



1982

Celebrating 35 Years!

2017

Fall 2017

# PONY EXPRESS

Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre

## Celebrating 35 Years of Service!

**As we celebrate our 35th Anniversary**, we look back upon how we have grown, and look forward to many new adventures as we explore innovative ways to fulfill our mission of empowering those with special needs to reach their full potential.

Sunrise was founded in 1982, and grew out of a deep understanding of the power of the human-animal bond. **The therapeutic riding program began with 5 riders and 3 horses, operating part-time out of a rented barn.** Continual growth necessitated several moves, but each location was both rented (making it hard to make improvements) and lacked an indoor arena. In 1996, after a successful capital campaign, the organization purchased its present home and a full-time, year-round program was launched!



**Camp Sunrise, started in 1990, was the first inclusive recreation program.** It was designed to enable children with special needs and their siblings to attend camp together, but it quickly became apparent that this model was highly successful at fostering a community of respect, understanding and teamwork that benefitted children of ALL abilities. (Find out more on page 2!). A second camp and Saturday "Little Breeches" Club were added in later years.

As Sunrise grew, we never lost sight of our roots and, **in 2001, a residential Instructor Training Course was launched** (accredited by CanTRA), designed to help potential instructors

from other fledgling centres gain the experience necessary to start or grow centres in their home communities. Many student instructors from across Canada and around the world have participated in this program—the only one of its kind in Canada!

**In 2016, Sunrise therapy programs expanded to include a CanTRA accredited Equine-Facilitated Wellness (EFW) program.** In EFW sessions, a professional counsellor, assisted by a Equine Professional, incorporates groundwork activities with the horse into mental health counselling services. We are excited about the past and future outcomes of this unique therapy program!

Over the years, parents often voiced concern about finding meaningful daytime activities for their adult children with special needs. In response to this, the Scotiabank Life Skills Development Program, **a day program for adults with special needs was launched in 2015.**

**We could not have reached our 35th anniversary without the resounding support of our community.** We thank our many supporters—individuals, corporations and service clubs—for all they have helped us achieve.

Where do we go from here? We encourage you to stay tuned in the coming months as we begin work on an even bigger vision, which we hope will eventually establish a respite and residential community.

We hope that past supporters among our readers may consider renewing their support this year, in celebration of our 35th Anniversary and in anticipation of realizing the broader Sunrise vision. **Thank you, Friends of Sunrise!**



## Camp Sunrise 2017

Learning to ride and care for horses, exploring the ponds and trails, swimming in the pool, testing your skill at archery, teambuilding on the low ropes course, enjoying the playground, solving mysteries, dressing up and playing games...it's all part of every fun-filled day at Camp Sunrise. 336 campers enjoyed fun and fresh air at Camp Sunrise this summer.

But Camp Sunrise is so much more than 'fun in the sun'. For campers of all abilities, it's a place to gain new skills, make friends and learn first-hand to appreciate diversity. For the many children with special needs, it's a safe haven where they can just be themselves and always feel fully accepted and empowered, knowing that they are an invaluable part of their team.

A mother of a camper with special needs shared her 'Camp Sunrise experience'. "My son attended camp last week and, after the first day, the behavioural and anxiety issues that he has had, and that have greatly concerned us and his teachers, decreased dramatically. After the week, the behaviour was completely gone. We had tried many different environ-

*Continued on page 3*



## Camp Sunrise 2017 *(continued from page 2)*

ments and gentle techniques (my husband has been working with children with special needs professionally for years), and I've never seen anything like it. I am so thankful to you, and to Ivy [his camp counsellor] for the changes we saw. This has been simply astonishing."

We are always amazed at the incredible impact of the human-animal bond, and the many positive outcomes that arise from having a "special belonging place" like Sunrise.

At Camp Sunrise, we also strive to ensure that finances are not a barrier to participation. Thank you those donors who helped us to provide scholarships for financially marginalized families: the **Guelph Community Foundation**

([Hugh and Lorna Guthrie Fund](#)) through a Children and Youth Summer Grant, **Roots Corporation**, the **Rotary Club of Guelph South**, and an individual donor.

A special thank you to **Pollock Pools** for helping us to keep our pool in good working order every summer. A Community Grant from the **Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation** ([Barrie Family Fund / Bryan and Gayle Webber Family Fund](#)) enabled us to purchase new PDF's and pool toys for our campers to enjoy this summer. We appreciate their support!

We look forward to seeing everyone at Camp Sunrise next summer!

