

# REINS OF LIFE, INC.

*changing lives one stride at a time*

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Interactive Vaulting Explained

Executive Director Message

For Children & ADULTS

Doctoral Study Results

Partnerships with Purpose



Interactive Vaulters performing an assisted leap at Reins of Life, Inc. Michigan City in 2019.

## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Interactive vaulting is often compared to “gymnastics on a horse” because participants perform movements on and around the horse. Movements range from sitting on the horse without holding the surcingle to more complex, like kneeling or even standing on the horse as it walks. Although these lessons can look very different from one to the next depending on the group of vaulters, these exercises are important because they help the participants learn the responsibilities of taking care of the horses, as well as the importance of communicating, working as a team and challenging each other to master a vaulting skill.

In 2019, just one year after the vaulting program began, ROL held a demonstration for the community to showcase the skills vaulters had been learning in the lessons.

The vaulters from two facilities, with help of the messenger - instructors Amanda Bubb and Daniele Charriere, chose the theme of the showcase and even came up with some of their own poses to perform on the horse. One of Reins' PATH Intl. Certified Interactive Vaulting instructors, Daniele, thought it was a wonderful experience to witness the “incredible amount of teamwork, support, encouragement, and resiliency. The students worked together within each group every week, encouraging and empowering each other to reach heights that they would not have reached alone. Then the two groups merged routines into breathtaking performance. The program fosters self-esteem, teamwork, and communication skills.

To watch the full Interactive Vaulting performance check out the Reins of Life, Inc. YouTube channel. Interested in learning more about Interactive Vaulting at Reins of Life, Inc. visit [www.reinsoflife.org](http://www.reinsoflife.org) or give us a call today!



# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

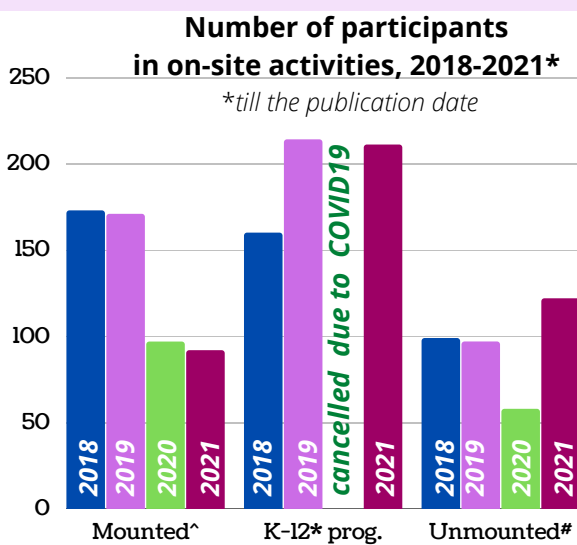
Hello ROL Family-

We have been busy bees at the barn! Going into Fall and now into Winter, we carry on with the blissful business from Summer. In just few short months we hosted 9 events (fundraisers, community outreach and educational); increased programming (welcoming returning riders and new ones); growing the interactive vaulting and veterans' programs; and re-instating our therapeutic driving program, equine-facilitated psychotherapy and K-12 programs - with returning friends from La Porte and Michigan City Area Schools and new partners from Career and Success Academies, SBEZ, and Oaklawn Residential Program. We even tackled a few facility improvements. We are overjoyed with all the happenings at Reins. We are active, upbeat and busy. Everyone knows their role, yet is ready to jump in when the fellow worker needs help. We are creative and innovative with the well-organized structure to accommodate the new demands of 2021 with the promise of high-quality services and full commitment to do everything we can to empower, educate, and foster independence. There is a little something for everyone at the barn and we are so thankful for our riders, volunteers, sponsors, donors and equine-partners. We think you are the bee's knees!

Dorota Janik, Ph.D.



K-12 School Program students take part in learning how to lead Gigi through obstacle course building trust and confidence.



^Therapeutic Riding, Interactive Vaulting, Therapeutic Driving

\* K-12 school gr. counted at the beginning of the school year

# EFP, Veterans, Nuzzles & Snuggles, Equine Encounters

## THERAPEUTIC RIDING: FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS

### What is therapeutic riding?

Therapeutic Riding (TR) teaches a person with disabilities how to ride a horse while incorporating a wide range of therapeutic goals. Each lesson is designed to meet physical, educational, emotional and/or social skill goals based on the rider's individual needs.

### How can adults benefit?

Once an applicant is accepted in the program, therapeutic goals are established and progress is documented. Therapeutic riding lessons are planned with the individual's educational, physical, social and recreational goals in mind. One of our riders states it best, "The gifts of therapeutic horseback riding are infinite - and completely individualized to the circumstances of the participants."

#### Physical

- Improved muscle control
- Increased balance and strength
- Improved cardio-respiratory function

#### Cognitive

- Increased concentration & memory
- Improved basic learning skills
- Improved communication skills

#### Social

- Improved self-esteem, discipline and courage
- Improved interpersonal relationships

Think Therapeutic Riding might be a good fit for you? Request an Appointment at [www.reinsoflife.org](http://www.reinsoflife.org) TODAY!



