



Spring 2018

PONY EXPRESS

Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre

The Power of the Horse by Ann Caine

Following an uneventful pregnancy, Scarlett, the youngest of four children, was born to parents Sarah and Joe on Sept. 17, 2010.

On the way home from the hospital Scarlett turned blue and Sarah, a paediatric nurse, dealt with the situation. Once at home the same thing happened again, when Scarlett's grandfather was holding her. At first it was thought that Scarlett's fast arrival into the world had an impact on this frightening breathing pattern. However Sarah soon observed that although her new baby nursed well and began to thrive, when on the change table her head turned quickly back and forth, while her eyes did the same thing but in the opposite direction.



Scarlett on Fantasy (above and right)

Scarlett was seen by an optometrist in Hamilton, who was concerned for her vision and general development, so she was referred to a paediatrician at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, where she was diagnosed with Lebers Congenital Amourosis. There is no family history of this disease, and Sarah and Joe researched all they could to understand the care and support their infant daughter would need.

Following an MRI, Scarlett was also diagnosed with Joubert's Syndrome at 6 months of age. She had low muscle tone, abnormal eye development and a breathing pattern where she would suddenly hold her breath for a prolonged period, and then continue breathing again. Scarlett also has Developmental Delay, and at 7 years of age is functioning at a four year old level.

Scarlett attends Sunrise with her personal support worker, Lynette. Before ever getting on a horse here, Lynette brought Scarlett to the farm for about six weeks, just to walk around and become comfortable with her surroundings. At 4 years of age Scarlett did ride a horse at another therapeutic riding centre, but when the horse sneezed it was really frightening for a little girl with no sight, and she refused to

get back on — hence the cautious approach to trying this therapy again. This carefully thought out plan paid off!

How has riding a horse impacted Scarlett's life? Riding has improved Scarlett's core muscle strength, and she can now walk a couple of steps without holding on. She has never been fond of men's voices, but she has a male side walker with whom she is very comfortable. Scarlett's social skills are developing — she now smiles and talks and will happily give you a "high five"!



Sarah and Joe are delighted with the positive impact riding at Sunrise has made on Scarlett's life. She may not be able to see her horse, but the connection between child and horse is quite magical, and mere words are not adequate to describe this empowering relationship that Scarlett enjoys during her weekly visit to the Sunrise farm.

Sarah says, "Sunrise has been a gift for our daughter Scarlett. Sunrise has allowed Scarlett to grow leaps and bounds physically, socially, cognitively and emotionally simply by being with her horse Fantasy. Children with special needs are frequent flyers to many specialist and therapy appointments, which are not always positive and happy times for a child. Having Sunrise be able to benefit Scarlett in such a positive way, when she does not even realize it, is truly the best gift for a parent of a child with special needs. To the Sunrise Family, thank you!"

Building Brighter Futures

At Sunrise's AGM on Monday, March 26, Sunrise members and supporters had the opportunity to learn about several exciting new initiatives being considered for future farm growth. These included:

Extension of existing stable area, which would

- Provide dedicated space for the Life Skills Program equipment, fostering greater success and independence in completing barn-related tasks.
- Increase number of cross-tie areas from 3 to 6, doubling the number of horses that can be groomed simultaneously, enabling therapeutic riding and life skills related activities to happen concurrently in the stable.
- Install water taps in stalls, and build new feed and hay rooms, thus improving efficiency of feeding and watering routines.
- Increase number of indoor stalls to improve capacity for horses preparing for lessons, in quarantine, or sheltering from extreme weather.
- Create dedicated Stable Management Learning Room, for daily use by all recreation, Life Skills and Camp Sunrise groups.
- Create second 'Quiet Room', as existing Quiet Room is insufficient to serve all campers, riders and life skills participants simultaneously needing a retreat space. This space improves self-regulation for participants with behavioural needs, resulting in greater social and emotional success in group programs. It is also used for intake assessments and parent meetings.
- Provide heated room for hanging horse blankets to dry in winter.

