year as we welcome new team members who bring valuable experience to Main Stay. They will help clients achieve their individual goals, help us grow our funding so that we can continue to serve our clients better and well into the future, and act as caregivers for our special furry four-legged team along with new additions to the very same.

We’re pleased to announce a **new location** for this year’s Black Tie & Blue Jeans Gala which will be the first Friday in May and also happens to be May Day. In keeping, this year’s event will celebrate new beginnings at the **historic Starline Factory in Harvard**. We’re very excited about this new venue and hope you will join us for this very special evening. And, if you’d like to help, we’re always looking for event sponsors and auction items.

We hope you enjoy the new look of our newsletter which carries forward our new name, logo and tagline that we introduced last year—**special thanks to our very own Carla and Krystal for the new design**. We are also very excited to be unveiling a new website and are grateful to Wonderwave Design for their help to design the new site—check it out at [www.mainstayfarm.org](http://www.mainstayfarm.org).

And finally, in this issue you’ll also read about one of the biggest initiatives Main Stay has ever undertaken—**a new facility**, which will allow us to serve our clients better, provide sufficient space for our noble animals, honor our selfless volunteers, and give our staff a productive, efficient place to work.

It is with great excitement and anticipation that we look forward to the upcoming year which once again gives us the opportunity to help individuals with challenges through our therapeutic riding, equine and animal-assisted learning programs. And it is with our unending gratitude to you for making it possible through your gifts of time and financial support.  

- Loriann

**Woody**

Woody’s big personality and wisdom will be missed around the farm. Woody was over 30 years old and for the past several years worked with our senior clients from Family Alliance. He was peacefully laid to rest this year before the winter winds began to blow. Enjoy your greener pastures, sweet boy.

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Dear Friends,

As you’ll see in this issue, 2014 brought endless opportunities for Main Stay. Opportunities for our clients to experience team work and achievement through their participation in Special Olympics, seeing the fruits (or vegetables!) of their labor through our gardening program, and to learn to celebrate their individuality through lessons taught by our little herd. And, of course, all of this was only possible through the generosity of those that gave to our year-end fundraising appeal which was our most successful yet—**thank you**.

And it looks like 2015 promises to hold no less!

Loriann

**WOODY’S BIG PERSONALITY AND WISDOM WILL BE MISSED**

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**INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY**
Imagine: Build a Barn—Build a Life

People from every facet of the program came together at the Stakeholders Meeting on January 24th to understand where the program is now and discuss the program’s exciting future plans.

Anyone who has visited Main Stay in the past 5 years can confirm that while the 40-acre property is spacious, the physical facility has become woefully inadequate for current programs. On any given day we may have therapeutic riding, animal assisted and equine assisted programs operating at the same time. In addition—clients may be job training and others may be working in the garden areas. *We pray it never rains on these days!*

In response to the wonderful growth of our programs, building a new facility was incorporated into a strategic plan over 10 years ago. In 2013, Main Stay hired Gillespie Design Group, to help pull all our ideas together and begin to bring an environmentally friendly facility to life. Together we've designed a temperature controlled building which includes a heated arena, additional stalls with specialized grooming space, offices, clubroom space, non-mounted teaching spaces, and a dedicated space for our incredible volunteers. Equally important, the existing barn will be repurposed to accommodate the ever-growing animal-assisted programs.

As with any successful capital campaign, we’ve been working behind the scenes over the past two years to raise the bulk of the funding needed for this exciting project. The total amount of the campaign is $6.5 million dollars. The building alone is $5M and we’ve included $250K for updates and reconfiguration to the existing barn, plus $1.25M to help absorb the increased costs over the next 5 years.

*We’re thrilled to be able to announce that we’ve raised over 80% of the funds for the complete campaign!* We will be forever grateful for those individuals and foundations who have stepped up early and provided tremendous financial support to bring this project to reality!

The *Build a Barn—Build a Life* project will allow us to serve our clients year round. What a productive and joyful idea that is to our team! We can see the barn full of clients, hear the laughter and feel the energy of something so powerful and life changing—can you? With your help, we will be able to take the final fundraising step to make this dream come true for all of us. Give us a call if you’d like to get involved!

Drum Roll Please...www.mainstayfarm.org

To go with our new name and logo, we are excited to unveil our new website! In addition to a fresh new look, you can be inspired by videos highlighting clients stories of strength and determination. A current calendar marked with upcoming events, program information, downloadable forms, and volunteer training dates are all now easily accessible.

