



## Hands-On-Horses Submitted by Leora Barry

In July PVTRA sponsored a week long program we named Hands-On-Horses. The program was created to provide a week long equine experience for young women considered "at risk." When a person is labeled at-risk it implies they are in danger of poor academic skills, poor social skills, drug related problems, self-injurious behaviors, hazardous sexual behaviors, and/or psychological issues which are typically due to their environment.

Sue Sullivan, a board of directors member and licensed social workers, invited 5 young women aged 12 to 15 to participate. Leora Barry, one of PVTRA's riding instructors, took this opportunity to document changes in the participants and gain evidence to support the benefits of therapeutic riding. As a graduate student in Bay Path College's Masters in Occupational Therapy program, she has learned about conducting research as well as met wonderful friends who have become dependable volunteers for PVTRA.



Since the Fall of 2009 PVTRA has benefited from a professional relationship formed with Bay Path College's Occupational Therapy (OT) Program. We have been fortunate to have students donate their time and expertise during riding lessons, horse shows, the Hands on Horses Summer Program, the annual Ride-A-Thon, a school service project and facility repair. Students have found that this exposure to various disabilities increased their confidence in working with people of different backgrounds/abilities, ultimately impacting their professional future.

This past November the OT students did a service project for the **Mooreland STARR Program** which provides transitional housing for young children who need short-term services. Their

A dedicated team worked hard Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 12:30pm to help the 5 girls gain as much as possible from their experience. The team consisted of Teresa Fischer, Gina Brewer, Kristen Hastings, Shari Phillips, Joann Cibelli, Skye Schiller and Pat Barry as the lead riding instructor, and Leora Barry as lead researcher and barn instructor. Sue Sullivan also committed herself to being available for the entire time the girls were at the farm.

The girls learned how to take care of their horse, from cleaning the stalls, to grooming and tacking, to cleaning the tack, and learning to ride. Some wonderful changes were seen in the participants over the week. We saw lots of smiles, sharing, helping, words of encouragement, and a desire to volunteer for PVTRA just to name a few.

The research was completed with a full literature review. Leora is now in the process of editing the paper for publication. The hope is to continue this program every summer for 2 reasons: 1) to provide youth at-risk an opportunity to shine; 2) collect more evidence to support therapeutic riding.

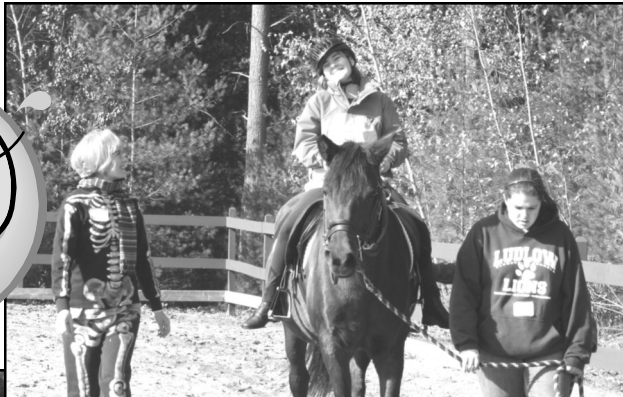
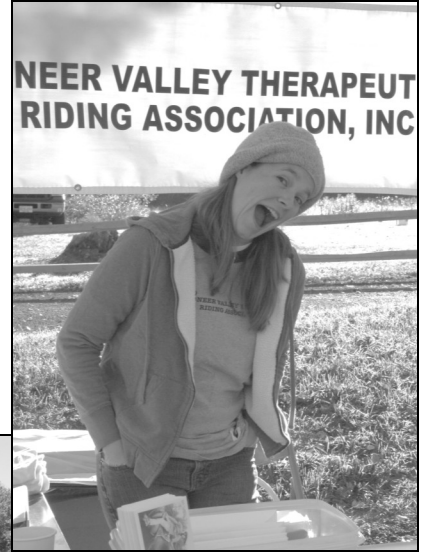
All those who participate in therapeutic riding from the volunteers to the riders, know how beneficial it is. However, insurance companies and medical professionals will never support us if we do not have hard evidence to prove its benefits. PVTRA is becoming an active member of the research community and intends on being an integral part of this exciting new time.

We are currently looking for sponsors to help us continue to provide the Hands-On-Horses program for years to come. For information on sponsorship, please contact Pat Barry at [pvtra.admin@gmail.com](mailto:pvtra.admin@gmail.com).

