



Fall 2016

# PONY EXPRESS

Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre

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## “Looking Back...Moving Forward” by Ann Caine

Margaret Yaskowich, who has Down Syndrome, celebrated her 50th birthday on July 29 this year. Margaret loves to go bowling, so it was not surprising that she chose to do that with her family and friends for **her birthday celebration**. **What she didn't know was her sisters had ordered a white stretch limousine to take her to bowling and back. Margaret was ecstatic, and the driver received one of Margaret's famous hugs, to show her appreciation.**

Margaret has been riding at Sunrise since she was 15 years old, and **her mother Deloris says Sunrise has been a big part of Margaret's life**. She started riding when her John F. Ross High School class attended the Sunrise Watson Road location (and later the Guelph Lake site), with their teacher Janet Brewster, who later served on the Sunrise Board of Directors. Margaret has enjoyed riding a variety of horses throughout the years—her most recent mount is Shadow, but **with Margaret's characteristic enthusiasm, she loves all the Sunrise horses.**

Deloris reflected on several highlights that Sunrise has provided for Margaret that no one else in her large family has experienced, such as meeting HRH Princess Anne, The Princess Royal, CanTRA Patron, riding at the Royal Winter Fair and, more recently, being part of **the riding demonstration at “Celebrate Sunrise!”**

Margaret is one of the few current riders who experienced riding with Nicola, her first instructor, when there were no indoor arenas. At that time, lessons often had to be cancelled in the summer, due to torrential rain, and Sunrise had to close down every Fall and start up again the following Spring.

Deloris served on the Sunrise board, and from the beginning was **always a “worker”**. **When bringing Margaret for lessons she tackled numerous small tasks to clear up the barnyard**. In more recent years Deloris has picked up newspapers in her neighbourhood and delivered them to the Sunrise paper bins on a weekly basis. At 86 years old, she has recently had to retire from this role, and we thank her for **her years of dedication**. **If another parent would like to “step up” in their neighbourhood, Sunrise would value this help.**

For many years, Margaret has ridden with Alison and Jenny, and they are firm friends, as are their parents. Deloris reflects on the great respect that the staff and volunteers have always extended to Margaret, and the wonderful, healthy experience that Margaret has enjoyed over the years. **What a positive Sunrise role model!**



*Photos from top: Margaret & Rebel behind the scenes at the 1990 Royal Winter Fair; Margaret with instructor Mary Ellen and horse Bobbie at a Sunrise Horse Show; (L-R) Jenny, Margaret and Alison during Volunteer Appreciation Week 2015*



# Camp Sunrise 2016

New friends, new achievements...and many great new memories were made at Camp Sunrise this summer. The record heat made swimming, bathing horses, and our impromptu water slide (top photo) popular activities.

In reflecting on the summer, Camp Coordinator Katlyn Wildfang observed, "We gave the campers the opportunity and the groundwork to take safe risks, and many were **surprised at what they could do!**" At Riding Camp, this included riders transitioning to greater independence (i.e. needing less volunteer assistance while riding), learning new riding skills or taking more initiative and responsibility for tacking and un-tacking their horses.

A new Riding Camp initiative, for older, returning campers was "Leadership Camp". Youth of all abilities, who would soon be graduating from the Riding Camp program, were provided with opportunities to build leadership skills by participating in team-building / problem-solving initiatives. On the other end of the age spectrum, many young campers at Farm Discovery Camp were attending for the first time, but quickly felt safe and comfortable at Camp Sunrise. Inclusion and teamwork are a hallmark of the camp - each week, 30-90% of campers on site had special needs.

Andrea, one of our summer counsellors, reflected on her summer, "I was given the opportunity to spend my summer at Sunrise, where dreams and friendships are made and limitations are left at the end of the driveway. The memories of camp and the people I met will last a lifetime, and the stories of my experiences will be shared with hopes to inspire others to be more inclusive and accepting."

