



Xenophon News

Volume 4

Winter 2008

Make sure your calendar is marked for the **XENOPHON GALA** which will be on **March 14th, 2009.**

Thank you to our 2008 Board of Directors

- *****
- Terry Murphy, President
- John Fazel, Vice President
- Chris Legallet, Treasurer
- Ellen Marienthal, Secretary
- Kris Holst
- Joni Binder
- Mark Caron
- Denise Boucher



Xenophon NARHA Award winners!

2008 NARHA Youth Equestrian Award



"I am more than cancer!"

Those were the words and the philosophy of Anthony Fusaro. Anthony had an amazing ability to face down adversity. He arrived at Xenophon in a wheelchair, bringing a great smile, a wonderful sense of humor and a life expectancy of six months. He progressed from wheelchair to cane and from surcingle to saddle to independent riding.

When he was strong, he groomed, tacked, led and mounted independently. When his health permitted, he gave presentations about the benefits of riding and Anthony could really draw his listeners in. He inspired his doctors and nurses as well as other students, volunteers and instructors at Xenophon.

During the last year of his life, Anthony may have been fighting a terminal illness, but his spirit was unwavering. He worked on his Eagle Scout Project, which he called HOPE (Helping Oncology Patients Endure) and even when he was once again getting around in a wheelchair, he hoped to ride again. He was one amazing individual.

Anthony passed away on May 20, 2008. Those he touched at Xenophon remember how truly special he was—how positive and strong he was through adversity—and most of all how his courageous spirit and love of life shined through his eyes and his great smile.

2008 Volunteer of the Year Award - Region 11

Ken Bergstresser has been a part of Xenophon since the early stages of the program and his dedication truly reflects in his involvement around the barn. Ken typically arrives at the barn before the sun comes up on Saturday mornings. Before feeding the horses, he begins his day by walking around to each paddock and hugging each horse individually. When a new horse was being introduced to the program, Ken commented that he would be administering the 'hug test' to determine if it would fit in. He encompasses a gentle, patient demeanor which is critical in a therapeutic riding atmosphere. Ken brings a smart, witty sense of humor to the program that is enjoyed by the parents, students, and volunteers.

Ken is originally from Chicago but has been in the Bay Area since 1950. He graduated from San Francisco State University in 1966 with a degree in Mathematics. He is currently a database analyst with Wells Fargo Bank - a position he has held for 29 years. He is looking forward to retirement so he can spend more time at Xenophon!



Ken has two sons and five grandchildren. He and Rebecca have been together now for twenty-three years! They have two horses - both Lucitanos: a 23 year old gelding (Pegasso) and an 8 year old stallion (Talisman).

When he's not around horses, Ken loves photography, astronomy, reading, biking and gardening.

Saturday mornings at Xenophon wouldn't be the same without Ken.

PARENTS PERSPECTIVES

By Bonny Griebstein

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Horses lend us the
wings we lack.

~Author Unknown

On Thursday, June 19th, my daughter, Jane arrived at Xenophon for her weekly lesson.

As we waited in our usual place on the deck, the vet conferred with the staff about Cocoa's condition. Jane watched, listened and absorbed all the nuances of the unfolding drama. A decision was made to take Cocoa to the veterinary hospital in Davis. Jan was committed to teaching Jane's lesson as scheduled. As the volunteers prepared to enter the arena, they each took a turn to say goodbye to Cocoa. Jane seemed to recognize that it may be a final goodbye. Jane was fixated on the departing horse trailer so Jan prompted her to blow a kiss to Cocoa as the trailer pulled away from the arena. Everyone's professionalism in the face of extreme emotion was extraordinary.

At our evening meal, Jane asked to add Cocoa to grace. Then at bedtime, she suggested that we say a special prayer for Cocoa. Jane told everyone in her circle of family and friends about Cocoa. We were amazed by all the spontaneous language and emotional connectedness that Cocoa's ordeal produced in Jane. We rejoiced when Cocoa survived her surgery and were elated when she returned to Lafayette.