*Can’t wait for you to take a look!*
Year-End Awards Party

Riders, volunteers, families and staff gathered at Woodstock North High School to celebrate another successful riding season and enjoy one another’s company. The year-end awards banquet recognizes the hard work of our riders and volunteers and provides a time for everyone to be together and celebrate.

Congratulations to Diane Massier, the 2014 recipient of the Founders Giving Award. Diane was speechless when her name was announced and we shared with the larger Main Stay community the many gifts she brings to the program. Diane is a leader and side walker in the arena in addition to grooming and exercising the horses, and assisting in fundraisers!

Upcoming Volunteer Training & Continuing Education

New Volunteer Training
April 11th, 12pm
May 16th, 12pm
June 20th, 12pm
July 11th, 12pm
August 15th, 12pm
September 12th, 12pm

Volunteer Continuing Education
May 27th, 11am and 6pm

Please call the farm to confirm your attendance! (815) 653-9374

Summer At The Farm— Animal Assisted Programs

Our non-riding programs welcomed a diverse bunch of youth clients to the farm, including some who are turning their lives around through a court diversionary program. The programs help meet social and emotional needs of these often underserved youth by providing opportunities for personal growth. Main Stay was delighted to receive a grant from the Subaru of America Foundation which contributed to the success of the Summer At The Farm programs.

This program is really relaxing and helpful for people that struggle in difficult situations.*

Some of the youth clients work with skilled mentors to help promote positive day to day choices. One mentor said it was the “best program we’ve ever attended! My client was enthusiastic and looked forward to coming each week. She has been more self-confident and is able to try new things, and is applying better social skills at home with siblings and learning skills for the school year.”

One of the highlights for this client was to get to work with the herd of small rescued livestock. She was particularly drawn to Kali, our miniature horse with dwarfism, who has adapted to her disability to become a healthy, loving and sassy member of the herd. The client said she liked “Kali because she puts on a great role as a different horse, size does not matter, different is good. I understand because I’m really tall for my age.” It is often difficult to express our own vulnerability, but this client freely expressed her thoughts when she was able to relate her own experience with an animal.
New Faces Around The Farm

Krystal Garmon joined the Main Stay team in August as our new Development & Events Assistant. Krystal recently graduated from Aurora University with an emphasis in non-profit management. At age 14 she started her own journey as a volunteer with Big Brothers/Big Sisters and has volunteered with other local non-profits in the past.

Stefanie Lenz joined the instructor team last season. Stef has a BS in Kinesiology, is a certified PATH Instructor & Equine Specialist in Mental Health, and a certified instructor through the Certified Horsemanship Association. Stef lives in Wisconsin with her husband, dogs, cats, horses, chickens, ducks and geese. In addition to showing, Stef enjoys camping and trail riding with her horses, too.

Chica is a 17 year old large pony mare who joined the herd during the 2014 riding season. Her narrow body type works well for many riders. She is well trained and a willing worker, which made her transition into our therapeutic riding program unusually easy.

Ana Poznanski fills in for Art, caring for the animals on the weekends. Ana is a high school student who enjoys spending time with her own horse, too.

Ellie Hardnack joined our instructor team after moving to Chicago in August. Ellie has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology, is a certified PATH Instructor and Mental Health and Equine Specialist. She has spent time at three other therapeutic programs on the East Coast. Ellie is a Navy wife and Mom of twin girls. Her family loves to spend time outdoors having fun!

Margaret Wert works along with Art to keep all of the animals happy and healthy. She has been learning about horses for the last seven years, including spending time driving her miniature horse, Rowdy. Margaret has four wonderful children (adults) and three amazing grandchildren.

Tiny is a rare breed of bunny, a Dwarf Hotot, known for their soft white fur and distinctive black eyeliner. He has short “uppity-ears” and a sprightly personality. He was adopted from AEAR.

Lois is a 10 year old chestnut draft-cross gelding with a curious and willing attitude. He is well trained and uncomplicated to ride with a sweet puppy dog personality. At first glance Louie’s size might seem intimidating but he is a very gentle giant.

Luigi is a Holland Lop bunny adopted from Animal Education and Rescue (AEAR). Luigi is a playful, social guy and a wonderful addition to the farm. We are his fourth but forever home in his young life.

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Veggies and Herbs and Pumpkins, Oh My!

