

SPIRIT OPEN EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM INC.



2009
Annual Report

Dear Spirit Friends,

In Spirit's mission and vision there is a time for everything. Over the course of the past three years, the Board of Directors works hard to develop a succession plan for our organization. We still do not know what future holds for Spirit, but our committed Team of families, volunteers, supporters and Board members has energy, knowledge, skill and inspiration to create more great moments with Spirit for students of all ages and ability...to help them to fulfill own potential, to improve self esteem and develop life skills for future.

It might seem odd that a person would be happy to work as Program / Executive Director of a non-profit organization with our economy being what it is now, but I am... and I am sharing this as an inspiration and invitation for future with Spirit.

As our nation endures a slumping economy, the staff of Spirit has taken a proactive approach to assure Spirit has a plan for stability, longevity, and sustainability for the future. Although the health of the economy is important to any non-profit, Spirit utilizes more than one area of income potential to sustain our programs. During these difficult times it is important to face down our fears, move beyond the anxiety and maintain a long term perspective.

Each day is a gift to be utilized to its fullest and whether we spend that day being worried and negative or hopeful and positive is a choice each one of us makes. We remain committed to being a good steward of your donations of money and time, as well as to serve to our community.

I hope as you read the 2009. Annual Report, you will join us in celebrating our many accomplishments during the last year. I thank you for your support of Spirit in 2009 and for your investment of time, energy or money in our future.
Sincerely,

Dada

Davorka Suvak
Program Director
703-600-9667

www.spiritequestrian.org
<http://spiritopenequestrian.blogspot.com/>

End of the year...and time to turn back...



January, 2009

- Spirit the Mare was gone....



Spirit was in her retirement home at field of one of board members, Ms Louise... Last evening, Spirit was lying down in the field and was not able to get up... She spent the night in field, but not alone...she had the pony mare with her until Saturday morning. She left with her head in my lap...peaceful and calm...

Spirit's riders had an opportunity to ride during the winter months in indoor at FPP, thanks to a generous donor who helped us to pay all winter hours indoors and asked not to publish it. Thank you!



February, 2009

- Came Annie, aka Anastasia....



Jessica had her first success in Annie's saddle..." I am up! I am not afraid!"



March, April 2009

- more riders, joy and fun...some rain and storms, but all was well...



May, 2009

- our volunteer, Sarah Mendelsohn got award for her work....

Two Teens Receive Character Award

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

The Mc Lean Citizens Association is awarding two teens a Teen Character Award in the 13th annual award ceremony at Mc Lean Day on Saturday, May 16. The award ceremony will take place at 2:45 p.m., at Lewinsville Park on Chain Bridge Road in McLean. Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville); School Board member Janie Strauss (Dranesville) and Rob Jackson, McLean Citizens Association president, will present the awards.

This year's awardees are Sarah Mendelsohn, a junior at Langley High School, and Chloe Yazdani, a senior at McLean High School.

Mendelsohn is being recognized for volunteering at Spirit Open Equestrian, a therapeutic riding center. Most Saturdays for the past two years, she has worked with young children, teenagers and adults with special needs, helping them to ride a horse. She helps get the horses ready prior to therapy, assists

with lessons, helps make the rides feel at ease and then helps put the horses away for the day. She always arrives early and is typically one of the last to leave. When other volunteers do not show up, she willingly steps in. "Many of the parents of the special needs children have expressed their gratitude and commented on Sarah's maturity and special care that she gives to their children," wrote Mendelsohn's mother. "She loves that she can help people learn to love the horses and help them move."



June, July, ...2009

- NTVRP horse show at FPP



Sharon, Andrew, Patrick did a great job presenting Spirit Program

Spirit created great moments for riders, whenever weather, construction work at FPP , or horse shows permitted ;)

August, 2009

- Anastasia is gone... :(

"Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take
But by the moments that take our breath away"

Annie had a great life, and enriched lives of many kids and their parents in last few months.



Without warning, this great little mare just left us...she is free somewhere in heavenly pastures with Spirit the Mare....

Jessica, Ginny, Robbie,... lost great friend and partner....in therapy, learning and joy....

Whatever pain comes all is easier with good friends...

Thank you Leslie and Dan for all you did to help Spirit keep on going after Annie was gone....



So, Sonny came from Louise's farm...

He seems to fit into Spirit as he always was part of our team...

September, 2009

...started with the Day With Spirit - at Jessica's farm. Thank you Sarah (Tall) and Jessica - you created great day for Spirit kids...



...and Bikers (Courtney and Rob) with their friends donated program and fund raising project...



Wendy Schugol, Para equestrian rider, Grade Ia, competed at Morven Park Equestrian Center, and achieved great results with Infinity...and her Larissa. Morgan mares rules!



October, 2009

- Spirit have more riders even it was so many rainy days, lot of construction activity, busy Saturdays at Park.....



November, 2009

New prospective home for Spirit, enthusiasm, dreams, good wishes and promises....Program was on hold almost whole November....Lot of work, and decision to move horses in December....



December, 2009

Hugs and tears with Leslie and Dan, promises to stay in touch and will let us come back if needed...

...and Sonny, Colby Dylan and Infinity came at the Spirit Farm...new facility....

In mid December came Solara, new pony mare, just like Spirit the Mare long time ago...



Horses are waiting for a job...this is a great moment when volunteers did simulation of real therapy, to check Solara about her attitude, and to remind old horses about their real job...



Turbulent time for Spirit came in this Christmas season...searching all opportunities to grow and serve our community using all our talents, skills, knowledge, energy and resources. New Year and new beginnings, faith and clear vision of Spirit's mission will put Spirit where it belongs...

2009 in numbers

425 lessons

33 students

1353 volunteer hours

Financial report will be available at our web page soon.

Main donor

Washington Forrest Foundation, Arlington

Special Recognition for 2009

Jeff Wallace, volunteer with the most hours with Spirit, always the first to come, and last to stay and assure that all horses and equipment are at their places...patient and reliable with kids and with horses - Volunteer of the Year in Spirit Open Equestrian Program

Whitney Fitzgerald, Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, Hippo therapist and Physiotherapist

Linda Trochim, Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor

Wendy Schugol, Para equestrian rider, Instructor in training, and Spec.ed. Teacher

Karen Kilgore, Instructor in training,

Sara Morehouse, Instructor in training

Those people are dedicated friends of Spirit who donated their professional knowledge, time and energy to Spirit. We want to say thank you to all of them

Theresa, Don and Andrew Clark, family which is essential part of our organization, with their enthusiasm, energy and unselfish work.

Hedy Glen and Sarah Mendelssohn - Volunteers with the longest commitment to our program. They are both with Spirit from day one, three years ago.

Dan Dalrymple and Leslie Painter - who provided for Spirit home, friendly support, network of great people at FPP for almost 2 years...

*Thank you all who supported our work and efforts to serve our riders!
Spirit Team and riders will be grateful for any help to keep on going in this
difficult time...*

*Because ... "100 years from now, it will not matter what car you drove, what house you lived in or how much
money you had in the bank ... but some day the world may be a better place because you were important in
the life of a child ..."*

*Spirit Open Equestrian Program Inc.
P.O.Box 1342
Great Falls VA 22066*

Stay in touch with Spirit at:

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