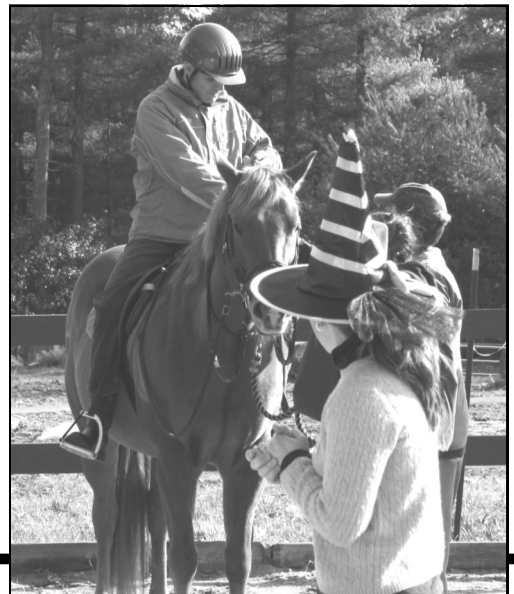
services focus on supporting a rapid reintegration into the community or transition to a next placement. Members of the Bay Path College OT club raised funds so that children from the Mooreland STARR program could ride and spend time outdoors at Wild Barry Ridge farm. Four children came to experience the great outdoors and they had a blast! The club members volunteered their time to help with grooming and riding. They also set up the scavenger hunt for a nice long walk on the sensory trail. Before the morning was over, each child got to decorate a picture frame containing a picture of the horse that they rode. PVTRA is looking forward to providing many more of these positive experiences with the help of Bay Path College students.

# Fall Riding Events

The 26th Annual Candace E. Dixon Ride-a-thon was held on October 10, 2010 from the Swift River Sportsman's Club in Belchertown. Forty-one riders joined the many volunteers for a beautiful day of riding. PVTRA realized approximately \$3800 for their fundraising efforts.



The Halloween Fun Horse Show was held on October 30, 2010 at Wild Barry Ridge Farm. Eleven riders demonstrated the skills acquired through a year of hard work. Thank you to the many volunteers who made this event a success!



Ryan Rocheleau, a Boy Scout with Troop 507 in Belchertown, earned his Eagle rank this summer by assisting the Pioneer Valley Therapeutic Riding Association with site maintenance.

Ryan first approached Executive Director, Pat Barry, in March 2010 when he was looking for an Eagle project. Pat gave Ryan some options and he chose a difficult project. He chose to find donations of lumber and replace the boards on the riding arena which were deteriorating.

Ryan managed parents, fellow scouts, 4-H members and PVTRA volunteers. This crew of able-bodied volunteers worked tirelessly for 10 hours over a weekend to replace the boards. The following week Ryan returned with a smaller contingent to stain the whole arena.

## Eagle Scout Assists PVTRA



Positive Thought for the Day

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

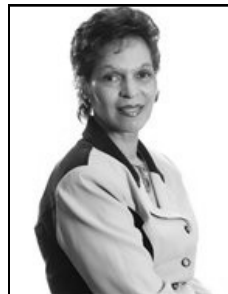
## Golf Tournament Held

A fundraising golf tournament was held Sunday, September 19th. Forty-three golfers met for a noon shotgun start at the Mill Valley Golf Links in Belchertown. The eleven teams of golfers enjoyed 18 holes of golf, a steak dinner and prizes for the teams winning 1st through 5th place. The feedback from participants was really positive according to Michelle Mesheau, one of the event organizers. We had some very generous sponsors who helped organize the tournament and donated many wonderful prizes for the raffles and team prizes. Thank you to all who assisted with this wonderful event.



### Wish List

- Farrier's Formula
- New Bridle for Scooby  
(horse pictured in photo at left)
- White Saddle Pads
- Digital Camera
- Camcorder
- USB Flash Drive
- Youth Stirrup Leathers
- Rainbow Reins



### Dr. Lucie K. Lewis

PVTRA is excited to announce that we will be moving forward with our program expansion with the help of Dr. Lucie K. Lewis. Dr. Lewis is an experienced, creative, business and technical writer with an in-depth understanding of planning and evaluation. Her expertise allows her to work with clients to understand their needs.

Dr. Lewis will help us with operation and strategic planning documentation. She will be guiding us through our business plan development. We will be exploring the feasibility of building an indoor facility that will enable PVTRA to increase our program capacity. To learn more visit her website [www.creativefutureslic.com](http://www.creativefutureslic.com).



**Check out our website!**  
[www.pioneervalleytra.org](http://www.pioneervalleytra.org)



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- ◇ *Emily Tower* .....Belchertown

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- ◇ *Patricia Barry*.....Belchertown

**Instructors**

- ◇ *Patricia Barry*.....Belchertown
- ◇ *Leora Barry* ..... Ludlow

**Volunteer Coordinators**

- ◇ *Michele Mesheu*..... Ludlow
- ◇ *Lisa Candido*.....Belchertown



Thank you Steerage Rock Riders 4-H Horse Club for your donation of \$350 toward the purchase of a defibrillator.