Collaboration—Better Together!

Through the generosity of the McHenry County Community Foundation, a grant opened the door to welcoming Harvard School District to Main Stay in the spring of 2015.

The enthusiasm and positive attitude of the Harvard students helped to make each weekly trip to the farm a great success.

“I LOVE IT HERE! This place is the greatest place!” says student, Tony

Students poured out of the school van with broad grins on their faces each week, echoing Tony’s sentiment that the farm really is a great place. The students worked on goals of communication, teamwork, creativity and kindness; all areas that they picked. Session curriculum was designed to provide plenty of fun ways to work on the goals.

One week students worked together to navigate safely across an imaginary hot lava flow, keeping their animal teammates safe with each careful step.

Another week students partnered up with sheep, goats, mini horses and donkey to play barnyard baseball. Laughter filled the air as students encouraged their animal partner to push, kick or head butt a large yoga ball from base to base. The game even had some outfield entertainment, compliments of Ricki and Lupe making numerous barnyard animal sounds.

Being able to work on life long goals, and having such fun doing it, really does express Main Stay’s mission driven hope of INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY in our clients.

We are grateful to donors like MCCF who make these sessions possible.
Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love. —Lao Tzu

Dear Friends,

These are such simple, yet powerful words. While I was considering the meaning of this quote, it occurred to me, I am blessed to see it in living, breathing action at Main Stay every day.

Kindness in words—on any given day you can walk into the Main Stay barn and hear a volunteer offering encouragement and praise to one of our riders. You can see the power in these words through a rider’s smile, or sitting a little taller, or trying just one more time even though they are exhausted—all because someone believes in them which makes them believe in themselves.

Kindness in thinking—thoughtfulness is something that prevails at Main Stay. Our staff is always seeking better ways to serve our clients and help them meet their goals, whether it’s coming up with a better way to communicate with them or ways to help them become stronger. The same goes with our volunteers—they are inquisitive and ask questions so that they can be of even greater assistance and support to our clients. We are mindful in our interactions with our clients, animals and each other and are aware that each brings something special to the program.

Kindness in giving—Main Stay, and in turn our clients, benefit from the generosity of so many individuals. Our donors make it possible for us to serve the community through their incredible generosity as evidenced by this year’s annual fund drive which raised over $90,000 and was our most successful yet. And this support couldn’t have come at a better time This year we have a record number of clients in need of full financial assistance who, without help, would not be able to participate in our programs. Your financial support also allows us to provide services to a number of other agencies who would not be able to come to Main Stay if they had to pay for our services. Not to be outdone, our volunteers, 150 strong, donated close to 11,000 hours to the program this past year. If these gifts don’t represent love, I don’t know what does.

Confidence, profoundness, love….all priceless gifts that your kindness bestows on Main Stay.

We are forever grateful to you and welcome you to stop by the farm to see the incredible impact your gifts have on the many people we serve.

-Loriann

Riders & Volunteers Rise to the Riders Challenge

Thank you riders and volunteers for your outstanding effort raising much needed program funds during the 2015 Riders Challenge. Your combined efforts brought in a record $12,000! The 2015 theme, Galloping into the Future, seemed appropriate as our new facility construction is well underway. Your contributions will help ensure a successful future at the farm and will be applied towards purchasing new therapy horses and caring for our current animals. Running a therapeutic riding and animal-assisted learning program would be difficult without our wonderful 4-legged team members!

Special thanks to our top money earners:

RIDERS—Sara B., Jenny B. & Gloria K.

VOLUNTEERS—Gabi S., Sue C., Belinda B., Lori H. & Judy F.

~INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY~
Main Stay Veterinarian WINS National Award!

Congratulations to Andrea McGowan, DVM, on winning the Path Intl. Veterinarian of the Year Award at the 2015 Annual Conference. Dr. McGowan was on hand to receive the award and spoke eloquently about the special place in her heart for the hardworking therapy horses who give so much to their riders. Dr. McGowan shares her expertise and compassion each time she’s at the farm caring for our horses. She has helped the program through some difficult medical issues and has generously donated a portion of her services so that the best care could be offered to our animals. We are grateful to have Andrea as the program’s vet and can’t think of anyone more deserving of this award!

PATH, Intl. Conference Highlights

Four Main Stay instructors piled into a van and hit the road to attend the annual PATH, Intl. Conference, held in Cleveland, OH this year. Industry professionals are able to meet and mingle over the multi-day event.

In addition to staying on top of latest news and expectations from PATH, our instructors were able to attend a broad range of workshops. Topics included how to best meet the needs of students, program animals, volunteers and the organization as a whole.

To be completed by summer 2016!

