



Ontario Therapeutic Riding Association

The **ManeLine** www.ontra.ca

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# Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program-Pride Stables Celebrates 35 Years of Excellence

By Shelley Byers Hanek, Pride Stables

The year 2009 marks the 35th anniversary the largest therapeutic horseback riding program in Canada. Established in 1973 and incorporated in 1974, Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program-Pride Stables combines physical therapy with education, sport and recreation.

Pride Stables served over 320 children and adults with special needs in 2008 in four consecutive sessions including children in their fully integrated summer day camp, Camp Pride. This core program is the backbone of Pride Stables; however, they have expanded their reach beyond the ordinary.

Pride Stables has opened their doors and their arms to at risk children, many of whom are unable to find another form of inspiration towards a brighter future. This Intentional Youth Development Program for Children at Risk is aptly called "Leg Up." In an encouraging environment, local youth are given an opportunity to gain experience in team work, employment, and self-esteem building skills.

"No one can make a mistake at Pride," says Heather MacKneson, Executive Director of Pride Stables. "For a youth who may be experi-



encing difficulties at home or school they are praised for completing the smallest of tasks and leave feeling worth-while and significant."

With three full time staff, four part-time instructors and 250 volunteers, this once grassroots program has quietly grown into something bigger than was originally dreamed of 35 years ago. Like some Canadians, they have not allowed themselves to be overtly demonstrative.

However, with an anniversary this year, Pride is stopping that cycle.

"We've been here for 35 years, serving the Region without much fanfare. This year, we want to toot our own birthday horn!" says MacKneson.

With celebrations planned throughout the year such as a Tack Swap, Craft Sale, and 35th Birthday Party, Pride Stables has taken off from the starting gate and is looking forward to showing off their unique programs.

With 12 horses, 11 ponies and very gracious volunteers on hand to assist a variety of needs ranging from cognitive delays to acquired brain injuries, Pride Stables, a registered charity, relies on the good hearts and generosity of the people of the Region of Waterloo to support their goal of providing a safe, high-quality riding program, including a thriving volunteer program.

"The volunteers are one of the best things about the program," says one parent.

Peggy Binkle's son has been riding with Pride Stables for over 5 years. Peter's cerebral palsy affects mainly his leg muscles, left arm, balance and speech.

"For a child like Peter, whose speech is difficult to understand, the consistency of support for riders is crucial and Pride Stables is super at retaining volunteers over many sessions. I think riding gives Peter a sense of self-esteem that he can do things other kids don't do," Peggy reflects. "All too often in life, the disabled are seen as unable when in reality it just means differently-abled."

Along with these programs, Pride Stables also provides a number of high-school students the opportunity to learn, hands-on, how to maintain a working horse farm. During the year, at least two co-op students will join the staff. These youngsters bring with them a fresh perspective and invaluable assistance in the office and barn.

The Pride Stables of today is a far cry from their humble beginnings. Pride

Stables was first tacked up on a small farm in Shakespeare. There, the horses and arena time were leased from the owners. As the public's demand for the service increased, the board of directors voted to expand to a facility operated by the C.O.D.R.P.

On April 1, 1988, the program moved to its current facility on Pioneer Tower Road in Kitchener. This land became known as Pride Stables.

With the help of the Cameron Heights Kiwanis Club and Mel Hunt, one small pony was purchased for the program. Peg O'My heart was named after Jack's wife. A small Shetland, she is still involved in the program and a favourite among the children.

With a four year waiting list, 13 borrowed horses, 147 riders, and Peggy, Pride Stables was gaining horse power. The community need was apparent. More families were turning to this unique form of therapy which combines the repetitive movement of a horse with a passive heat massage.

Simulating the human walking motion, therapeutic horseback riding is a viable form of physical therapy assisting

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## COMING EVENTS

**June 20** - OnTRA South Regional Competition, TEAD, Mt. Hope, ON

**July 24-26** - 2009 Ontario ParaSport Games, Woodstock, ON

Volunteers are needed for the 2009 OPSG. Please contact us through our website.

