

Xenophon

Xenophon's Mission: Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of disabled children by providing a high-quality program of therapeutic horseback riding and related activities



"Run for the Roses" a Huge Success

Staff

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While the event occurred the evening of March 22, not on May 3—the day of the running of the Kentucky Derby—as you walked in the door of Round Hill Country Club,

it was hard to believe that you weren't at Churchill Downs. Men and women alike had donned their derby best, and the hats rivaled those at the last royal wedding. Our hat judges had a difficult job choosing the best of them, and were so stumped that three awards were given for three different categories. The most creative hat displayed an actual racetrack around the brim. The over-

all best-hat award was given to Joni Hirth for her "crown of roses."

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Instructors

Janet Alexander, O.T.

Jan Bindas

Laura Fend

Tineke Jacobsen, P.T.

Myke Judd

Heidi Koch

Melissa Maker

Wanda Sayuk

Board Members

Mark Caron – President

Trudy Presser – Vice President

Judy Lazarus – Treasurer

Jean Johnstone – Secretary

Leslie de Boer

Bryan Goldwyn

Ann Welch

Bridle Paths to Success: A New Pilot Program Starting at Xenophon



Beginning in July, Xenophon is teaming up with *RES Success*, a nonprofit residential program for adults with developmental disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorders. (RES stands for Redefining Educational Services.) "Bridle Paths to Suc-

cess" is a non-mounted horse interaction program designed to provide young adults with a horse-focused educational opportunity. Participants come one day a week to interact with the Xenophon horses while learning horse husbandry and life skills.



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Research Project Taking Place at Xenophon

Although therapeutic riding has been in existence since the 1950s, documenting its physical, cognitive and emotional benefits has been slow in coming. Whereas the benefits were evident in the participants' progress, true scientific studies have been few and far between. It has been only over the past 15 years that

empirical studies have been undertaken, presenting repeatable, irrefutable results. These types of studies have led to greater acceptance of the practice of therapeutic riding and hippotherapy amongst the medical community, as well as the advent of insurance reimbursement for hippotherapy costs. Both milestone accom-

plishments within our industry are due, in large part, to the involvement of licensed medical professionals such as doctors; licensed physical, occupational and speech therapists; and other licensed medical professionals.



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Student Horse Show May 31, 2014 by Myke Judd

Saturday, May 31st was a beautiful day for Xenophon's annual student horse show at our facility in Orinda. Scores of volunteers arrived early to get our wonderful therapeutic horses spruced, groomed and warmed up for our Xenophon riders. We had 43 of our 54 students participating in the show, which opened with a colorful ceremony and a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner sung by Susan Fleming. Our riders did an outstanding job of demonstrating their riding skills for our enthusiastic audience of parents, siblings, friends and volunteers. Demonstrations included a competitive game of "Red Light, Green Light;" Novice and Advanced Trail Class in which riders showed off their ability to maneuver around obstacles in the arena; a Games Class using "human poles;" vaulting skills and dressage skills, followed by a Hippotherapy Parade. All riders enthusiastically received their

trophies and acknowledged the fervent praise and therapeutic applause from the audience.

The horses looked beautiful, with their manes and tails braided and bedecked with green ribbons; they showed amazing patience and worked hard throughout the day. We couldn't run our program without our four-legged friends—Dandie, Ozzie, King David, Go-Go, Starlight, Dinero and sub WimB.

Xenophon Executive Director Mari Parino presented a thrilling driving demonstration through a cones course with her beautiful Frisiann, WimB. Melissa Maker, one of our instructors, performed a spectacular dressage demonstration for all to admire, giving several students something to work toward.

A delicious, complementary BBQ lunch was provided by the Xenophon Board of Directors for all—students, parents, sib-

lings, volunteers and other guests— expertly cooked and served by Sam Parino, Trudy and Bruce Presser, Greg Welch, Ron Wichmann, Brian Neville, Bryan Goldwyn and Mark Caron. They served 180 hamburgers and 50+ hot dogs. It was a real treat and was clearly greatly appreciated by all.

