



# SunnyBrook Meadows Therapeutic Riding

March 2009

## 2008: A Year of Firsts for SunnyBrook

There is nothing new under the sun. *Ecclesiastes 1:9b*

While this verse is true I must say no matter where we are in life's journey we can experience things that are new to us.

The 1st that comes to my mind this year was watching the Bucknell Business Management 101 students as they worked to create our new and certainly closer parking area. Several students took opportunity to try their hand at spreading shale with my tractor. In the end they created us a wonderful close parking area.

Right on the heels of that experience came Mandy Wadsworth our very first student doing an internship. What a great help she was as she entered data, cleaned stalls and got involved in our Therapeutic Program operations.

After that Carl Swartz started some much needed lane work. Nothing new about that until he took the time to teach Gage, my grandson, and me to operate the "Bulldozer".

Gage was first and that really shamed me into it. Now don't get me wrong I'm not ready to hire out as a heavy equipment operator. Although, I did manage to tear up the lawn and smooth out the lane.

You may notice as you enter the lane the stone laid wall for the flower bed. That was not an easy first as the community service workers that helped me start it would tell you. Spring will tell if I have a lot to learn in that area!

The last first was the most trying. In 15 years of operation this December brought the first time I found it necessary to close the barn to riders and volunteers due to a very contagious disease brought into the barn by a new horse I purchased. The good news was only one other horse in the barn was affected and I got to care for my horses instead of doing paperwork. When weather permits I will be putting up an isolation stall in the far pasture.

May 2009 be filled with exciting and joy-filled firsts in your life.



## Ride-A-Thon 2008

SunnyBrook Meadows held its annual Ride-a-thon on October 18, 2008. The riders from their Therapeutic Riding Program enjoyed a scenic journey through the beautifully decorated trails, keeping a watchful eye out for horse treats to be enjoyed by their trusty steeds. The horses at SunnyBrook enjoy their work all year long transporting their special riders into worlds they seldom have opportunity to enter.

Concluding their rides, a picnic lunch was enjoyed by volunteers and riders together. It was then time for the horses to give the volunteers that long awaited opportunity to mount up, as they participated in their feature of the fund raiser. At that time all enjoyed a volunteer horse show. Volunteers contacted area businesses as well as friends to sponsor them and support this unique program, which gives coveted opportunities to our riders.

This year, due to the difficult economic times we face, SunnyBrook raised only 50% of its needed goal to fund the riding program. If you have a desire to support this program either through volunteering or financial support please call 570-547-1565 or contact us through our web site: [www.sunnybrookmeadows.com](http://www.sunnybrookmeadows.com).

*Thank you for your support!*

# 15 Years of Grace at SunnyBrook Meadows

*Reflection: 1. an image given back 2. to contemplate; ponder.*

One of my favorite reflections is of a student riding around the edge of the pond, his image is caught in the still water for all to enjoy. It makes a fabulous photo.

As I reflect on the previous 15 years, I stand amazed at what the Lord has done for us. We started mostly with a hope and a lot of dreams. I recall our 10-year plan, a program with Special Olympics, a new arena, trails and a full year program. I'm not sure now why we wanted to ride in the winter!

Fifteen years later we stand in our new arena (built in 1998) on a cold February morning starting our yearly Special Olympic Program. Special Olympics started in 2002. There are usually around 12 riders enjoying the opportunity to learn new skills and interact with friends and volunteers. Sue Garcynski, our only remaining original board member, works hard to keep this aspect running smoothly.

As we look at the image we started with it begins to change its characters but not its characteristics. The horses change. Our oldest mount at this time is Willy the only horse my husband (Dick) and I bought together for the program. As I write this on my working retreat, I look out the window and watch Shadow, our very 1st program horse standing in the sun enjoying her semi-retirement.

Volunteers change, riders come and go. Through God's grace we have remained. If my memory serves me correctly we only have two of our original riders left. Tiffany and Nathan have ridden many of our horses, but both would claim Shadow as their favorite horse.

It is very rare but some things haven't changed. For example the Montgomery Lions club was the 1st service organization to support our program and they have continued to be faithful through out the years. Soon after the Montgomery Lionesses came on board with their faithful support. Area residents, friends, and businesses have given of their time and resources to meet our needs. H.R.I has helped in so many of our projects that I'm afraid to list them!

We could never reflect back on the 15 years and feel pride in our accomplishments, because the Lord has used a united effort by so many people.

Thank you for 15 years of continued support friends, riders, volunteers, board members, service organizations, businesses and area colleges.

*Edna Riddell*



*John and Rachel Higham*

## Meet Rachel

My name is Rachel Higham and I am the SunnyBrook Meadows Therapeutic Riding intern. My internship will span from January 12, 2009 through April 25, 2009. I'm completing my Bachelor's degree at Mansfield University in Leadership

for Children and Adults with Disabilities. I have worked with individuals with developmental disabilities for over ten years in varying capacities ranging from direct care to administration. My goal is to complete Phase I of the Therapeutic Riding instructor course with the PA Council on Therapeutic Horsemanship in May 2009.

I am married to John, a writer and psychologist, and have two step-children, David, 17 and Alyssa, 15. We live in Canton, PA and I work part-time as an administrative assistant for my husband's private practice. We are avid gardeners, producing much of the food we consume.

I am inspired when people who have disabilities are offered the opportunity to live their lives as they choose. I can only hope to be a pebble on their paths by empowering them to reach their fullest potential.

## Special Olympics Season



It's that time of year again! Join us for the Special Olympics season. We need lots of volunteers for this growing program! Care for the horses, interact with the riders, and make some new friends!

**Lesson dates: Saturdays at 10am**

**February 7, 14, 21, 28**

**March 7, 14, 21, 28**

**April 4, 11, 18**

**Local Competition: April 25**