Making Connections

Therapeutic riding, equine and animal assisted learning and the adaptive garden programs share a common goal—helping our clients make meaningful connections.

One boy reflected on his time at Main Stay, he had, “made awesome friends, learned patience and made a connection with Louie. Main Stay makes me happy, I talk more now.”

“Main Stay means a lot, especially the volunteers and Chip. They taught me how to care for a horse and how to care for myself. They REALLY helped me!”

“Clients spend time at the farm to help with social and emotional needs. Connecting with the animals often helps clients to more successfully connect with their own peers and family.

Being at the farm, “helps me through my bad days when I am there. Interacting with the animals made all of my worries disappear.”

“The animals are a calm to my storm. If animals can be calm and collected during many situations and surrounded by many people, so can I.”

“Thank you for the love you bring to the planet.”
The magic of new beginnings—I love the sound of that—new opportunities to do great things. As you’ll see throughout this newsletter, great things are happening all around Main Stay. You’ll read about groups from One Hope United, McHenry High School and Allendale who all had the opportunity, with the help of our horses and animals, to learn about themselves.

Our wonderful animals and volunteers were instrumental in helping clients gain patience, to ease anxiety, make new friends, and learn new skills—to name just a few benefits of our programs. You’ll also hear about how rider Morgan’s abilities have grown during her time at Main Stay.

New beginnings also include new additions to our team—these new team members will make us stronger and better able to serve the community. We also introduced a new program “Harness the Power of Your Team” which provides participants with team building and leadership skills development.

And of course, the big news—we moved into our beautiful new facility in September of last year. In celebration of the new building we asked clients and volunteers to share their feelings about Main Stay and what it means to them. You’ll see their thoughts on colorful post-it notes throughout this newsletter.

We hope you enjoy and take pride in reading these since it’s YOU, our supporters, that make Main Stay a place where they can trust in the magic of new beginnings.

We are deeply grateful for each and every one of you,

-Loriann
Meet Morgan

Morgan loves to laugh, especially when she’s at the farm and riding, one of her favorite activities. She started out with a leader and two sidewalkers almost 6 years ago and now spends part of her lesson completely in charge of her horse.

Riding is a fun, family outing that includes both her mom and dad coming to watch and celebrating her accomplishments.

Morgan’s mom, Terri, loves that Main Stay is a place where Morgan is challenged to reach goals and when she does they are celebrated.

Finding a place to fit in has been difficult for Morgan, but at Main Stay she belongs and her spirit shines. Besides riding, Morgan comes weekly through school to volunteer her time learning job skills. She’s a hard worker and her time at the farm helps keep our facility clean for all to enjoy. To top it all off, Terri volunteers her time at the farm as well helping make our volunteers feel special. We like to say that Main Stay is a “family affair” and for Morgan and her family, it really is! We are thankful the entire family shares their time and talents with us.

Allendale LINC School

Main Stay welcomed students from Allendale LINC (Learning Increases through Networking in the Community), a day treatment program, to the farm in 2016. Although he rarely, if ever, spoke at school, one student opted to express himself as soon as he arrived at the farm for the first day of sessions.

The student thrived at the farm, choosing to participate in activities and freely speaking with staff and volunteers each week. As sessions drew to a close, he expressed his appreciation for some of the non-verbal activities that his group participated in. The hope is that the teen will transfer his willingness to verbalize his thoughts and feelings to other settings in the future.

The same group worked with our amazing Master Gardener volunteers. They learned about many aspects of gardening, sampled a variety of vegetables and even built a giant scarecrow to help keep unwanted critters out of the garden.

Connecting with peers, animals and the natural world positively changes lives.

~WWW.MAINSTAYFARM.ORG~
Ode to Lava Pit—a client’s poem

The strong, calming scent of the farmland filled the air, tickling my nose as I breathe in.

Wild turkeys quietly roaming the distant, leaf-covered hillside.

Thomas the sheep, with his raw cotton-like coat, standing tall at our group’s side.

The sun beating down on us like a hot lamp, as we built a path across the imaginary lava.

Our goal was to reach the other side of the pen without stepping off the path made of plastic rings and PVC tubes, otherwise stepping into the lava.

We had limited resources; eight pipes and 2 rings.

As a leader, my goal was to keep everyone, including Thomas, on the path to avoid our certain demise at the hands of hot lava.

Although keeping Thomas in line was challenging at times, we eventually made our way across the pen.

All of us feeling triumphant; we rewarded Thomas with a bunch of attention, getting the same in return.
Congratulations to Belinda Bockman, the recipient of the 2016 Founders Award at the Year-end Rider and Volunteer Recognition Party. Belinda’s contributions to the program are many and varied; volunteering in the ring with clients and assisting at Special Olympics to name just a few. An artist, professional landscape designer and long-time horse woman, Belinda shares her many talents with the program and for that we are so grateful.

In addition to these contributions, this past year she was instrumental in designing and planting the beautiful foundation planting and landscaping around the new facility. Not only did she design the new landscaping, she was able to secure donations for 90% of the landscape materials, and rounded up a group of people to help install all the plants. This saved Main Stay an estimated $20,000 or more!

Volunteers are needed in many different capacities at the farm. Visit our website to learn more about upcoming new volunteer trainings and different ways to get involved. We can’t operate without you!

Thank you to Nancy Steinmeyer for the large format art pieces that add color and inspiration to the new indoor arena. Nancy used Main Stay images and transformed them into grand artwork.

Nancy Ochi, a longtime supporter and friend of Main Stay, was recently interviewed regarding her involvement with Main Stay.