It was a tremendously successful day, enjoyed by everyone there. The day would not have been complete, of course, without our amazing photographer, Jim Pire, there to take all the wonderful photos (which you can see on our website). It was a memorable day made possible by the long hours of Xenophon volunteers and instructors and especially the hard work of Danielle, Mari and Christine for organizing and running the show. Thanks, everyone, for a job well done. This was our best student horse show ever!

Xenophon's First Tack Sale by Rae Miller



Staff and volunteers staged Xenophon's first tack sale on June 21 at Danville's

"Summerfest," joining Horses Healing Hearts, Sonrise Equestrian Foundation and Iron Horse Equestrian with a variety of new and used merchandise for equine enthusiasts. Wearing colorful leis and joining Christine and Danielle to staff the event were Rae Miller, Lindsay Hendricks and Heidi Koch, along with mothers and daughters from the Rolling Hills and Lamorinda National Charity Leagues.

Marc Ayala-Bass, former sales rep for Tekna Saddle Company, donated

several new saddles, bridles, girths, martingales, splint boots and halters. Other generous donations included saddles, tack, books, clothing and miscellaneous items.

Proceeds totaled more than \$1,600, which will be applied toward Xenophon's many needs and projects.



Horse Husbandry Field Trips for Local Schools



This spring, both Springstone High School and Woodside Elementary School made field trips out to Xenophon. It was the third trip for the teens from Springstone High School; their day consisted of learning about the horses' diets and how to identify and use the various tools in the

grooming kit. Interactive sessions included getting hay, grain and supplements ready for the evening feed, learning about and cleaning the different parts of the tack, and grooming our horses until their coats were shiny. In addition to being enthusiastic learners, the students were a big help around the center, taking care of various miscellaneous jobs. The group of 10 energetic 3rd to 5th graders from Woodside

Elementary School also learned about horse husbandry. The highlight of the day was labeling the parts of the horse—directly on the horses with chalk! Starlight and Ozzie were champs as they stood patiently while being "painted." The day ended with a picnic and fun arena games.



Leslie de Boer Recipient of the *Jean Schaffner Spirit Award*



The Jean Schaffner Spirit Award is a long-time tradition at Xenophon and its presentation is one of the highlights of the annual gala. The award was established years ago by Kate Schaffner in memory of her beloved mother, Jean Schaffner. Kate lent her building expertise to Judy Laza-

rus—Xenophon’s founder—when the center was built at its current site 21 years ago and has been a huge supporter of Xenophon ever since.

The purpose of the Jean Schaffner award is to honor a volunteer who goes above and beyond in his or her service to the center. Choosing this recipient is an extremely difficult task, as we are fortunate to have so many individuals who give their time tirelessly to Xenophon. This year, Leslie de Boer was the deserving recipient of the award.

Leslie began volunteering for Xenophon in 2008 as a sidewalker, but soon stepped into the role of horse handler. Said one instructor, “She was so sweet and enthusiastic, but she had limited horse experience; it has been wonderful watching her eagerly absorb everything, developing into such a con-

fident and capable horse handler! She is always so quiet and kind to everyone, taking care of a million things effortlessly.”

As Leslie’s talents were realized—as happens with most of our volunteers—more and more was asked of her, and she willingly stepped into numerous new roles: first becoming a longliner, who drives the horse from behind on long reins for our hippo-therapy sessions. Said our physical therapist, “When Leslie decided to learn longlining, she embraced it fully. When she is at the reins, I enjoy a great sense of calm because I know she will take care of the horse’s needs during the session. This leaves me the privilege of total focus on the client, which makes the session that much more successful.”