To advertised your Events in The ManeLine please send them to: [ontra@ontra.ca](mailto:ontra@ontra.ca)

## CLASSIFIED ADS

### SPECIAL EVENTS

**Sun. March 29** - Tack Swap at Pride Stables  
 10 am - 3 pm at PRIDE Stables, 584 Pioneer Tower Rd., Kitchener  
 Rent a table for just \$10! Contact: 519 653-4686 or [info@pridestables.com](mailto:info@pridestables.com)

**Sat. May 2** - 'Developing Rider & Horse for Therapeutic Riding & ParaEquestrian Sport', Clinic with Nancy Tapley  
 9 am - 5 pm at WindReach Farm, 312 Townline Rd, Ashburn ON  
 For info contact: [stables@windreachfarm.org](mailto:stables@windreachfarm.org)

### COMPETITIONS

**Sat. June 20** - OnTRA South Regional Competition, at TEAD 8360 Leeming Rd., E., Mt. Hope (Hamilton area)

**July 24-26** - Ontario ParaSport Games, Woodstock, ON  
 Volunteers are needed for the 2009 OPSG.  
 For info contact OnTRA through our website.

## 2009 OnTRA MEMBER CENTRES

**ASHBURN:** The Stables at WindReach Farm - 905-655-5827  
**BANCROFT:** EQUALL - 613 474-1556  
**BARRIE/ORILLIA:** Stonegate Farm - 705-327-7801  
**BELLEVILLE:** Quinte Therapeutic Riding Assn. - 613-395-4472  
**BRACEBRIDGE:** With Care Oke-Cook Family Farm - 705-645-5866  
**BRAMPTON/CALEDON:** Caledon Equestrian School - 905 584-2022  
**CALEDON EAST:** Peace Ranch - 905-584-9156  
**CARLETON PLACE:** Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program - 613 257-7121  
**CORNWALL:** Brave-Hearts Riding Club - 613-528-1616  
**CORNWALL:** Second Wind Acres - 613-528-1616  
**DURHAM REGION:** Durham Therapeutic Riding Assoc. - 905-668-6680  
**GREELY/OTTAWA:** Therapeutic Riding Assoc. of Ottawa-Carleton - 613-821-1844  
**GUELPH:** Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre - 519-837-0558  
**HAMILTON:** T.E.A.D. - 905-679-8323  
**INNISFIL:** Springland Riding Stable - 705-431-7009  
**KINGSTON:** Happy Heart Hippotherapy (Uniquestri Ltd.) - 613-546-7770  
**KITCHENER:** CODRP / Pride Stables - 519-653-4686  
**LONDON:** SAFI Therapeutic Riding - 519-866-1123  
**MILTON:** Windrush Stable Therapeutic Riding Centre - 905-854-6008  
**NEWMARKET:** Horse At Heart Therapeutic Equestrian Centre - 905-898-3201  
**NIAGARA ON THE LAKE:** Red Roof Retreat - 905-684-0235  
**NORTH AUGUSTA:** Touch a Rainbow - 613-926-2116  
**OWEN SOUND:** G.F.A.C.E. - 519-372-2721  
**PETERBOROUGH:** PARD Therapeutic Riding - 705 742-6441  
**PETROLIA:** Tomlynn Acres Reg. Quarter Horses - 519-882-0958  
**PORT ELGIN:** P.R.A.N.C.E. - 519-832-2522  
**PORT BURWELL:** Jabez Therapy Ranch - 519-874-1168  
**RIDGEWAY:** I CAN-T.E.R. - 905-894-3276  
**SAULT STE. MARIE:** Therapeutic Ride Algoma - 705 945-8546  
**SHELBURNE:** Traditions Farm Therapeutic Riding Centre - 519-925-1866  
**THUNDER BAY:** Thunder Bay Therapeutic Riding Assoc. - 807-472-5650  
**TIMMINS:** Timmins Therapeutic Riding Assoc. - 705-269-5994  
**TORONTO:** C.A.R.D. - 416-667-8600  
**WINDSOR:** Windsor-Essex Therapeutic Riding Assoc. - 519-969-1261  
 Please volunteer at a centre near you!

