

SUMMER 2018

# Xenophon



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

## 25th Anniversary Gala "Silver Jubilee"

### Staff

#### **Executive Director**

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Myke Judd

Heidi Koch

Melissa Maker, P.T.A.

Haley Mathews

Wanda Sayuk

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Jeff Shaw



Many long-time friends, volunteers and patrons were be-dazzled at Xenophon's "Silver Jubilee" event on March 17th this year. Nearly 400 guests turned out for this special 25-year anniversary celebration, held at the charming Diablo Country Club estates.

Our evening commenced with Mari Parino, Executive

Director of Xenophon TRC, and her husband Sam, greeting guests. They were joined by staff and board members, as well as our teen equestrians and graduates from the center. Baby Boomer was another special surprise in the grand lobby; animal lovers of all ages were charmed by this adorable kangaroo.

A cocktail hour preceded the dinner and while guests imbibed they also delighted in games, raffle selections, and an incredible silent auction experience with enticing exhibits of the live auction, which were formally presented during the dinner hour.

As the evening progressed, the silver-enchanted main dining room took center stage while we listened to some heartfelt tales of thanks and success delivered by Genna Legallet, Xenophon student alumni and Charlotte Sandford, current Xenophon student.

*Continue on page 2*



## Kaitlin Parodi Teen of the Year 2017

Last fall, the Patience Honorary Teen of the Year was awarded to Kaitlin Parodi. Kaitlin has been volunteering for Xenophon for over a year. Kaitlin comes to the center multiple times per week giving generously of her time despite a rigorous school schedule.

From her first day at the center, Kaitlin demonstrated an enthusi-

asm and willingness that set her apart. She does it all and manages to make herself an integral part of the lesson program no matter the task. It was a joy to honor this special teen and we were thrilled that her parents could join us for lunch and for the award. Kaitlin received a plaque and her name will be added to those of other teen

winners on the perpetual plaque in the office. Keep up the good work, Kaitlin!



## Operation Hooves on the Ground

## The Veteran's program at Xenophon



The veteran's program has gotten off to a great start this year. We've consistently had 4 men and 2 women vet-

erans participating. The veterans learn about grooming, ground work, horse handling, and round penning. On the last day of the Session 1, everyone received an Operation Hooves on the Ground t-shirt and we had pizza out on the deck. But, the highlight of the day was the riding. It was great to see them put all the ground working skills they had learned into practice while riding.

Xenophon works with the VA hospi-

tal in Martinez. Most participants are in VA programs for PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injuries. We have a small team of specially trained Xenophon volunteers, but the horses are the real therapists. Their gentle, quiet, accepting demeanors are just what these men and women need. Some of the most powerful times are when they are relating to the horse in a quiet moment.

Written by: Haley Mathews

## Gala Continued



Cheers and tears of joy permeated the ballroom as these young ladies shared their stories!

Other highlights of the evening included a historic slide show featuring our Founder, Judy Lazarus, a photo-booth for all to enjoy, and terrific picture boards capturing snapshots of history with equestrian-students. Our "auctioneers", Daniel and

Jake, rallied the crowd to bid enthusiastically and generously. We had a special moment to remember those members of our Xen family that we have lost. Then, to top off the evening...there was dancing!!!

Mari expressed a very special thank-you to all who contributed to this event and gave guests some useful insight towards what makes this organization great: successful daily operations management, community effort to fund organizational needs, dedication, hard work and passionate volunteerism. This was one of our most successful fund-raisers ever...raising over \$200,000.

If you were unable to attend the Silver Jubilee, count on another fabulous dinner gala next spring on Saturday, March 23rd 2019! The Xenophon gala is an annual fund-raising event that offers an evening of laughter and good camaraderie for all, while raising funds and awareness for our therapeutic services. Thank you to all those who participated and gave so generously.