Creation of a small, secondary 4-season round ring behind existing arena, which would:

- Greatly expand capacity for equine-facilitated wellness sessions (presently they can only be run when NO other activities, of any sort, are happening in the entire stable/arena facility, to protect client confidentiality).
- Enable horse training and exercise to continue concurrent to therapeutic riding or camp lessons.
- Enable private lessons to run concurrently with group lessons.

Creation of a residential/respite care facility, which would

- Provide supportive, but independent, living options for adults with special needs in a rural setting, via accessible studio apartments.
- Include a multi-purpose 'great hall' space for large gatherings, meetings, training sessions, and for activities of existing programs.
- Incorporate a large kitchen, providing for the needs of the residential and respite program, but also diversifying programming opportunities for the existing life skills program.
- Provide respite care for up to 6 children or 6 adults on a rotating basis throughout the year.

Creation of a forest area, which would

- Provide a greater diversity of natural habitats on site.
- Create accessible forest trails and woodland programming spaces to support new activities for participants in all Sunrise programs. These would compliment the existing pond and field areas for outdoor activities.



Board of Directors members (clockwise from top left) Matthew Bulmer, David Kennedy, Donna Christie, Lynne O'Brien (Executive Director) and Patsy Marshall plant the ceremonial First Trees during a Board Meeting. These trees will be transplanted to their permanent place within the Sunrise Forest Project area in the near future.



Above: Conceptual picture of stable extension (and existing office, arena and stable), viewed from parking lot (top) and barnyard near paddock 2 (bottom). Images courtesy of Frey Building Contractors.

Upcoming Events at Sunrise

Scotiabank Life Skills Day Program Open House Saturday, June 16, 2018 1-3 PM

If you, or a friend or family member, are 18+ years of age, have special needs and are looking for meaningful and engaging day-time activities, we invite you to attend Sunrise's Scotiabank Life Skills Day Program Open House on June 16.



Nicholaus (left) and Joleen leading horses Sundance (left) and Faline.

Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about program activities and chat with current participants and their families. Drop by, learn more, and pick up an information package! The program runs on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For further details, please contact Shawna,

Life Skills Program Coordinator at 519-763-5517 or by email at shawna@sunrise-therapeutic.ca

We are delighted to have **Scotiabank** as our inaugural Life Skills Day Program funder, through a generous 3 year (2015-2018) grant. Their support has been instrumental in providing the equipment and facility upgrades necessary to make this a successful program in the long-term.

Participants are eager to share their experiences with visitors. When asked, Tuesday participants all agreed that "the horses!" were their favourite part of the program. "The horses, of course, are the best part. I feel comfortable working with them and want a career with horses," Melanie explained. "Grooming the horses is my favourite part", agreed Brooke, "but also socializing, and learning new things."

Clients also participate in seasonal crafts & activities, farm chores and gardening activities (including raising and selling - by donation - vegetables and cut flowers, proceeds of which fund special group outings). This year, the program also partnered with Wellington County's Green Legacy Programme. Each group has made several visits to The Green Legacy Tree Nursery as volunteers.

Celebrate Sunrise!

Sunday, June 24, 2018 1-4 PM

Join us for an afternoon in the country, celebrating the accomplishments of our riders and supporters. This annual fundraiser provides guests the opportunity to see the benefits of therapeutic riding first-hand, through demonstrations and musical rides. A fabulous late lunch, created by local chefs **Moe Vidotto** (owner of Savour the Season) and **Steve Chaves** (owner of Malasada World) is followed by an exciting live auction led by the always entertaining **Robert Milburn**. **Lisa Richards** of Magic 106.1 FM, Guelph, is returning as M.C. of the event.

We are honoured to have **Tommy Hunter**, Canada's Country Gentleman and Honorary Sunrise Director, introducing this year's special guest, **Wayne MacDonald**. Wayne is a solo acoustic artist, glider pilot and SCUBA diver who also happens to be a paraplegic. A glider ride with Wayne is one of the many unique auction items available. Others include a 1-week stay at a private vacation property in San Miguel, Mexico, and a 1-week African safari for two, on a private wildlife reserve!

We hope you will join us for this fun and uplifting event. Tickets are \$50 each and are available on our website (www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca/celebrate-sunrise/) or by calling Jennifer at 519-837-0558 x32.