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“Cabs and Carriages” in Napa

Picture emerald green vineyards of cabernet, pinot noir and malbec under a perfect sapphire blue Napa sky. Imagine touring through those vineyards in a carriage drawn by two powerful black Friesian horses while you sip a glass of deliciously crisp chardonnay. Sounds like the perfect day, doesn’t it? But that’s not all... Add in appetizers on the lawn beside an 1882 restored farmhouse, followed by a gourmet catered lunch paired with some of Napa’s finest wine. This

was the “Cabs and Carriages” event that was offered at Xenophon’s gala last year. Molly Hendry of Hendry Winery, in collaboration with chef Emily Buller (formerly of Peju Winery and now with Small Table Farms), Mari Parino (Xenophon’s Executive Director) and Michelle Bushong, put on a stellar event. The six guests, who were fortunate to be high bidders at the gala raved about every aspect of

the day, from the carriage ride to the food to the impressive hospitality of



all involved. Watch for this event being offered at Xenophon’s next gala, and don’t miss out on this one-of-a-kind opportunity.

Laura Fleming— Teen Volunteer of the Year

Xenophon’s teen volunteers are highly valued at the center; they bring an energy and enthusiasm that is contagious to staff, students and other volunteers. Many of the high schoolers who volunteer do so while carrying a crazy school load of honors and AP classes, playing sports or participating in student govern-



ment—yet they still find time to give of their time at Xenophon. To honor their commitment and dedication, each year Xenophon presents the Patience’s Teen Volunteer of the Year award to a young person who demonstrates outstanding service. This past year, our award recipient was Laura Fleming. Laura began volun-

teering with Xenophon in 2010 as a sidewalker. She became a groom in 2012 and moved on to become an excellent horse handler and longliner in 2013. Laura is a natural horsewoman and demonstrates an extraordinary amount of care toward our horses and students. She is a senior at Carondelet High School; in addition to her academics, caring for her own horse, and her dedication to Xenophon, Laura tutors one afternoon a week. Congratulations to this remarkable young woman.

Gala continued

The evening began with a fabulous silent auction, while the non-shoppers placed their bets on the ponies, hoping their steed would win them a bottle of wine. The bugler from Golden Gate Fields, dressed in his traditional red jacket, lauded the crowd with his “Call to the Post” and other tunes. Round Hill did not disappoint with the wonderful dinner that was served. While guests were enjoying a fabulous salad, Leslie de Boer was announced as the winner of the Jean Schaffner award, and we heard from one of our parents, Anna Tague, about the impact that Xenophon has

had not only on her daughter, Nicole, but also on her other children who have spent time at the center volunteering and doing projects.

The live auction was kicked off by auctioneer extraordinaire Daniel Parino with a dessert auction. Bruce Johnstone, the pastry chef from San Anselmo’s famed restaurant Insalata, presented two signature desserts that caused a flurry of bidding and some healthy competition. A big thank you to all who donated to and bid on the live and silent auctions.

The event raised more than \$100,000 for Xenophon and its pro-

grams, exceeding its target and accounting for nearly half of the center’s operating budget. We could not have done this, of course, without all those involved: our event planners, donors, attendees, and corporate sponsors, who helped in such a big way to underwrite the event and ensure another successful year for Xenophon. As a result, we are able to stride confidently into 2014, keeping our therapy rates affordable and implementing some new pilot programs that are in the works. Thank you all!

Research continued

Xenophon is always striving to be at the cutting edge of industry standards. In keeping with this tradition, we are proud to be participating in a formal research project that is a collaboration between Mary Jones, M.D., of the Department of Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital Oakland; Xenophon instructor Tineke Jacobson, P.T., CTRI, HPCS; and Diane Morabito, RN, MPH, a volunteer at Xenophon. Together, the three are studying the usefulness of an “iSway” device in measuring the benefits of hippotherapy

on postural control in a child with neuromuscular dysfunction as a result of Rett Syndrome.

The first trial of the research project was completed last fall. Subsequent months were spent reviewing the first trial, preparing the additional materials as well as arranging for pre-, mid- and post-measurements through Children’s Hospital’s new GAIT Lab at its Shadelands facility in Walnut Creek.