Written By:  
Barbara Donovan



For more pictures please visit our website: [www.xenophontrc.org](http://www.xenophontrc.org)

## Connor Akers Builds New Viewing Deck

Xenophon would like to extend a big thank you to Connor Akers for building the lovely viewing deck on the side of our outdoor arena. Connor built the deck for his Boy Scout Eagle Project. Connor was an amazing young man to work with, spending months building a model prototype, consulting with construction specialists and securing a donation for the building supplies. When building day finally came around, Connor brought a large group of scouts and was the perfect job foreman, overseeing

the safe, and precise pouring of concrete, framing, and building. Connor's job planning, supervision and attention to details epitomized the process of obtaining an Eagle Scout Award. The new deck is spectacular, and was a much needed addition in order to provide our parents with a safe and visible place to watch their child's hippotherapy session or therapeutic riding lesson. Thank you, Connor, for all your hard work and efforts. Xenophon would also like to thank ETIC Engineering

for their generous donation which was used to purchase the building supplies for the deck. Your support of our program is greatly appreciated.



## Volunteer Training Day 2018

Since the beginning of the New Year, we have added new faces and energy to our volunteer base. On Saturday, February 10th, we had a spectacular turnout of over 70 new and returning volunteers!

The volunteers were divided into groups, which rotated through 5 stations for training. One of our stations demonstrated how noise (conversations) can be a distraction in a student's lesson. It went like this; a

volunteer sat between 2 volunteers who were standing. Then the 2 volunteers started conversing loudly, while the instructor tried to give directions. This was to show that ANY extra conversation can overwhelm a student while in a lesson and it is critical for our volunteers to be in silent attention while assisting a rider. Another group training focused on "herd dynamics". Here, the volunteers learned about horse communication such as...why does a horse

switch its tail? What if the horse's ears are back, what is he/she indicating? It's important for our volunteers to have a grasp of horse communication for the safety of our students. Within the 3 hours, volunteers covered many dynamics of what it takes to do their important job in a safe and fun manner.

As always, we at Xenophon thank our volunteers for their enthusiasm and support.



## Xenophon Staff Presents at PATH Region 11 Conference



Did you know that Xenophon's therapeutic riding instructors are certified through a professional organization called the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH International)? This certification requires a riding test, a written exam and a riding skills assessment. In addition, once certified, the instructors must complete continuing education units. One of the ways our instructors satisfy their continuing education requirements is by attending conferences. This keeps us up on the cutting edge

of our industry standards. This past summer, Mari Parino and Heidi Koch attended the PATH Region 11 conference held in Reno, Nevada. Region 11 consists of centers located in California, Nevada and Hawaii.

The quality of the presentations was tremendous. Heidi attended the pre-conference workshop designed for experienced instructors that dealt with identifying human body types, horse body types and how these impact the comfort and balance of the rider when mounted. There are complicated physics involved in choosing mounts that facilitate the maximum ability of the rider. Other workshops covered goal-driven curriculum development, facilitating mental health issues in therapeutic riding, and managing the older horse.

Mari presented a workshop on long lining (driving from behind) and how

to get a horse ready to be part of a hippotherapy program. Using "driving games", it was a fun and interactive clinic. Mari has been asked to present this workshop again at this summer's PATH International Region 11 conference at the end of July in Shadow Hills, CA.

Mari is a state chair for PATH, representing Northern California. As such, she is part of the planning committee for the Region 11 conference. This dedicated group of state chairs and regional reps put on fabulous conferences that are edu-



## Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon 2017



Saturday, November 18, 2017 was Xenophon’s day to honor our amazing volunteers. As soon as lessons were finished, a gang of helpers converted our arena from riding center to outdoor cafe. The taco truck arrived; the food materialized and the party start-

ed. Keeping with tradition, the afternoon was kicked off by cheers from each day’s volunteers and they did not disappoint. Wednesday pranced in to a classical march with lead horses AND their “drivers” doing quite the piaffe. We had singing renditions and clever poems.

While some of the staff made a valiant attempt at a “Cheers” singalong, it was decided they should start practicing now for next year. The Connected Horse crew joined in the fun and the Tuesday veterans group brought tears to our eyes as they shared their experience. Who knew we had so much talent amongst us?

Of course, the day concluded with the awarding of the coveted “Xen wear” to those who earned their T-shirts, hats and gifts. Our gift awards are a small token of appreciation for the hours that our volunteers give. They come with the deepest of appreciation.



## Emmett Retires From Our Herd and Teddy’s on The Mend



Although Emmett was one of our therapy horses for just a short time, starting in August 2017, he attracted the attention of our students with his long mane and tail, mischievous playfulness, big blue eyes and his muzzle mustache (which grew thicker in the winter).