## Hippotherapy Course at Sunrise

Pippa Hodge BSR, SCSP, MCPA, HPCS, of B.C. was the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) faculty member who instructed a very successful Level 1 Hippotherapy at Sunrise from August 25-28 - the first course presented in Canada led by a Canadian clinician.

The AHA Inc. states, "Hippotherapy literally means treatment with the help of a horse, from the Greek word *hippos* meaning horse. The American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) has defined hippotherapy as 'a term that refers to the use of the movement of the horse as a strategy by Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech-Language Pathologists to address impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities in patients with neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction. This strategy is used as part of an integrated treatment program to achieve functional outcomes.' (AHA, 2000)"

Thus, hippotherapy is a step beyond therapeutic riding as the therapists themselves are actually employing disability or injury-specific exercises, as they would in a clinical setting, in partnership with a certified equine professional. Conversely, in therapeutic riding, the therapists work with instructors and clients in an advisory role, to set physical, cognitive or communication goals for each client. The instructor then incorporates these goals into games and exercises while also considering riding skill development, social development and overall fitness as positive outcomes of each session.

The eleven course participants came from as far away as BC, Alberta and Nova Scotia, with the majority being from Ontario. In her usual engaging manner, Pippa shared her considerable knowledge and expertise through classroom presentations, videos, practical demonstrations and hands on experiences over the four day course. The evaluations were positive with everyone eager to keep in touch with Pippa and one another, to share their ongoing experiences as they begin putting their newly acquired skills into practice.



*Top: AHA students work with rider Layla during a hands-on workshop; Bottom: Course participants with Pippa Hodge (3rd from left) and Ann Caine, Sunrise President (far right).*

# Thank You!

In addition to Camp Sunrise making the farm a beehive of activity this summer, we had several other projects underway! The eaves troughs on the arena were replaced, with great thanks to **Capital Paving Inc.** for making this possible. Our very dated washroom on the main floor of the farmhouse was also renovated, improving its accessibility for the day program participants, visitors and residential student instructors—the farmhouse is a busy place! Thank you to **Scotiabank** for enabling this renovation as part of their three year commitment to supporting the Scotiabank Life Skills Day Program for young adults with special needs.

We appreciate the ongoing support of the **Aberfoyle Farmers' Market**. On August 26 they hosted their "Peaches and Ice Cream" fundraiser for Sunrise.

Of course our horses could not do their jobs without ongoing care and training which is supported by our many horse sponsors. Thank you to those who have sponsored or co-sponsored horses over the past year:

**Costco Wholesale Canada • County of Wellington Friends of Sharon Campbell Harry E. Foster Charitable Foundation Rotary Club of Guelph South • Spearn, Diana Starbucks (Stone Rd, Guelph) • Strom's Farm & Bakery Township of Puslinch • UPI Energy LP Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc.**

...plus several more **individual donors** who overwhelmed us with their generosity as they bid on 'horse sponsorships' at our "Celebrate Sunrise!" live auction in June. Thank you all!

We would also like to thank **The Georgina Foundation** and **Givesome** for grants which enabling us to purchase two GoTalkPro units for our riders with limited communication skills. The device (shown at right) is programmed to speak a variety of lesson-related words when the rider pushes the appropriate picture. We are excited about the new communication opportunities these devices will provide for our non-verbal riders.



## Sunrise Mission

"To develop the full potential of children and adults with special needs and lead them closer to independence through a therapy, recreation, horse riding, life skills, farm related activities and education programs."

## Sunrise Programs

### THERAPY PROGRAMS

- Therapeutic Riding lessons for children & adults with special needs
- Grooming sessions for youth / adults with special needs
- Equine-Facilitated Wellness for children & youth facing mental health challenges

### RECREATION PROGRAMS

- Riding Day Camp for ages 8 to 13+ (summer)\*
- Farm Discovery Day Camp for ages 5 to 8 (summer)\*
- Leader-In-Training for ages 13 to 16 (summer) \*
- "Little Breeches" Club: an introduction to horses for ages 4 to 7 selected Saturdays (mornings or afternoons) Spring & Fall \*

### LIFE SKILLS PROGRAM:

- Scotiabank Life Skills Program: Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Lesson volunteers needed! Must be 15+ years old.
- Student Instructors: Residential training opportunities for Canadian and International students (3-12 months)

\* These integrated programs are open to children and youth with or without special needs. **All instructors are Canadian certified.**

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Newsletter designed  
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Sunrise is a Member of:



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- Guelph Chamber of Commerce
- Cambridge Chamber of Commerce

- Volunteer Cambridge
- Volunteer Centre of Guelph-Wellington
- SKIC Supporting Kids In Camp