Here are a few highlights from her story. Enjoy!

This is an honor, and one I question if I deserve. Main Stay has a warm place in my heart, and I read all newsletters from front to back.

Tell me how you first got involved with Main Stay?
I happened to meet another friend at a local horse show I was observing. She later told me she was volunteering at Main Stay and asked was I interested. I was! Being a horse owner I understood what it took to become certified, and that made Main Stay the right choice.

Having my own horse also made me quite conscious of the cost, so I had a true appreciation of the cost/benefit of running a program like Main Stay.

What has surprised you most about being involved with Main Stay?
The most amazing thing about Main Stay is the people, for sure. Since day one everyone I encountered - staff, volunteers, families - are all so kind and generous. Why wouldn’t you want to hang around there? And horses too? That’s a win-win-win. When my personal time grew short and I couldn’t volunteer anymore I made a commitment to myself to continue to support in ways I could

What do you wish other people knew about Main Stay?
I wish it were easier to get the word out to the community about Main Stay’s many programs and the many people of all ages that it serves. In my dreams volunteers and donations would overwhelm the staff because everyone would want to be a small part of making a difference in a stranger’s life.

Why are you supporting Main Stay?
There are many charities we support, but Main Stay is special because we know the people we are supporting. I’ve met the staff and the clients and truly feel the donations are well spent. Giving locally is always preferred to global charities, for us.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about donating?
When anyone asks me about Main Stay I assure them it’s a top quality program and charity. Their donations or volunteer efforts would be maximized to the fullest, and they could rest assured they made the right choice. Best of all, the entire purpose of Main Stay’s existence is to make a difference in the lives of those challenged, and they do a phenomenal job of the task.

Donor Spotlight

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Inspiring Unbridled Joy, Everyone Benefits!

Even with the exciting new facility and growing programs, Main Stay continues to operate with a limited core staff. Without our many wonderful volunteers who choose to make a difference, our program would not exist. We are always grateful to welcome new volunteers to Main Stay, come for a VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

You just need the desire to give your time... we can almost guarantee you will receive more than you give!

Are you a certified PATH, Intl. Instructor, or interested in learning more about the requirements to become certified? We would be happy to connect with you about certified instructor needs at Main Stay.

Changing Faces Around The Farm

**Joanne Muivey** has been a long time volunteer and successfully completed her PATH instructor certification in 2016. She is also an active Pony Club parent and has 2 horses of her own at home.

**Mark Bianchini** was a volunteer at Main Stay and was instrumental in building the stalls in the new barn. He had so much fun he now works around the farm helping to keep the grounds and facility so beautiful throughout the year.

**Willard** is a 4 year old mini gelding who joined “The Littles” herd when his owner headed off for military training and deployment. Willard loves attention!

**Jillian Giese** has over 11 years of donor relations and fundraising experience she is sharing with Main Stay. She has many interests outside of work and is always on the go!

**Sunshine** is a sweet little mare with polka dot spots in keeping with her breed, a Pony of the Americas, which is native to the USA.

**Johnny & June** are a brother and sister team who specialize in mouse control in the new building.

**Jessica Boyd** joined the barn crew and helps to keep the animals happy and healthy. She is a true animal lover and volunteers at a local wildlife sanctuary in her spare time!

**Peggy Sorokowski** has been a volunteer on Thursday evenings for over 15 years! We are delighted to welcome her in a new role, as our new Volunteer Coordinator.

**Autumn** is an 8 year old Quarter Horse mare. As a former ranch horse, she is comfortable in a variety of settings and has a lot of wisdom to offer riders.

~INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY~
Dear Friends – What a year we have just closed out…

Have you heard me say THANK YOU?! When I think of the huge accomplishment of last year and combine it with the celebration of 30 years of formally being “Main Stay” — I don’t know what I feel more—is it

Gratitude,
Joy,
A sense of family,
Compassion,
Pride of our Team,
A sense of accomplishment,
A sense of wonder?

It is certainly all of this (and much more) and above it all—it is a feeling of Love.

Love and Deep Gratitude – they win hands down!

So many people have been part of bringing us to this point…3 decades of people that stand behind and beside Main Stay. People like YOU! You have brought us to this point. You have played a role by saying yes and we are forever grateful!

It is your yes, which helps us change lives. It is your yes, that helps us not only keep the doors open — but allows us to thrive!

Because of your yes — we have touched lives deeply. We have watched children and adults take their first step, heard them speak their first words, watched them form friendships or work through fear and learn to trust…pretty amazing work You Do when you say YES!

From the bottom of my heart – to all of YOU – great big love and deep, deep gratitude!

Sara

Mark Your Calendar!

* April 23, 2017 – Human Race 5k Run/Walk – 8:00am, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake
* May 5, 2017 – Black Tie & Blue Jeans Gala – 5:30pm, Starline Factory, Harvard
* May 21, 2017 – Fair Diddley – 10:00am, Woodstock Historic Square
* July 2017 – Riders Challenge – Main Stay Therapeutic Farm
* October 14 & 15, 2017 – Fall Diddley – 9:00am, Boone County Fairgrounds, Belvidere
* December 2, 2017 – Christmas on the Farm — 1:00-7:00pm, Main Stay Therapeutic Farm
* December 3, 2017 – Kiwanis’ Santa Run for Kids — Crystal Lake

Participating in, and supporting these events helps to lighten the financial load for all of our amazing clients

~WWW.MAINSTAYFARM.ORG~
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.

~INSPIRING UNBRIDLED JOY~

Please help us be kind to the environment, send your email address to info@mainstayfarm.org

Like us on Facebook

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