DISCLAIMER: Please be advised that OnTRA is not responsible for the accreditation, actions or activities at any OnTRA Member Centre. OnTRA has no legal or structural authority over any Member Centre as each Centre is autonomous. Be aware that horseback riding can be a dangerous sport therefore you should verify the safety procedures & the certification of the instructors at the therapeutic riding facility of your choice.

## OnTRA Rider Awarded OEF Bursary Fund

A Markham, ON young rider with a disability has been awarded two major honours by the Ontario Equestrian Federation (OEF). Brock Bontje has received both the prestigious 2008 OEF Bursary for junior riders and the 2008 Cassie Bonnar Award.

The OEF offers a minimum of five bursaries annually to Junior OEF members (youth between 14 -17 yrs) wishing to pursue an equine career and/or further their competitive goals. The winners are awarded the prestigious OEF Bursaries based on their current involvement with horses and their future goals, as well as letters of recommendation from their respective coaches. The \$1000 OEF Bursaries go towards riding lessons, training, competition fees, continuing education, or other activities that will assist the winners in reaching their equestrian objectives for 2009.

When Brock began riding in the therapeutic riding program at Community Association for Riding for the Disabled (CARD) eight years ago he required two side walkers and a leader. He progressed to having a leader and now rides independently. Through his dedication and perseverance Brock has made significant gains in strength and improved posture as well as self-esteem and confidence.

Just 4 years ago Brock began competing. He has overcome his many challenges to compete for the first time at his



Brock Bontje

classified level, Grade 2 (walk/trot), at the '2008 Ontario ParaSport Summer Games' where Brock was awarded the Intermediate Level Silver Medal.

Brock is very committed to both riding and assisting with the CARD therapeutic riding program. At the age of 14 he became a volunteer with CARD. Brock was chosen to work at CARD for the second year in the Co-op placement program through his school. Last summer Brock worked as a leader and sidewalker, assisting severely disabled children in the

CARD Summer Camp Program. In addition to the Co-op and Summer Camp Program, he continues to volunteer in classes helping other children with special needs find the joy and benefits that therapeutic riding has given him.

Brock's dedication is evident when asked what riding means to him:

"I love everything about CARD, and especially the horses. It makes me feel proud that I can ride a horse. I ride at CARD one day a week. I volunteer in classes two times a week and more if they need me. Last summer I was hired as a program summer staff student. I did my co-op work placement from school last year and I was asked to come back to do my co-op three days a week this year.

This year my goal is to become a grooming trainer. I am learning and grooming our miniature horse. CARD has taught me that I can work with horses and children. This is something I am good at and something I can do as a career.

Riding lets me try new challenges like competing in dressage and then the judges let me know what I need to work on and improve.

Someday, I hope to ride for Canada in the Paralympics."

OnTRA congratulates Brock Bontje on all of his equestrian achievements in 2008 and wishes him every success in the future.

## Advanced DVD Orders Now Available For The 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Finals

Las Vegas - March 3, 2009 - Those interested in owning DVDs of the championship dressage and jumping competition at the 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Finals can now place their advance orders online at [www.thesporthouse.com](http://www.thesporthouse.com).

The Rolex FEI World Cup Finals return to the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas, April 15-19, featuring the world's best horses and riders competing for the title of FEI World Cup Champion in the two Olympic disciplines of show jumping and dressage.

The "Live and Unedited" DVDs feature all the high jumping, side stepping, non-stop equestrian action with limited graphics and commentary.

"We are so excited to offer fans the opportunity to place advance orders for these DVDs of the 2009 Rolex FEI World Cup Finals," said Liz Hughes of Carr-Hughes Productions, producers of the DVDs. "Horse lovers never get tired of watching their favorite horses and riders compete; these DVDs will be a great addition to any equestrian enthusiast's video library!"