The second trial began in June and will last approximately 12

weeks. Xenophon’s funding for the research project has come from a grant given by the Sheila Moloney Newton Trust, with our therapist Tineke Jacobson donating her time. It is everyone’s expectation that this trial/study will result in a formal report that will be published in a professional journal. To learn about the research project, please visit our website, www.xenophontrc.org, and click on the link to the project summary.



Pilot Program continued

The pilot program was developed to meet the evident need for opportunities for young adults ages 22-29, as once individuals with disabilities are beyond school age, there are very few non school-funded programs available for them. We hear this from so many of our Xenophon parents and have also been reading about it in both local and national publications. This pilot program will allow us to address that need while putting our center to good use in the morning hours when we typically aren’t running lessons. The program will run to the end of the year and will be reevaluated at that time.

Jean Schaffner Award continued

Next, Leslie’s fabulous people skills and organizational skills made her the ideal candidate for a volunteer coordinator. And when her exceptional business experience was noted, we realized she was a perfect candidate for Xenophon’s Board of Directors. If that role were not enough in and of itself, Leslie also took on the task of Grantwriting, giving countless hours helping to solicit grants, helping to secure thousands of dollars for the center. In addition, she has donated hours and hours of her talents in writing and graphics to develop professional-looking print materials of which Xenophon can be proud.

It is difficult to count the number of hours Leslie has donated in all of her various job capacities at the center. We are truly grateful to have her as part of the Xenophon team.

Jack Hanna and Xenophon Team-up at the Lesher Speaker Series

For its annual Newsmakers Speaker Series, the Lesher Foundation teams up with select non-profits, who are given the opportunity to promote themselves as well as reap any profits from the evening. This year, Xenophon was honored to be chosen as one of those nonprofits. Even better: Xenophon was paired with famous



zookeeper and TV personality Jack Hanna. Our evening included a private reception for staff and board members with Mr. Hanna and some of his “friends”—which included a baby red fox, an African porcupine, a young kangaroo, an owl, and a friendly black-and white-lemur. The interactions with these amazing animals proved to be eye-opening (but in some cases, eye-closing, when a lemur is perching on your shoulder and lick-



ing your face). Mr. Hanna was funny and engaging.

In conjunction with the event, KTVU Channel 2 came out to the center last fall to shoot and produce a short video that was shown before Mr. Hanna’s presentation. We are grateful to the Lesher Foundation and Mr. Hanna for this wonderful experience and the great exposure for our center.

New Horses: King David and Dinero



King David started his new work as a therapy horse, carrying his first student at Xenophon in September 2013. Since the day he stepped out of his trailer, he has taken to his new life at Xenophon and acts as if he was born to do this job. He passed his certification with flying colors. His affectionate personality has endeared him to students, volunteers and staff. King David carries all kinds of riders—from independent to our most challenging students—always taking care and looking out for his riders.



With the registered name of “Mr. Hollywood Cash,” **Dinero**, as he is called, is an 10-year-old quarter horse gelding. He is on loan to us from Ann Branagh, who has also graciously allowed us the use of King David. Dinero is a gentle soul who seems to have been made for therapy work. He passed his tests in the shortest amount of time on record. He began working in lessons in February 2014 and is fast becoming a favorite mount for all types of riders, who love his flashy palomino paint color and his beautiful blue eye.

Our sincere thanks go to Ann Branagh for the use of her special horses and her support of our center.

Kiwi

Kiwi has been with Xenophon for more than eight years. She came to us when she was only six, having been used solely as a brood mare with little to no riding. Her work



under saddle progressed quickly, and when it came time to introduce her to her job as a therapy horse, she took to it right away. Her short, stout stature made her the perfect size for her

work; she could carry larger, more disabled riders and it was easy for sidewalkers to support them. Kiwi was always patient and tolerant; it didn’t matter how unbalanced the rider was, or how loud, nor did she care how many people were crowding around her. She took our most disabled clients but would also carefully tend to those riders finding their independence.