Individual clients and groups spent time in the organic gardens. It was an unusually wet and cool summer which made all of the plants thrive. Clients marveled at the amount of work required to keep weeds at bay while encouraging desirable plants to be healthy and strong. Produce was harvested and served as treats for the animals in the program as well as for clients, including a newfound love of tender radishes by many skeptical teens. Produce was also available to be taken home by the Main Stay community, creating an opportunity for clients to teach their families about unique plant adaptations, like the hearty purple bush bean’s chameleon-like nature, turning into a standard looking green bean when cooked. The pumpkin crop was particularly hearty thanks to the ample rains of summer. Clients were able to decorate and take home a wide variety of pumpkins and gourds. We look forward to working with skilled Master Gardener volunteers again this year.

The Master Gardener program is an all-volunteer organization sanctioned by the land grant institution in Illinois, and sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension. These skilled volunteers hope that a newspaper “lasagna” garden system in the garden will help to keep the weeds under control with less pruning and plucking this year.

Santa Run

Team Main Stay joined several hundred other runners during the Crystal Lake Kiwanis Club Santa Run for kids in December. Funds raised benefited Main Stay and other McHenry County agencies. Thank you Crystal Lake Kiwanis Club for organizing another successful and fun event!

Continuing Education

A two day workshop in Equine Assisted Learning was held at Main Stay in March of this year. Skills learned during this introduction to non-riding equine assisted learning can be applied to the growing numbers of clients and groups who spend time at Main Stay working on social, emotional and behavioral goals. According to Strides to Success, “This ground based approach taps into the natural and playful attributes of horses to help clients learn essential life skills, problem solving techniques, heightened awareness of their actions and the actions of others.” It also offers an opportunity to refresh our hard working therapy horses enthusiasm by partnering with humans in a new way.
Closing Thoughts

As you come to the close of this newsletter, we hope you are able to feel our gratitude and appreciation for everything you do to make all this exciting news possible! It truly is your involvement and dedication that keeps us moving our work forward in such positive directions.

As I reflect over the additions to programming we’ve made over the years (decades actually) I’m struck by the thought that although we’ve added exciting new programs, we have never stopped serving those who came through our doors in the beginning, our therapeutic riding clients. And…now we serve new clients with diverse needs; mental health issues, at risk youth, adults with both physical and emotional needs. These folks may benefit most from our equine and animal assisted programs, or from working in the garden after spending time with the animals. Your gifts of time and money allow everyone who comes to Main Stay to find their “soft, safe place to land”.

Your support has also allowed us to enhance our mission – and the new logo, name and tagline define that mission in beautiful simplicity. Together we’ve created a place that provides a setting that is soothing and challenging, as well as, calming and rejuvenating to the body, mind and soul. The promise of a new building will beautifully enhance the work we already do – it is as full as promise as any new client that comes through our doors!

As we look to the future and see the dream of a new facility becoming more and more real each and every day – we’re honored that you continue to trust, invest and partner with Main Stay. Each day that we work together, we make this program stronger – which in turn makes our clients and our community stronger.

You do this – we do this – together!

We ask that you pause for a moment to reflect on how deeply you’ve impacted everyone Main Stay touches. The ripple effect is bigger than you may realize...so please, let the celebration belong to YOU TOO!

Here’s to the warmth and promise of spring and a renewed commitment to possibility, each other and saying Yes!

Much Love & Gratitude –
Sara

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☐ YES! I want to help support Main Stay Therapeutic Farm.

Name______________________________
Address__________________________________________________________
City________________State______ Zip ______
Phone________________Email__________________

Gift Amount □ $25 □ $50 □ $75 □ $100 □ Other $ __________

☐ Please designate my gift to the areas of greatest need.
☐ I’d like to support a horse through a monthly gift of $50
☐ I’d like to support a rider through a monthly gift of $50
☐ I would like to have information on providing a Bequest to Main Stay.
☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER

Acct #________________Exp. Date ___________ CVC __________

Signature____________________________

*Thank You* for your support. Your gift is tax-deductible as provided by law.
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www.pinterest.com/mainstayfarm1

~ INSPIRING UNTOLD JOY ~

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*Registered PATH, Intl. Instructor

6919 Keystone Road
Richmond, IL 60071
(815) 653-9374
www.mainstayfarm.org

Mission
Main Stay’s mission is to encourage, enrich and empower individuals through the therapeutic benefits of horses, animals and nature in a nurturing and uplifting setting.

Black Tie & Blue Jeans – A May Day Celebration!
Starline Factory, 5:30 pm

New Location!
Starline Factory, Harvard, IL
May Day Celebration!

Save the date!