Unfortunately, because of Emmett’s short back (common in the Gypsy Vanner breed) it was hard on him to carry unbalanced riders on a regular basis. Because of this limitation, we felt it was necessary to retire him for his own well being. He was returned to his owner Alex, who was happy to have him back. We thank Emmett for his service with us!

Unfortunately Teddy had a slight tear in his rear suspensory ligament for which he’s been on stall rest since November of 2017. His most recent ultrasound was promising and he’s been given the go ahead to start extended walking times and being used in walk only lessons.

Teddy is enjoying his moments of freedom from his stall and is eager to get back to work. We’ll proceed cautiously with a slow rehab in hopes that he makes a full recovery.

Teddy has been missed by many of his students as we know he has so missed working with them.



Dear Readers,

The Xenophon herd have some special requests. They work so hard and need some extra pampering to stay happy and healthy. Pedicures need an upgrade (special hoof picks), cool shades (fly masks) and fly spray will make us summer ready.

Teddy is now on a sugar restricted diet and celery just isn’t cutting it. So he asks you to include sugar free treats for him.

### Wish List

- ⇒ Ultimate Hoof Picks (7)
- ⇒ Full Face Fly Masks (7)
- ⇒ 1 Guardian Fly Mask
- ⇒ Beet Treats
- ⇒ Comfort Fit **SMX** Air ride saddle pads. 30x34 and 32x34 or 33x34
- ⇒ Eco Vet Fly Spray
- ⇒ Equine Senior
- ⇒ LMF
- ⇒ Absorbine Tea Tree Oil Medicated Spray and Shampoo

## Xenophon's Horse Handlers Put to the Test



What better way to spend a Saturday morning than to be challenged at multiple levels in the art of horse handling? This year's horse handler training proved to be creative and challenging. Our fearless leaders, Mari and Linda, put together a skills course to

test ourselves and our steeds. Following a review of herd dynamics, body language and horse psychology, each of us trainees, from novice to experienced, found that there were interesting challenges awaiting us.

Do you have your horse's full attention? Are you able to move the horse's feet quickly in response to your body language? Is the horse at a comfortable distance from you yet still verbally and physically connected to you? How do you engage the engine (hindquarters) to get maximum responsiveness? Shoulder over? Back and forward with voice and body cues?

Our course consisted of moving each

horse smoothly through walk, trot, stop, walk transitions, through cones, poles and cavalletis and around obstacles. We then were asked to repeat this with all the different horses in the barn. Not always an easy task. We had to make adjustments quickly for each horse. Needless to say, the expert coaching of our staff was invaluable.

Overall, I came away with a great appreciation for the varied skill set needed to keep a horse and it's handler tuned to each other. I also appreciate how the Xenophon staff carefully prepares us for this job, building our confidence, while having a great time together.

Written By: Marilyn Schumacher

## Summer Camp 2017



What do tie-dye shirts, mini horses and Indian Ponies have in common? Summer Camp! This past summer six campers spent their mornings in the peaceful setting of the ranch. But, their excited

energy filled the air as each day was met with anticipation and enthusiasm, for each was filled with crafts, riding and special time with their mounts. Under

the direction of our Xenophon instructors, riders increased their mounted skills and learned to groom and tack. Learning to give their horse a bath was also on the list, a necessary skill after acrylic paints and handprints turned their horses into Indian Ponies. A highlight of the camp was a visit from the miniature horses, Blackie and Windy, from SonRise Equestrian Foundation. When asked what her favorite part of camp was, one camper answered, "The minis, because Blackie was just my size." Both Blackie and Windy were good sports as they were groomed, braided, led through obstacle courses, painted, and bathed. It was a special week filled with creativity, new friends, and, best of all.....Horses!

### Upcoming Events:

**A's Game:** Saturday, July 21st

**Horse Show:** Saturday, September 29th

**Summer Camp:** M-Th, July 30th – August –2

**Gianni's Fundraiser:** Monday, December 3rd

## Chevron Volunteers Help Get Xenophon Show-ready



Corporate Caring Week is the largest corporate volunteer program in the Bay Area. It is coordinated every September and brings thousands of employees from

local companies to assist Bay Area nonprofits. For over 15 years, Xenophon has posted projects and has had numerous groups from Chevron and other companies come to the center to volunteer their time and energy. They built decks, run-in sheds and shade structures. They spread bark, planted shrubs and applied paint just about everywhere.