Hoofbeat Challenge

Saturday, September 29, 2018 9 AM - 1 PM

Ride, walk and win! Raise pledges then join us on September 29, and explore over 200 acres of beautiful groomed trails with your horse, dog or friends! Event includes on-site lunch, **Starbucks** coffee and bake sale (voucher towards lunch provided for registered participants), Life Skills craft and produce sale, two raffles (one geared & timed for walkers and one for riders), door prizes for both groups and fundraising prizes. Special guests this year

are several members of the **Ontario Mounted Special Service Unit (OMSSU)** who will be riding with participants.

Individuals and teams can register now! Goody bags for first 100 registrants PLUS an Early Bird draw for registrants on August 15! Visit www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca/hoofbeat/ or call Jennifer at 519-837-0558 ext 32.

Walkers: Register at 9 AM Walk starts at 10 AM sharp
Riders: Register at 10 AM Ride starts 11:00-11:15 AM

Thank You to...

Rotary Club of Guelph South:

For quite a few years, this Rotary club has supported Sunrise (and other Rotary projects) through the proceeds of their popular Taste of Italy dinner, held at the Puslinch Community Centre every February. This year they raised \$5000 for Sunrise! Thank you, Rotarians!



Executive Director Lynne O'Brien accepts a cheque from the Rotary Club of Guelph South, presented by Township of Puslinch Mayor Dennis Lever. (Photo by Dianne Paron)

The **George Lunan Foundation**, who provided a generous grant in support of Sunrise's Scholarship Fund, which ensures that finances are not a barrier to participation in camp and therapeutic riding programs. Thank you also to the **Ross-Shire Foundation** for their ongoing support.

Capital Paving Inc., for making our farm look fabulous! Thank you for maintaining our driveway, improving our paddock footing, and so much more!

Scotiabank, Spaenaur Inc. and **UPI Energy LP**; the support of these companies has enriched Sunrise programs in a myriad of ways, as they have come alongside Sunrise to make various growth projects a reality in recent years. Thank you!

100 Women Who Care Guelph, who recently selected Sunrise as one of their quarterly beneficiaries! Their gift supported our Horse Acquisition Fund, Scholarship Fund and other initiatives. We greatly appreciate their support!

The **Guelph Community Foundation (Hugh and Lorna Guthrie Fund)**, for providing a grant for summer camp, enabling Guelph children from financially marginalized families to access Camp Sunrise. We also thank the **Guelph Community Foundation** for a community grant which will support a renovation project to improve accessibility (details will follow in our Fall 2018 newsletter).

Our Horse Sponsors! We couldn't run our programs without our therapy horses, and the donors who provide for their daily care and training. Thank you to those who have each sponsored or co-sponsored a horse in the past 12 months:

100 Women Who Care Guelph

Bryan's Farm & Industrial Supply • Coffey Creek Farm

County of Wellington • D.H. Falle Family Foundation

Rotary Club of Guelph South • Spaenaur Inc.

Township of Puslinch • Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

UPI Energy LP • Plus 10 individual donors!

Thank you also to our **Stall and Paddock Sponsors** of the past 12 months. Your gifts have made a difference in many lives!

100 Women Who Care Guelph • Guelph Wish Fund for Children
McDonald's Restaurants of Guelph • Don & Barb McKay
PDI • Spaenaur Inc. • UPI Energy LP

Sunrise Mission

"To develop the full potential of children and adults with special needs and lead them closer to independence through 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
by Alissa Gibson.
Edited by Ann Caine.

Please email info@sunrise-therapeutic.ca to receive your newsletter by email, or to be removed from our mailing list

Contact Us

Mail: 6920 Concession 1, RR #2, Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0

Phone: (519) 837-0558 **Fax:** (519) 837-1233

Email: info@sunrise-therapeutic.ca

Web: www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca

Office Hours: MON—FRI 8:00 to 4:30

(Tours & visitors are welcome by appointment.)



Sunrise is a Member of:



Canadian Therapeutic
Riding Association



Ontario Camps
Association

- Ontario Equestrian
- Guelph Chamber of Commerce
- Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
- Volunteer Action Centre
- PIN (The People and Information Network)
- SKIC (Supporting Kids In Camp)