It's never too late to progress towards your goals. Adult rider strides towards success with his volunteers and trusty steed.

“ This feels like a community of safety and connection, and it provides the perfect atmosphere to learn and grow. ”

# THE RESEARCH IS IN !!!

## Horses as Healers: Evaluating the Impact of Equine Assisted Therapy Summary Findings from Doctoral Dissertation

Hello to the friends of Reins of Life. My name is Wendy Seerup and I am an Assistant Professor of Undergraduate Social Work at the George Williams College campus of Aurora University. I have recently received my doctoral degree (DSW) in clinical social work. I have developed an interest in animal assisted interventions during my last ten years as a professor when I started teaching and learning about experiential therapies. My dissertation research was facilitated during this past summer, and was set at three equine therapeutic farms. I was fortunate to have met Dorota, your executive director, and several of your participants who contributed to my study.

My research was based upon interviews with 21 participants who shared their personal story of the impact of equine therapy. The end result was the development of 5 themes: (1.) equine therapy farms provide an environmentally healing setting, (2.) equine therapy provides the opportunity for therapeutic physical engagement, (3.) horses provide unique healing benefits, (4.) equine therapy utilizes action-oriented interventions for client benefit, and (5.) equine therapy provides the opportunity for uniquely dramatic life transformation.

There are three main takeaways gleaned from the themes in this study. **The first is the fact that the relaxation and welcoming community of the equine farm provide an opportune and low pressure setting for healing. The second that an experiential based intervention is the perfect recipe to healing for some people, where they can "work-through" their story rather than tell their story again. And third, that the unique qualities of equine therapy can provide dramatic results and life changes for people, including those that have tried other interventions. Participants transformed from being home bound to working, from addiction to clean, from lonely to socially connected, and from suicidal to safe.** As a social worker, I hope to promote the practice of equine therapy for participants that can benefit, and share these results to assist in removing barriers to access to equine therapy services.

*Dr. Wendy Seerup, LCSW.*

Little but mighty! Rider and equine-partner work together to navigate through an obstacle course during a Therapeutic Riding lesson.

### Ways you can help us make an impact!

\*Even if you use Standard Deduction on your tax return in 2021 you can claim above-the-line \$300/single or \$600/joint filers if you donate to non-profit

\*IRA Charitable Rollover for donors over age of 70.5 (required minimum distribution).

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH PURPOSE

**Equine Partners.** Take Fancy Fay - Purina September Horse of the month - such an outstanding horse! She is the only horse in our herd of 28 who works in all activity areas. On any given day, you might see her participating in a therapeutic riding lesson, an interactive vaulting lesson, pulling a carriage or even doing unmounted work with a special education class from our local school. She loves our volunteers and participants and has been known to purposefully engage during quiet moments by nuzzling, lipping and licking them.

Reins of Life, Inc. is one of the newest members of the Partnership for Children of St. Joseph County. **Partnership for Children** is a collaboration between ten youth-serving agencies. We help youth and families who need extra support learning to manage behaviors and emotions.

These organizations include:

- Boys and Girls Club
- La Casa de Amistad
- Oaklawn
- SJC Cares
- Transformation Ministries
- YMCA of Greater Michiana
- Youth Service Bureau
- YWCA
- Reins of Life, Inc.
- Seasons Counseling of Michiana

Subscribe to the ROL Mailing List at [www.reinsoflife.org](http://www.reinsoflife.org) to learn about upcoming FREE trainings that support community mental health and learn about referral services for youth.

SJC CARES is the **St. Joseph County's System of Care** organization - a group of community collaborators who work together to identify needs and develop solutions to support the mental health of youth and families. Reins of Life, Inc. has officially joined as a Member Organization.

SJC Cares offers monthly meetings to network with community members from social workers, mental health professionals and PARENTS! SJC Cares also offers PARENT CAFES sessions throughout the county in person and through Zoom. Parent Cafes are a great way to meet families, have conversations and truly connect with parents just like you!

**To see a list of upcoming meetings and Parent Cafes visit [www.sjccares.org](http://www.sjccares.org) today!**



St. Joseph County  
**CARES**





## Reins of Life, Inc.

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**THANK YOU TO ALL SUPPORTERS & VOLUNTEERS WHO  
JOINED US THIS SUMMER FOR  
FUNDRAISING EVENTS & DAYS OF SERVICE!**

**FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS VISIT  
[WWW.REINSOFLIFE.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.REINSOFLIFE.ORG/EVENTS)**

**DO YOU WANT TO BE PART OF THE TEAM?  
CONTACT US TO CHECK VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES.**

**[STAFF@REINSOFLIFE.ORG](mailto:STAFF@REINSOFLIFE.ORG)**



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