This year, a fabulous group from Chevron's Richmond Refinery came and gave 4 hours of their valuable time.

We needed help to spruce up the center for our annual horse show. This included pulling weeds, replanting in our flower beds, spreading bark, pruning back bushes and painting. There was no slouching with this group, and the amount they accomplished in 4 hours was remarkable. They completely filled our dump trailer with trimmings and weeds. Thank you Shad, Angelica, Valerie, Silv, Steve and John for all your hard work.

## Xenophon Horse Show 2017

In preparation for the horse show, our riders worked tirelessly for months in advance to master neck control, straight posture, the ability to use their reins, mastering leading or riding independently and remembering patterns.

Their hard work shone through on show day as over 48 riders demonstrat-



ed their skills through a variety of classes. The day started off with pizzazz. Our Opening Ceremony class rode to the beautiful music of Dulcinea, an all-girl Acapella choir from Los Lomas High School.

The girls harmonies echoed through the covered arena as our class paraded our country's colors, while former students, Rebecca Weston and Sierra Olson proudly lead the parade carrying the Xenophon banner. Our Hippotherapy Parade classes followed, and then it was on to Walk Trot, Trail, Showmanship and Dressage. It was a day to spend with fam-

ily and friends, taking in demonstrations by Canine Companions for Independence; a Pas de Deux, by instructor, Melissa Maker, and student, Laurel Gallion; and a BBQ lunch hosted by the Xenophon Board of Directors.



For more pictures please visit our website: [www.xenophontrc.org](http://www.xenophontrc.org)

## Welcome Back Rachel Bloom!



**Rachel Bloom** is back with us! Rachel brings years of horse and Xenophon knowledge. She began volunteering with us in 2013 – starting out as a side walker and moved up the ranks to

groom, then horse handler and exercise rider. Soon after, in 2015, Rachel was hired on as our Volunteer Coordinator where she encouraged others to volunteer with our wonderful program. Rachel tem-

porarily moved out of state from 2016-2017, but was anxious to relocate back to the Bay Area where her family resides. She returned in January, and has hit the ground running – working daily to reconnect with our herd of horses, and prepare all of the administrative tasks for the gala. Rachel will be assisted by our extremely dedicated Assistant Barn Manager, Linda Parsons – they make an amazing team!

Rachel began riding horses at the age of 9 and spent her adolescence riding hunter/jumpers at Bottomley Farms in Briones she later rode at Skyline Ranch

in Oakland. Rachel was raised in Berkeley and attended Berkeley High School and Berkeley City College. She comes to us with over a decade of retail sales and management experience. Working with imports from Bali and Morocco led her to travel and also live rurally in the hills of Mendocino County helping manage a friend's ranch.

Rachel has a beautiful 4 year-old daughter, Amirah, who already shows a strong interest in horses when she visits the center. In Rachel's spare time she is an avid gardener and enjoys spending time with her close knit family.

## Connected Horse Early Onset Dementia Program at Xenophon

**Did you know?** Approximately every 66 seconds, someone in the US develops dementia? Estimates indicate that over 15 million family members and friends are caring for a loved one living with this debilitating disease. The stressors on the relationship can cause health problems and an erosion of quality of life for both the individual living with the disease and the care partner.

Xenophon has joined forces with Connected Horse to address the needs of those afflicted with Alzheimer's or dementia and their care partners. Connected Horse is a nonprofit organization, which has developed a workshop curriculum using therapy horses. Through research studies performed at Stanford University and UC Davis they have documented the benefit of equine-assisted therapy in improving quality of life indicators in participants. Xenophon is the first center in the US to pilot the curriculum.

### Using our special therapy horses the workshops are designed to restore relationships by:

- Developing awareness skills to reduce stress and increase individual quality of life.
- Practicing verbal and non verbal communication strategies that strengthen relationships.
- Exercising more awareness of sense of hearing, smell, touch, and sight.
- Understanding how better to support the care partner relationship.



### *Is there someone in your life that is trying to cope with the disease?*

We are sensitively seeking dyads (2-person units, i.e. dementia client and care partner) to participate.

Come and experience the benefits, have hopefulness restored and find peace and support in the tranquil atmosphere at Xenophon.