When Xenophon added a hippo-therapy program, Kiwi was the “go-to girl.” Hippotherapy requires that the horse be driven from behind so that the horse’s movement is in a proper frame with more precise steps. Kiwi took to it immediately.

Over the past eight years, she has carried our riders without complaint, always performing to the best of her ability. The job of a therapy horse is quite mentally taxing—they have to manage unbalanced riders, respond to commands from different leaders and riders, stand still for long periods, and put up with flying toys and being constantly crowded. Not many horses tolerate the job in the manner Kiwi has. So when she injured her tendon, there was no question that we needed to do whatever we could for her to help her get well. She is resting up now and is being well-cared for, and we hope to have her back on board next season.

Donations to offset Kiwi’s medical cost are gladly accepted.

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Janet Alexander, O.T. by Marilyn Hogg



She's back! But then again, she never really left! Janet Alexander, Xenophon's former Program Director, has returned as a licensed Occupational Therapist.

Janet's association with Xenophon began 10 years ago. Having decided on a career change after 17 years in financial services, Janet came across an article in *Self* magazine about therapeutic riding; it was an "aha!" moment. Janet did some research around the community and found Xenophon—it seemed the perfect way, she realized, to combine her interest in horses and her wish to volunteer with children.

Starting as a sidewalker, then becoming a horse handler, Janet became a true believer in the many benefits of therapeutic riding. She especially credits current Xenophon Executive Director Mari Parino and Xenophon's long-time instructor Jan Bindas for being inspiring mentors. In 2006, Janet was appointed Xenophon's Program Director, meanwhile earning her Registered Instructor certification from PATH International, which requires extensive knowledge of horses and riders with disabilities.

After four years as Program Director, Janet realized that her strongest interest was in the "hands-on" aspect of therapeutic riding. The timing was perfect, it turns out, as Mari had returned to the area and was ready to take up the leadership reins, and current Program Director Danielle Coburn was recruited. So Janet "sort of" left Xenophon to study Occupational Therapy at Samuel Merritt University in Oakland. (We say "sort of," because Janet frequently returned to Xenophon as an instructor and to lend her experience and expertise in other areas of the program. She also served on the board until recently.)

In 2013 Janet became a licensed and registered Occupational Therapist. With no local jobs available, she took an OT

position with a school district in Lake Tahoe. But the commute was a challenge, as she traveled every weekend to her home in the East Bay. The Tahoe assignment ended in March, and Janet then worked for a few months in a similar capacity for the West Contra Costa School District. This August, Janet will join the Moraga School District, working with children in grades K through 8.

The best news, though, is that Janet has returned to Xenophon as an OT instructor in the expanding hippotherapy program

Janet lives in Oakland with her husband Brian and family dogs Kimba and Ceara.

She is a serious hiker, backpacker and road bicyclist, and has pedaled from Portland, Oregon, to Los Angeles. On her longest ride, she covered 103 miles in a day! Some days, she just rides over the Oakland hills to get to Xenophon, "the magnet," she says, "for my passion and dedication to helping children in a nurturing family environment."

We are so glad she has found her way back to Xenophon!

PG&E Workday

Being a working ranch, there are always projects to be done at Xenophon—from fixing fencing to bigger annual projects such as planting and painting. We would be lost without the help and support offered from various clubs and organizations that come and donate their time at the center to complete some of these projects. In April, we were fortunate to have a group from PG&E's tax department in San Francisco come and give a day of their time at Xenophon.



Braving threatening rain, the group came and quickly went to work painting stalls and replacing mulch on the sensory trail. Despite the rain that ultimately ensued, they donned jackets and hats and continued to work, accomplishing much more than expected considering the weather: Benches were repaired; painting was completed; and tie rings were installed. A big thank you to this group for their hours of service.

Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center



Watch for our *NEW WEBSITE!*

Coming soon!



www.xenophontrc.org

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