



# Horse Feather Therapeutic Learning Center

## Newsletter!!!

July 2012

Howdy Partner, this newsletter is well overdue. It is hard to figure out where to start. So I am going to just jump right in to the beginning.

Many moon ago, in the year 2000, I went off to college, determined to open a therapeutic riding center for the handicap. I got my degree in Social Work with a concentration in Psychology. After graduation in 2005 I went out into the work force to see what social work was all about. Let me tell you friend it is not pretty out there. February of 2011 I left my position as a supervisor for Community Partners for Child Safety to take Horse Feathers TLC head on.

Over the past 12 years much has gone into the design of Horse Feathers TLC. My experiences with my autistic cousin, my work in the youth shelter, my experience in counseling addicts, the long hours spent with helping struggling parents, my time in the school system and listening to the complaints of the world. This along with life experiences has all contributed to my plan for Horse Feather TLC.

I have had many people say to me, that we already have a therapeutic riding center, why would we need another.

Well, let me tell you, Horse Feathers TLC is so much more than a just therapeutic riding center. Let me explain who we are.

1. The foundation of our center will be directed in serving the disabled. Horse Feathers acknowledges that we all have some degree of disability, some more than others. Whether

the disability is physical, emotional, mental or cognitive. Our center will be available to all. Our goal is to integrate not segregate.

2. We are a learning center. Everything we do will include some sort of learning. We acknowledge that traditional ways of teaching are not always the best. We will strive to make learning fun and hands on.
3. Horse Feathers will be a working farm. We will have a variety of farm animals and all the chores that come with farming. Many never get to experience what it is like to collect eggs from the chicken house, milk a cow or feed a horse. We understand this, and embrace that farming has so much to teach. Whether it is: calculating grain and minerals, reading instructions on how to raise rabbits, or listening and understanding the needs of the animal. The list is endless. We know it is fun, enjoyable and has so much to offer
4. We are aware that schools are struggling to keep students motivated and interested in learning. This is why our center will be available to all our area schools for field trips or to carry out special curriculum that normally can not be done on school grounds. Such as collecting fossils from the creek, walking through the woods to gather leaves or experimenting and studying wind energy. We are preparing to help.
5. We will offer office space to other professionals that wish to use our facility. The horse is making great strides in helping to



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empower us. Physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, special ed. teachers, social workers, psychologist, and counselors can all use the horse and the farm to assist them in their work. It is a wonderful thing to witness first hand. Sharing our facility with other professionals opens great opportunity for our communities to receive awesome alternatives to traditional therapies.

6. When I was out in the social work field I seen a lot of disturbing things. Most of which is unknown to so many. Our programs are designed to not only teach but to address social problems within our communities.

- a. Probation youth program. Currently, probation youth do community service for their penance.  
We want to work with the courts to design a program that will help guide these youth in future decisions.
- b. AA and NA meeting site for teens.  
Offer a site where teens are the focus
- c. Parenting Classes. Interesting enough this can be carried out in the horse arena.
- d. Cooking classes for kids and adults
- e. Day camps that coincide with the schools balanced calendar and offers fun, educational and affordable alternatives for our kids and parents.
- f. Community garden and raised gardens.
- g. Site for court ordered supervised visits.  
Currently these visits are done in a 8x8 room, McDonald or in a library with a caseworker at there side. We want to

offer a more family environment where evaluations are done more discreet.

In addition to all this, we have designed our facility to have an industrial kitchen, banquet room that will seat several hundred and be open to the public. This area of our facility will be to give opportunity to those who find it difficult in finding a job in our communities. We will teach job readiness skills, proper hygiene, social etiquette, money management, food preparation, problem solving. Once again the list is endless.

All these social issues take place within our communities and we are planning and gearing up to make a difference.

So, you see Horse Feathers TLC is not another therapeutic riding center for the handicap. We are a center where the sky is the limit. We want learning to be fun. We want those who are a lot of times separated from us, do to their disability to intermingle among us and make their lives meaningful. We want to go back to the basics. We want to make a difference.

Now, I know what you are thinking. If I heard it once I heard it a hundred times. This is an awful big project. Yes, it is. But, we can not let this stop us. Our communities need a program like Horse Feathers TLC

For those that know the song by Toby Mac "City on our knees." Lyric go like this. "If you gotta start start somewhere why not here. If you gotta start sometime why not now. If you got to start somewhere, I say here. Great Song! Check it out on the web.



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### This is where we are now.

We have written several grants to area community foundations and have been denied by all. This is for a couple of different reasons. 1. We are a new program. Funders are leery of new programs. They want to see others get on board before they make a commitment. 2. We do not have our own 501c3(non-profit status). We are operating under Historic Hoosier Hills non profit. This is typical for new program to fall under the umbrella of another non profit. Mary Ann Gay our lawyer is working on the final stages of our own non profit status. This is usually a long drawn out process. Once we have our own 501c3 status grant funding should come somewhat easier. But till then, we are going to keep pushing on and resubmit grants to the area and community foundations.

So for right now, all our money needed for startup is coming strictly from fundraisers and donations. Let me tell you, it has been rough.

- ❖ Our volunteer base and the number of participants at our events have been very low. And this is making it also very difficult for start up.

Many of you have probably read in the paper that we were planning to locate our facility behind the UPS building in Versailles. Well, after several meetings with the property owner he decided that this was not a good option for him.

- ❖ So, from there we got a lead that Camp Chazon located in Dillsboro might be an option for us. (This is a Baptist camp that has been closed down for several years). The

owner Tom Ferhman has graciously given us the use of his property till the first of the year.

- ❖ Currently we do not have a permanent place to call home. But, we are looking at several different options. We do know that we want to be centrally located and we need plenty of land to grow and expand our programs.

In addition to all this, we are trying to start our first therapeutic riding session. These sessions will be one night a week, for one hour, for six weeks cost will be \$130 for this session. If you know of anyone that can benefit from the interaction and the riding of a horse, please direct them to us.

### The one thing we do know is.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** On November 3<sup>rd</sup> we will have our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual horse ride and chili supper. This will be at Versailles State Park at the saddle barn. We are looking for riders. Big, little, young, old, fat and skinny, we don't care. We need riders to scout for sponsors. Prizes will be awarded to those who reach certain goals. We are planning a chili cook-off, so if you don't ride you can eat chili. We need volunteers. How many of you sit at home wondering what you can do. Once again I do not care if you are young, old, fat, skinny, have curly hair or bald we need you. Sponsors, and silent auction items. If you can help in anyway please contact me. There is so much to do and if we all do what we can do then Horse Feathers Therapeutic Learning Center will become a reality. Please help where you can.

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(email best way to reach me)

Or call

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