We welcome all of your inquiries, please contact: [info@xenophontrc.org](mailto:info@xenophontrc.org) or call the center, (925)377-0871

Written By: Renee Dyer

## The Loss of Our Friend, Annie.



This past January Xenophon lost a dear friend and longtime volunteer, Ann Welch. Annie, as she was affectionately known, dedicated countless hours to Xenophon for many years on a weekly basis. She was involved in therapeutic riding, hippotherapy, and Bridle Paths to Success. She loved children and wanted to be part of their hands-on experiences constantly offering kind words and a helping hand.

Annie was a big part of Xenophon's annual Gala. She committed many

hours fundraising. Sitting on the Gala Committee, helping organize and run one of the fundraising events for the evening plus donating a special party each year for our live auction. In addition to all these activities, she was an integral part of the Xenophon Board. This wonderful woman loved giving back to others and worked tirelessly to help wherever needed.

Annie's philanthropic work extended over a considerable number of years to numerous organizations: De La Salle Parents Association, The California symphony, Contra Costa Habitat for humanity, and Wheelchairs for the World.

Annie is survived by her loving husband, Greg, and her three devoted sons, Danny, Michael, and Bobby along with her brother, Rob, and his wife, Teresa. Along with her granddaughters, Scarlett and Avery and Daughter-in-law Amber. Her "five boys" as she liked to call

them, were all by her side when she passed peacefully.

Annie's positive attitude, laughter, and warm smile will be greatly missed at Xenophon. She always found joy in life and left us with so many special memories to cherish.

Happy Trails to you, Dear Friend, until we meet again.

Written By: Cherie Garcia-Day



## New Faces at The Center



**Irina Fedulow:** Irina, or Ina as she is known at the barn, has recently joined our group of physical and occupational therapists. Ina will be conducting hippotherapy sessions on Wednesday afternoons. She received her Doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of New England, in Portland, Maine in May of 2015. Before coming to California to work in outpatient neurorehabilitation at Kaiser, Ina interned at various outpatient and trauma clinics in the Midwest and the East Coast. She is currently at UCSF.

When not at the barn or the clinic, Ina enjoys hiking, running and unwinding with yoga and meditation. She recently took up photography and golfing with her fiancé CJ. On the weekends, she enjoys camping in Northern California and taking Wilderness Medical courses. She loves languages and speaks Russian, while studying German and Japanese. She is getting married this September in Nicasio where she grew up horseback riding. She loves staying active and is going to start training for a half marathon this summer.

**Misha Jacobs:** Many folks may have met Misha and have seen her around the barn. Misha began as a substitute instructor at Xenophon in July of 2017. In the Fall, Misha filled in regularly as an instructor on Tuesdays and has now moved to a permanent role on Saturday mornings.

Misha came to Xenophon with a wealth of experience. After receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in Therapeutic Recreation, she interned at the National Ability Center in Park City, Utah. She has worked with preschoolers and youth who are blind or visually impaired as well as with adults with developmental delay. Her experiences include working with prison inmates, mental health patients and seniors in memory care. Misha was certified as a PATH Instructor in 2010, while attending CSU Chico. Misha has always been passionate about working with animals and people with different abilities and loves being outdoors!



### Bridal Path to Success

### Xenophon's Adult Unmounted Program



Participants alternate from RES Success and Las Trampas, two local organizations providing housing and resources for adults with disabilities. Heidi Koch, our BPS instructor begins each new session with conversations and tasks that are designed to determine each person's knowledge, abilities, and needs. Our Xenophon volunteers focus their efforts in supporting

Heidi, and helping the participants get the most benefit from their time at Xenophon.

The challenges of these amazing adults are varied, but all are willing to try new things. By the end of the session, they'll be leading horses through an obstacle course, and everyone involved is better for the experience!

Written By: Barbara Roth

Bridle Path to Success (BPS) is a program created and designed for developmentally disabled individuals 18 years of age and above. BPS takes place at Xenophon on Thursday mornings. The primary goal of the program is to give participants a basic education about horses and their care, as well as providing them the opportunity to interact with, groom, and handle our horses. The benefits go much deeper, though, as our students gain confidence through their personal connections with the horses, and pride in the tasks they accomplish.



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## Jamieson Ranch Vineyards



Xenophon would like to thank Jamieson Ranch Vineyards who donated all the wine served at the gala. We are so grateful for their generosity.



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