Individual DVDs are available of the FEI World Cup Final Dressage Grand Prix, FEI World Cup Final Dressage Freestyle, FEI World Cup

Show Jumping Final I, FEI World Cup Show Jumping Final II, and FEI World Cup Show Jumping Final III for \$20.00 each.

Fans may also choose to purchase the "Ultimate FEI World Cup Fan Package" for \$93.00, which includes a DVD of each of the 5 events.

DVDs can be ordered in advance, on-line at [www.thesporthouse.com](http://www.thesporthouse.com), or by calling toll free within the US at 1-888-546-7406 or 518-946-7820 for those outside of the United States. DVDs will also be sold on-site at the Rolex FEI World Cup Finals in the vendor area.

Started in 1979, the FEI World Cup Jumping Final is an annual international showdown among the world's best show jumping horses and riders. Approximately 45 riders qualify from 13 leagues around the world. In the 30 finals held through 2008, United States riders have emerged with the most titles, having won the championship seven times.

The 2009 event will mark the eighth FEI World Cup Jumping Final to be held in the United States, following Finals in Baltimore in 1980, Tampa, Fla. in 1989, Del Mar, Calif. in 1992 and four in Las Vegas in 2000, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

First held in 1986, the FEI

World Cup Dressage Final has been held in the U.S. three times, in 1995 in Los Angeles and 2005 and 2007 in Las Vegas. The Netherlands has dominated the competition, winning nine titles, followed by Germany with seven. The United States won its first title in 2003 when Debbie McDonald rode Brentina to the championship.

### About Las Vegas Events

Founded in 1983, Las Vegas Events, Inc. has grown with Las Vegas as the city has emerged as one of the world's top special event and resort destinations. A private, not-for-profit organization, LVE is funded by hotel room tax and serves as the exclusive major special events agency for the city. Since 1991, Las Vegas Events has produced, presented or supported more than 480 events, which have driven more than 4.4 million visitors to the area, resulting in an economic impact of more than \$2.7 billion. Further information about the Rolex FEI World Cup & Jumping and Dressage Finals, including information on purchasing tickets, is also available at the official website at [www.lasvegas-events.com](http://www.lasvegas-events.com).

## CODRP - Pride Stables

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with posture, balance, mobility and function. Further, it is very useful for individuals who have impaired perceptual, cognitive, behavioural, mental health and language skills. Overall, the benefits are multifunctional bringing together a social, physical and educational approach to therapy, with a little bit of magic in the mix.

Fast forward to 2009 and Pride Stables is celebrating 35 years of magic. Today Pride has 20 acres of land, an indoor riding arena and no waiting list. Each horse on the property, has been generously donated to the program. The community has grown around the little farm. Deer Ridge Golf and Country Club spans two sides of the fences and new homes saddle up to the edge of the property. A little slice of heaven sits among the growth.

With new riders contacting Pride daily, the program can fill over 600 spaces each year without overlap. However, for many, riding in every session is their joy. This joy can be felt in the letters written to horses and tacked onto the stall doors in the barn...

Dear Nickers

You are the best horse. I like you because you are beautiful. I like riding you. I like touching your fur. I have so much fun horse back riding. I love Pride Stables. I will miss you until I come next time.

Love David



Dear Peggy,

It is fun running a round with the other Ponies? I miss you. I hop I see you wne I com to agine. I love you Peggy. The next time I see You I wil give you a apple and a cairrit. I love you Peggy.

Love Shelley

Pride would like to extend an invitation to everyone to come for a visit to witness the magic of Pride. Celebrations will be ongoing. Stay tuned to [www.pridestables.com](http://www.pridestables.com) for details.

To Find out more about becoming an OnTRA member check our website, [www.ontra.ca](http://www.ontra.ca) or call 905-839-4931

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