Build a Barn—Build a Life

Collin’s Courage

Collin is a young boy with autism and is non-verbal. As a result, he has a difficult time communicating his needs. However, each week his dedicated team of volunteers and instructor search for different ways to interact and connect with him. His volunteers play an important role and are an integral part of the session. Collin’s mother says she would need to take him to four different therapists to get the benefits that he receives in a single session at Main Stay. The movement of the horse gives him the sensory input he needs and helps him to focus. And with each ride he is learning more and for this his mother says, “I can never pull this away…it means so much to him” and to his family.

Gold, Silver and Bronze, a few of our favorite things!

25-26th. Troy’s mom, Linda, summed up the experience for their family: “It was a phenomenal experience for him and the whole family really enjoyed it. It was a unique opportunity for him to show off his skills. It really boosted his self-confidence! He loved the response from the audience and being in front of a crowd.” Pretty impressive for a young man who according to his mom is normally very shy. Jen, Flynn, Sierra, Grace and Anna seemed to feel the same way. First-time competitors as well as our veteran riders demonstrated their “can-do” spirit during the competition and made us all proud. Team Main Stay - riders, family members, horses, volunteers and staff--had a great time being together and celebrating the riders’ accomplishments. We’re already looking forward to the 2016 Games!

“I can never pull this away...it means so much to him.”

Do you get butterflies when you have to perform in front of a crowd? If so, you need to meet Team Main Stay for some tips on how to “rock the house” and stay calm and collected in front of an audience. Our talented Special Olympic competitors rode like champions during the Fall Equestrian Games held October
Kudos to our Amazing Volunteers—you are our “Main Stay!”

Fun was had by all at the Year-End Recognition Party. The party is a time to be together and celebrate a successful year at the farm for our clients and volunteers. Clients’ accomplishments were shared as well as giving thanks to our dedicated volunteers.

It’s such a joy to honor those who benefit from and give to the program.

The annual Founders Giving Award recognizes a special volunteer for going above and beyond as well as upholding the Main Stay values including Respect, Caring, Acceptance & Integrity. Congratulations to Jean O’Brien, the recipient of the 2015 Founders Giving Award!

Master Gardeners!

We were delighted to collaborate with the Illinois Agriculture Extension Office for a second year in 2015, resulting in over a dozen Master Gardener volunteers spending time helping and educating in our small but bountiful garden. Alongside Main Stay staff, the volunteers worked with clients, helping to grow and harvest colorful produce that was enjoyed throughout the summer.

We look forward to the 2016 garden!

A “little” Help from our Friends (well, more than a little!)

Our fantastic volunteers donate their valuable time both inside the arena and outside of it allowing the program to run seamlessly. Meet two special individuals who donate many hours to help keep the farm looking beautiful throughout the year – Ron and Mark. These two humble men aren’t in the arena, but their service is a tremendous benefit to the farm. Both men aren’t looking for fame or glamour, helping to keep Main Stay in tip-top shape is something they enjoy doing. It’s easy to see the trust and comradery they have with each other and Main Stay’s farm manager, Art.

They are here every week, sometimes up to 20 hours per week, mowing, trimming trees, weed whacking, tending fence lines, power washing the barn or fixing something! Both men like to work with their hands and once they retired from their full-time jobs they wanted to give back. Art knows Ron and Mark are safe, trustworthy and well-skilled and says,

“I couldn’t do this job without them. They see a need and take care of it.”

Ron said he’s looking forward to seeing the program grow and knows there will be plenty of jobs to keep him and Mark busy for years to come. Thank you Ron and Mark for sharing your many talents with us!

~WWW.MAINSTAYFARM.ORG~
IN LOVING MEMORY

It is with tremendous sadness that we share the news of long time rider Colleen Mahoney’s unexpected passing on January 27th while at a community event with her family.

Her passions included horseback riding, bowling, cooking, movies and music. As a cheerleader for her family and friends, Colleen allowed everyone around her to feel unique and special while enjoying every moment of every day.

Colleen’s positive attitude and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. Main Stay holds the Mahoney family in our hearts during this difficult time.

New Faces Around The Farm

Natasha Fetzer joined Main Stay as a volunteer during the 2015 riding season. She has since joined the team as a barn assistant, providing kind care to all of the animals who are so important to Main Stay.

Tina Kranz was a volunteer at Main Stay for four years before becoming a certified instructor. “The people, the animals... everything about Main Stay is so special.” At home, Tina spends time with her family and many four legged friends.

Ben & Jerry are twin Katahdin lambs born in February 2015 at the Hooved Animal Humane Society. They are sweet, short and stout. No shearing needed, this breed sheds their wooly coats naturally each year.

Nicole Nystrom has ridden since she was young and joined Main Stay as a barn assistant this year. She has a degree in equine management and science. In her spare time she plays guitar.