Sunrise appreciates the support of the following donors, whose gifts to our Camp Scholarship Fund ensured that finances were not a barrier to participation for many local children: Kitchener-Waterloo Civitan Club, Rotary Club of Guelph South, Zonta Club of Guelph and a Children and Youth Summer Camp Grant from the Guelph Community Foundation (Hugh and Lorna Guthrie Fund). Thank you also to our amazing counsellor team for their excellent work this summer.



Photos (clockwise from top): Cooling off on the 'water slide'; A Farm Discovery camper celebrates a great pony ride with a volunteer; Campers show off the treats they have prepared for their horses; Heading to the mounting block to ride!; Ribbons, certificates and smiles at the end-of-session Horse Show; Campers having fun at the pool; A bulls-eye at the archery range!

## “Celebrate Sunrise!” Event Breaks Records!

On Sunday, June 26, Sunrise hosted its “Celebrate Sunrise!” event, and raised over \$50,000 (net), a new record for our June fundraising event! All proceeds supported Sunrise’s therapy and recreation programs.

Sunrise’s special guest was Dr. Roberta Bondar, Canada’s first woman astronaut, who was introduced by Sunrise Honorary Director Tommy Hunter. Dr. Bondar’s presentation was inspiring, fascinating and amusing, as she took time to also answer questions about space that had been submitted by three Sunrise riders, as part of a pre-event “Ask an Astronaut” contest. Earlier in the program, Dr. Bondar also presented ribbons to Sunrise program participants following the therapeutic driving demonstration and musical ride, accompanied by Melissa Carter, representing the Bridge-way Foundation, who sponsored the driving program.

Guests enjoyed delicious food prepared by chefs Moe Vidotto (of Savour the Season) and Steve Chaves (of Malasada World), as Lisa Richards, of Magic 106.1 FM, MC’d the event. The entertaining live auction, led by auctioneer Robert Milburn, raised over \$30,000!

Sunrise board & staff would like to thank the committee members, guests, donors and volunteers who all worked together to make this such a successful event.



Clockwise from top: Therapeutic riding demonstration by Jordana (right) & instructor Tiffany; Dr. Roberta Bondar (at left) with volunteer Jen and rider Layla, who is proudly holding up her ribbon; Tommy Hunter addresses the crowd.



## Sunrise: “A source of inspiration and joy”

This summer, we were delighted to learn that Sunrise had been selected as one of several charities to receive a gift from [Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada \(TMMC\)](#) — this in addition to a recent gift from the employees of Toyota to co-sponsor Maedoc, one of our therapy horses!

Sunrise was nominated by Mike Veit, the parent of a Sunrise rider. In his nomination letter, Mike explained, “Sunrise...is a wonderful not-for-profit organization that has been helping adults and children with various disabilities for over 34 years. Through a dedicated approach to team building, inclusiveness and empowerment, countless individuals have acquired a lifetime of memories, which otherwise may never have occurred.

My daughter is one of those lucky individuals. Afflicted with a mitochondrial disorder and cerebellar ataxia from birth, my daughter has struggled with many issues, not the least of which is her inability to walk independently. For over 17 years, Sunrise has been a great source of inspiration and joy for her. She has learned the value of team work, setting realistic goals, respecting one another and trusting those around us.

Seeing a young, disabled child sitting on top of a horse with a smile from ear to ear, quickly tells the story of true success. People

with disabilities “can” and will “do” when given the opportunity. Sunrise brings that opportunity to life. Through the tireless efforts of the office staff, the compassion, understanding and vision of the board of directors, the wonderful barn staff and the myriad volunteers, Sunrise continues to succeed in helping those that are less fortunate.” We appreciate the support of Mike and his colleagues at Toyota!

### SPECIAL THANKS!

Sunrise would also like to acknowledge the resounding support of the following major sponsors:

[UPI Energy LP](#), for donating \$35,000 from their June golf tournament to Sunrise.

[Spaenaur Philanthropy Fund](#), for a generous grant to sustain and enrich a variety of Sunrise programs and activities.

[McDonald’s Restaurants of Guelph](#), for donating a portion of the proceeds of their McHappy Day to Sunrise.

[Ross-Shire Foundation](#), for their ongoing support!

[Guelph Community Foundation \(McKeough Taylor Fund\)](#), for their annual support of Sunrise programs.



**Hoofbeat Challenge! Ride / walk / hike** for Sunrise on September 24 on over 200 acres of beautiful trails. Free lunch voucher, T-shirt and more for all registrants (\$50 minimum pledges to register). Bring your family and friends— lunch is also available for purchase from The Farmhouse Kitchen food truck....**plus enjoy the silent auction, bake sale, face painting, pet photography, 15 min. massages, trivia trail, and more!** Visit [www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca](http://www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca) or call 519-837-0558 x21 for details.

## New Sunrise Programs

Sunrise is excited to launch its Equine Facilitated Wellness (EFW) program this fall, led by Tricia Mellor, MSW, RSW, CTRII. EFW is a new CanTRA program providing mental health intervention and treatment. Horses are an integral part of these confidential sessions which also include an equine professional. Limited spaces are available, and these services can sometimes be claimed through the client's insurance. For more information, please contact Nikki at 519-837-0558 x29.

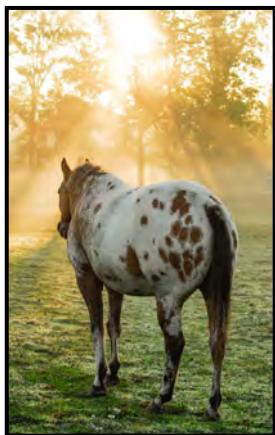
**Registrations for Sunrise's Scotiabank Life Skills Development Program are now being accepted**, as a second day of weekly programming has been launched—now on Thursdays as well as Tuesdays. This 'horses and horticulture' themed day program, for teens and young adults with special needs, focusses on setting and achieving individualized goals in a collaborative, team-based setting. Call Shawna at 519-837-0558 x32 for details.

### IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of dedicated Sunrise volunteer Helen Reid on June 23, 2016. Helen was a leader and sidewalker for many years, and also helped in the stable, grooming and exercising horses, and with any and all barn chores. Although her health prevented her from continuing in this role in recent years, she faithfully supported Sunrise in other ways, especially the care of her beloved Hilary (our donkey). She will be greatly missed!



We are also saddened by the recent passing of Petey, one of our dedicated therapy horses. Polka-a-dot Petey, an Appaloosa, was our "go-to" horse for many of our youngest riders, due to his compact size and very quiet nature. Petey's passing (a decision made due to an incurable, painful and progressive eye disease) will leave a large hole in our herd...and in our hearts.



## SUNRISE CALENDAR

Saturday, September 24

Sunrise Hoofbeat Challenge

Sept. 24 - Oct. 30., 2016  
Weekends

**Harvest Fun Days at Strom's Farm**  
in support of Sunrise  
[www.strom.ca](http://www.strom.ca) for details

Saturday, October 1  
Saturdays - 5 weeks

**Fall "Little Breeches" Club begins**  
(limited spaces still available)

Volunteer Training Clinics  
Held monthly - call Lynne at x31 for details

### Sunrise Mission:

**"To develop the full potential of children and adults with disabilities and lead them closer to independence through a therapy, recreation, horse riding, life skills and farm related activity program."**

### Sunrise Programs: *Experience the warm family atmosphere*

- Therapeutic Riding lessons for children & adults
- Scotiabank Life Skills Program: Tues. & Thurs. year-round
- Riding Club group English riding lessons for independent riders \*
- Riding Day Camp for ages 8 to 13+ \* (summer)\*
- Farm Discovery Day Camp for ages 5 to 8\* (summer)\*
- **"Little Breeches" Club:** an introduction to horses for ages 4 to 7 selected Saturdays (mornings or afternoons) Spring & Fall \*
- Leader-In-Training summer program for ages 13 to 16
- Internships - residential training opportunities for Canadian and International students (3-12 months)
- Volunteer Opportunities

\* 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.  
Camp photos by Katlyn Wildfang.  
Celebrate Sunrise photos (page 3) by  
One2One Photography (Kitchener)

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### Sunrise is a Member of:



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