Henson's stables provided Cocoa a warm stall in which to recuperate. Since Henson's is walking distance from our house and I am a long time horsewoman; we asked Janet if we could participate in Cocoa's care. Through the months of Cocoa's recovery, Jane and I hand walked and brushed Cocoa many times each week. A visit to her and her horse friends at Henson's became a staple of our summertime routine. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to give back to the program that had given us so much in such a short time.

As the day approached when Cocoa would return to Xenophon, I selfishly had some trepidation about the loss of such a gratifying routine for Jane. But Jane rose to the occasion and spontaneously announced how glad that Cocoa would return to her Xenophon friends.

2008 NARHA Equine of the Year Recognition Award

Cocoa, our beautiful 21 year old mare beat out hundreds of other horses to win this national award. Many of you know how wonderful she is when ridden by one of our students but did you know that when an able-bodied person rides her, she shows the fiery personality of an Arabian? She can adjust her energy level according to who is riding her. With our young, disabled riders, she slows her pace especially when her rider is unbalanced or unable to sit up straight. With a background in shows and parades, Cocoa is tolerant with excited, spontaneously noisy children. Although she is by nature wary and undemonstrative, she lovingly nuzzles children who come to feed her a treat after a lesson. It is clear that she has all the patience in the world for our students and she will stand quietly with soft eyes when they bestow their hugs and kisses.



Cocoa is majestic and beautiful inside and out.

Comments from the Corner Stall

Judy Lazarus, Executive Director

Fall is here; the leaves are changing and the days are cooling off. It seems like only yesterday that we were thinking about the beginning of our riding season.

Our children continue to progress and have fun at their horseback riding lessons. Their smiles are a great reward for our effort. It is a joy to watch our dedicated instructors doing their jobs so well; and thank you to all our devoted volunteers. This year we served 40 students of many different disabilities. They learned and thrived with the help of our dedicated instructors and volunteers.

The following note from Rocio Palomino, aged 14, will tell you what a joy riding can be:

As far back as I can remember, I have always wanted to participate in sports, but because of my disability, and the fact that I must use a wheelchair to get around, my choices have always been limited. Riding a horse is like nothing I have ever experienced. For once in my life, I was moving about freely, without the restraints which having a disability places on me. I was seeing my surroundings in a whole new light. On the outside, I must admit, I was nervous about being so high above the ground, but on the inside, I was jumping for joy.

In order for us to continue our exemplary program we will need your help. Our financial future depends on the generosity our friends. Next year will certainly be difficult for all, but we will need your help even more than ever. Your donation will help in so many ways. It can fund a scholarship, help with horse care or help with the maintenance of our lovely facility. It truly does "take a village" to make sure that everything goes well. Please add your name to our donor family.

We have a bright future with the arrival of Clark Construction. They have asked to build us a covered arena. This is a dream come true. If everything proceeds as planned, we should begin construction next Fall. Thank you to Bill and Barbra Casselman of Clark Construction who are spearheading the project. Thanks also to McGuire and Hester who have already cleared the land for the future arena.

We need your help! We will be working on a comprehensive strategic plan for Xenophon's future. We want your input! Please watch for an online survey in January!

Once upon a time there was a little princess name Kiwi and she had a magic horse ball she used to play with it outside. She was a happy little princess and then her magic ball landed in a scary forest & there was an evil king named Bandit & he saw Kiwi and he used horse evil powers to close the door she tried to open the door but Bandit said you've been a bad little princess you came in my forest then he grabbed her and put her in his castle then she was locked in the highest tower then a prince name Pal came in and saved her then ran out then he had her magic ball then king Bandit closed the doors then he said where do you think you're going? then prince Pal said run princess Kiwi run she did then prince Pal did also then Pooh was Kiwi's sister and Cocoa was her mother and princess Kiwi and prince Pal got married and lived happily ever after then king Bandit was jealous because princess Kiwi was gone and never came back.

The End by Alicia Jensen





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Group Name: Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center / Group ID # 5367046

Xenophon's Mission

Xenophon's mission is to provide a high quality program of therapeutic horseback riding and related activities to disabled children. By providing a safe and stimulating environment, Xenophon seeks to enrich the lives of our students by improving their physical and mental ability, increasing their confidence, and enhancing their self esteem.



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