Pepsi headed off to join his new family in Wisconsin just in time for Christmas. He will enjoy a well deserved retirement with plenty of love and pampering. We are very grateful that Pepsi found such a wonderful home after contributing so much to the program.

Rose Smith officially joined the board of directors at the November meeting. Rose is VP of Retail Banking at McHenry Bank & Trust. She brings significant board experience and is looking forward to sharing her expertise with the farm.

~INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY~
Every New Year holds the promise of hope and this New Year holds an abundance of anticipation and promise! 2015 found us preparing for the shift that is about to become reality. Several internal workshops helped us gain focus, direction and a deeper understanding of how to better serve the community.

Our team continues to push boundaries, for themselves, and those we serve. I am in awe!

On a daily basis the new facility comes closer to being open—and talk about awe...it is such special space. There is not only much needed room for every aspect of our work; there are also plenty of special spaces that will call people to sit, be still and be at peace. This is what we worked to create—a space that is holistic, welcoming, active and peaceful—all under one roof!

We can’t wait to fling open the doors and welcome all of you in! It’s going to be here sooner than we can blink, summer is our targeted timeframe. Every time I walk through it my imagination can see and feel it full of people! I “hear” laughter spilling from the arena, the chatter of people grooming and the clip, clop of the horses moving from their own private stall, through spacious, wide aisles. I “see” people busy working, while others are deep in concentration, learning something new or pushing past a boundary they never imagined. Soon, cars, school buses, vans and PACE buses will be parked out front—all bringing people out to Main Stay for their favorite time of the week!

The area between the new and existing barn will transform into flower and vegetable gardens where happy clients get to reconnect with nature as they “play in the dirt”. The “little” animals will have permanent housing in the existing barn with ample indoor space dedicated to Animal Assisted Learning. This dynamic and powerful programming will finally have dedicated space. Looking forward to watching it grow!

I envision all of it busy, loud and very happy! I hope that you can see, hear and feel it, too, because, you made it happen!!

Together, we are changing lives—please honor yourself for being part of the magic of Main Stay!

With the expanded facility will we be the same? In my heart I know that is a resounding yes! It is everyone’s commitment to continue to honor the values and vision that have always defined Main Stay.

Even more than that—it is most certainly you, our community, that make us who and what we are! The excitement shared between everyone who’s seen and been through the new facility is so high, we can almost walk on air. That’s what we will continue to build on and what we will nourish in the future. We will each do our part—with our joint dedication, all of us can trust that Main Stay will remain the very special place that we know it to BE. With your help and commitment it will only get better. Imagine that!

With Great Love and Respect – Sara

Main Stay’s dedicated board of directors staying on top of the latest construction progress!
Main Stay’s mission is to encourage, enrich and empower individuals through the therapeutic benefits of horses, animals and nature in an uplifting and nurturing setting. Main Stay is a place where bodies are challenged, minds embrace possibilities, and spirits are renewed.

**Board Of Directors**
Sara Foszcz, President/Instructor*
Richmond, IL
Michelle Runnion, Vice President
Fox Lake, IL
Michelle Toll, Treasurer
Burlington, WI
Joan Castell, Secretary
Woodstock, IL
Joan Rowe, Member
Woodstock, IL
Gloria Kraft, Member
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Tim O’Connor CFP
Crystal Lake, IL
Margaret Schulte DBA, FACHE
Grand Rapids, MI
Ron Niemaszyk CPA
Barrington, IL

**Staff**

**Full-Time**
Loriann Dowell, Executive Director
Art Anderson, Barn Manager
Roxie Elliott-Crandall, Head Instructor*/Equine Mgr.
Carla Kaizen, AAA Manager/Instructor*
Jean Maraist OTR/L, Program Director/Instructor*

**Part-Time**
Leah Bohl, Barn Relief
Natasha Fetzer, Barn Relief
Ellie Hardnack, Volunteer Coord/Instructor*
Ann Henslee, Community Outreach
Tina Kranz, Instructor*
Danielle McKenna, Senior Volunteer Coord/Instructor*
Nicole Nystrom, Barn Relief
Kim Werner, Office Administrator

*Registered PATH, Intl. Instructor

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**Black Tie & Blue Jeans Gala!**

Break out your best Derby Hat and join us on May 6th at Starline Factory in Harvard

Doors open at 5:30 pm
The evening includes Bluegrass music by the Georgia Rae Band, a Southern Fare Buffet, Silent and Live Auctions, & Derby Hat Contest.

Tickets can be purchased on Main Stay’s website or please call the office for assistance.

If you are interested in becoming an event sponsor or donating auction items, please call 815-653-9374.

Thank you!

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Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/MainStayTFarm

~INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY~