



Friends for Tomorrow News

Spring '06

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The Quadrille—A Team Effort

"We did it!" Those were Franny's words after completing the quadrille at the Friends for Tomorrow horse show last Saturday, spoken with pride and relief. Speaking in public is a huge challenge for Franny, and the speech at the beginning of the performance was a first for her.

Facing an audience and speaking up can be intimidating to a lot of people, but sitting on horseback and looking down seems to make it easier. Rebecca had been sick on the morning of the show, and yet she came in to ride, because she didn't want to let the team down. She aced her speech and even gave a shy smile. Being amongst friends made it easier to give a beautiful performance.

"We have had a dream for a long time, a dream to bring together a group of riders with similar skills and let them enjoy not only their riding, but also the social aspects of ...working as a team."

"The look" was a much discussed topic amongst the riders during the week leading up to the show, and it certainly added to the team spirit! The music that they picked was very inspirational to them. As they were entering



Jessica and Sarah faced a challenge of a different kind. Riding the faster horses meant a lot of concentration and coordination, and they constantly had to look out for their partners and the other quadrille pair. They rode off the lead rope, and their performance couldn't have been better had they been led!

They all looked beautiful in their blue and purple t-shirts with saddle blankets to match. Thank you, Diane, for making that possible.

the arena, the song "I have a dream" was playing. What an appropriate title! We have had a dream for a long time, a dream to bring together a group of riders with similar skills and let them enjoy not only their riding, but also the social aspects of the barn, hanging out together, looking after their horses together and most of all, working as a team.

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Our Mission is to enhance the lives of children and young adults facing extraordinary mental and physical challenges through the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding.



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Warmest greetings to all,



Although Mother Nature has handed us a challenging spring, we are blessed with the warmth and sunny sparkle of the many smiles brightening our days at Friends For Tomorrow. I am so eager to share all the details, but fear I could fill three newsletters in my efforts to convey my excitement!

Since December, we have seen our riders all choose new goals, and proudly display the fruits of their efforts in our horse show on June 3. Throughout the day, more than 200 spectators and volunteers cheered on our young equestrians. A rainbow theme brightened the dark deluge that gave a soothing backdrop of ambient noise to the day's events. One of the highlights of our day was the Quadrille ride, performed to music by four of our senior riders. Once again, Sue orchestrated a meticulously planned day, easily and seamlessly executed by our capable instructors and volunteers.

We are so fortunate to be a participant in several unexpected and heartwarming projects this year. FFT was featured as a grant recipient in a video produced by Middlesex Savings Bank to further their philanthropic efforts supporting the Middlesex Savings Charitable Fund. We have been invited to participate in another filming project to be completed later this summer with the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation. Several of our volunteers pursued senior projects this spring, focusing on various aspects of the program, including direct service and administrative and fundraising support.

We are humbled by the inspiration felt by participants here, both as riders and as volunteers. We listened with tears in our eyes as young women who struggle to make eye contact and carry on simple conversation spoke publicly – clearly and to a group of more than 60 family and friends. Our volunteer Katie was inspired to author, design and publish an incredible book for the children in our program. It is my hope that we can help her find someone

“I remain so grateful to each and every person who reaches out to stay involved in our work.”

in the publishing industry to support her efforts; perhaps you are the person to support FFT in this unique way!

I remain so grateful to each and every person who reaches out to stay involved in our work.

Whether deeply involved as a family riding with us, a volunteer, a donor, or someone who simply takes the time to stay in touch with our efforts through reading the newsletter, you are behind the success of our riders. Enjoy the stories to follow, and thank you for coming along for the ride!

May this summer bring you the deep peace felt in lazy childhood days,

Diane

Welcome “Third Time’s a Charm!”

The young “Prince”, as he is called in his home at Coldbrook Farm was born at 5:00 in the morning on June 15. Mom Jigsaw and her colt are both healthy and doing well! We look forward to Jen sharing all his stories of mischief as he explores the world and makes new friends.



Quadrille

continued from page 1

Our dream came true this winter. Being on a different schedule gave us the opportunity to fit some quadrille practice sessions in. After our 5 winter sessions the girls had memorized the figures, but we still needed a lot of fine-

tuning. Four more sessions were scheduled outside of normal program hours. The result was the stunning performance you saw at the show. The large audience and the spontaneous applause for difficult moves were very encouraging for our riders. Even the dreaded pinwheel went off smoothly. They were all beaming with pride and relief at the end of the ride, and rightfully so. A dream came true – we did it, indeed!

Indeed, Dreams do come true! Thirteen years ago, I sat watching my son, Sam, then two, giggling and talking to a pony as though he was a brother. Daydreams and wishes, mentors, hard work and generosity throughout the years have seen a dream blossom and grow beyond my farthest-reaching hopes. To know my dream has allowed others to

The Quadrille

by student rider Francesca Brown

To prepare for the riding show I practiced every Friday for three weeks. I rode on Doc every time. Doc is a nice and gentle horse. I decided to get new clothes for the show. My mom took me to the store to buy socks, pants, and riding boots.

A lot of my friends participated in the show. The show was two hours long. I cheered for my friends when they were riding. It was fun riding in the show. I did a good job. I wasn't nervous because I had enough practice. It was exciting having my family watch me ride. I like riding horses. They are cute.

pursue theirs has been one of the biggest gifts of my life. So, to Franny, Jessica, Rebecca, Sarah, Sue, Lucy, and all the FFT family, KEEP THOSE DREAMS COMING!! We'll be along for the ride.



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gratitude is shared
with our two host
farms, Berryfield
Farm and
ColdBrook Farm.
Your generosity
allows us to bring
great joy to the
riders, families,
and all of us here
at Friends For
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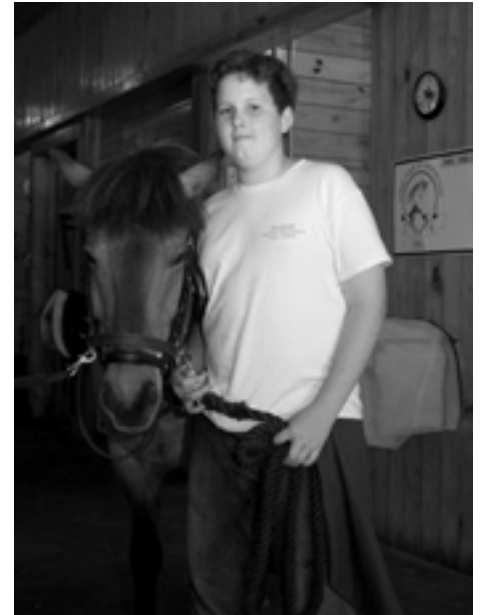
Thank You!

Volunteer Profiles—Andy

I have been volunteering at Friends for Tomorrow since the fall of 2005. In the beginning I was only doing this to get my required community service. But I just recently surpassed those goals and am still happily volunteering at Friends for Tomorrow at least once a week.

When I began volunteering, for the first two months the whole process was a little bit awkward. As a rider myself, I knew some of the stuff that needed to be done, and this contributed to me getting through the first couple sessions alive. At this point I didn't know where anything was, or what

you could or couldn't do, so I worried that I was always going to be doing something wrong. Experience helped; after 4 or 5 months, which goes by unbelievable quickly, you start getting more and more comfortable with your surroundings. After about five months you get into a routine. You also build a friendship with some of the riders. In the earlier stages, they go through the same awkward time as you when they have a new volunteer working with them. You don't quite know what to say or how to act. Some kids slowly start remembering your name. Later on, some kids start talking to you like they have known you their whole lives. And then after a couple weeks you start interacting more with some of the kids, like grooming the horses with them or something as small as fixing their shoe



in the stirrup. I think that gaining friends is what this program does for a lot of kids and volunteers. That is why I am always happy to volunteer for Friends for Tomorrow.

Charlotte

Ever since I was little, I've loved horses. I always wanted to be around them – whether it was simply feeding an apple when I could, or driving by pastures of them during car rides. When I was nine years old, I finally got to start taking lessons at a local barn; I was thrilled! It was my dream. After many lessons and being a working student for four years, it happened. I got a horse for my thirteenth birthday! I love being with my horse. Being with horses gives you such a great feeling. That's why it's so much fun helping other kids be around horses.

Volunteering at Friends For Tomorrow is probably the most rewarding thing I've ever done. I feel like I'm helping kids to do what I love, which is ride horses. Just two or three hours after school can make a lifetime of difference to the kids who get to ride here. Just spending

time with the ponies can make the highpoint of their day. It's also great because I still get to be around horses – the Icelandic horses! These ponies are great, they're so well behaved and seem to love their job.

I feel that everybody should be able to ride no matter who you are. FFT is so great because clearly they feel the same way. The instructors devote their time to helping the kids learn to ride and about horsemanship. Riding is such a great thing for everyone to do because it's so beneficial. It is an emotional and sometimes even physical way to heal yourself and others. It gives such a powerful feeling of freedom that only the moving shoulder blades and smooth easy gaits of a horse can give you.

Being at Friends for Tomorrow is always good time spent. I think it's such an important part of the day for the

Charlotte

kids who ride here for two reasons. Having fun and being around horses, and having the feeling that no matter what, there will always be people and ponies here that care about them. When the children leave here at the end of the day, we already miss them and can't wait to see them again the following week. It is wonderful to know that those fuzzy snuggly ponies will always be there, ready to give them a wonderfully spent afternoon.

Volunteer Highlights

Scattered across the page are images from the gift Katie Parrish presented to FFT this spring, a book inspired by her experiences with the children of Friends For Tomorrow. Katie has always loved horses and children; recent years have cultivated a love of writing as well. Having earned the privilege to pursue a senior project at CCHS, Katie combined her passions, the result of which is a brilliant book, *A is for Adventure*. She wrote, photographed, designed and published a limited number of books, most of which were awarded as trophies at our recent show. It is our hope that we can continue to support Katie's efforts by assisting her in having more books



published for the program; we would welcome suggestions or assistance in attaining this goal!

It is always hard to say goodbye; it is with excitement and best wishes that we wish several of our high school seniors success and happiness as they move

into the next chapters of their lives. Katie Parrish and Sarabeth Henderson have both been with us for their high school careers, each giving well over 600 hours of precious time. We also wish Elissa Bullion the best as she heads off to college.

We are so grateful to all our volunteers, for the exuberance and connection of our young adults and for the steady and seasoned support of our more senior volunteers. We always welcome new faces into our family of volunteers, and have been interested to see an increase in adult volunteers this past year. Please contact us if you are interested in joining us!



D is for Determination to reach for the sky.

Our Volunteers

Kris Auger

Mia Auger

Henry Barrera

Marie Louise Barrett

Joanne Borstell

Kylie Branch

Elissa Bullion

Allison Bryan

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Lucy Huber

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Gwyndaf Jones

Margo Kenney

Lauren Knollmeyer

Sumi Krishnan

Franco Lichauco

Alissa Long

Jenny Macone

Jessica Margolis

Chloe McGuffin

Emily Miner

Linda Miner

Ann Nawn

Suzanne Oblom

Susan Paige

Katie Parrish

Andrew Platt

Carol Ravanis

Hannah Reeve

Giselle Riobueno

Naylor

Rebecca Robinson

Charlotte Sargent

Matt Segal

Priscilla Smith

Alice Tattersall

Tudor Velea

Louisa Walker

Jeannie Watson

Nori Welles-Gertz

Jessica Wentzel

Amanda Williams



Volunteers Sarabeth and Katie will be heading off to college in the fall. Their dedication to our program and their commitment to the children will be missed by everyone.

Friends for Tomorrow, Inc.



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Your Continued Support Helps Our Program Flourish

Ramping Up Support

The riders of Friends For Tomorrow have a new circle of Friends! One of the first sunny evenings in June set the tone for a warm welcome when Frank's Steakhouse in Cambridge hosted a wonderful evening featuring a selection of wines and a delicious buffet. In addition to introducing more than 100 people to the program, we received an outpouring of support from our FFT families and contributors.

Hannah Belson, along with the help of her Mom and Dad, shared with attentive new acquaintances the story of Hannah and her weekly visits with Sue. Listening to the words of the family, and particularly the "Thank You" from Hannah, said more than we as representatives of FFT ever could. We also asked volunteers Katie Parrish and Lauren Knollmeyer to share their passion for the children of FFT, which they did with poise and sincerity. We are most grateful to all who helped

make this evening a grand success, and welcome our new friends!

Carol Ravanis, one of our Board members, seamlessly guided us through the successful event at her family's restaurant on Massachusetts Avenue. Frank's Steakhouse generously donated their space, attentive staff, and all the food we could eat. Wines were selected and donated by Berman's Wine and Spirits and M.S. Walker of Somerville, as well as our board. Flowers were donated by Lindsay Norris of Lincoln, bringing the beauty of June roses, peonies, and sunflowers indoors.

The proceeds of the evening, in excess of \$7,000.00, will be used to help fund the design and installation of an appropriate mounting ramp for our use. This vital piece of equipment helps support our riders by encouraging more independence and increased physical ease through the mounting process.

It offers additional _____ for our instructors as well, aiding our older and heavier riders onto the horses' backs. We are so blessed to have riders who have been with us for years, and to know we can grow alongside them with their needs as budding young adults.

Thank you all helping us "ramp up" our program!



Hannah Belson on Jigsaw at Cold Brook Farm

Visit us online at www.friendsfortomorrow.org