

*"You'll be amazed at what you can learn from a horse."*

— Matt and Suzanne Case, Clearwind Farm L.L.C. Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy

**NORTH CAROLINA  
THERAPEUTIC RIDING  
CENTER**

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**Strategic Plan**



The 2011-2013 strategic plan for the North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center is dedicated to:

## Dedication

Those who have provided equine-assisted activities and therapies to thousands of children and adults of the Orange-Durham-Alamance community for over 33 years since NCTRC was established in 1977; and all the board members, staff members, volunteers and donors who have passionately carried NCTRC forward to the effective organization it is today.\*

- \* especially to the founders: Dot Kohlbach, Lou Paules and Debby (Lominac) Howard;
- \* the anonymous donor, who has served as a lesson volunteer for 8 years, for her generosity in helping secure the future of NCTRC; and
- \* Matt and Suzanne Case for their generosity in also securing the future of NCTRC and for their potential gift to enable NCTRC to use their farm as a permanent home for future generations.

## Acknowledgments

This document was prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee for the North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center. The members are:

Evelyn Chojnacki  
Jackie Cole  
Andrea Folmer  
Linda Mansmann

Margie Muenzer  
Laurie Reddick  
Frankie Price Stern  
(chair)

Davin Stewart  
Gene Stunec  
Sarah Shapard  
(executive director)

Rollo Begley, Robin Barefoot, Ian Buchanan, Lara Katz, Sandra Ray, Diane Stranahan, and Audrey Ganitopoulos provided critical assistance. Perry Colwell and Sherry Graham, **Executive Service Corps** of the Triangle, provided significant guidance and advice. Jan Jones Pulley provided the graphic design and production of the Strategic Plan. The Meadowmont office of Prudential York Simpson Underwood Realty graciously provided the printing of this brochure.



This plan was approved by the NCTRC Board of Directors on August 24, 2010.

## About North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center

Parents or guardians often call on NCTRC to give their children or adults they care for opportunities to ride horses and have some plain old fun. That's great. But NCTRC is also an opportunity for them to excavate something of themselves with the help of the horses. This could include exercise, therapy, socialization, learning, and/or development of life skills. They could gain in confidence and physical strength, or develop the ability to communicate more clearly, focus more deeply, or learn to take turns and work with others. To this end, we create individualized treatment plans that not only energize them but also help them ultimately work towards their overall potential.

— Sarah Shapard, Executive Director

*“Therapeutic riding is not just a pony ride. It's not an outing. It goes deeper than that. It's physically and emotionally beneficial to people who need to connect with the physical world, which they can be so isolated from because of their afflictions.”*

— Shannon Woolfe, longtime volunteer

## The Origins of NCTRC: How It Came To Be

“I ran a therapeutic center in my native Scotland. When I came to USA in 1976 I thought I'd find a program where I could volunteer, only to find that there were none in North Carolina. It took a while to establish a therapeutic riding center, because people - especially the medical community - thought I was crazy! Lou and I visited a few stables and found some suitable ponies we could use, and the rest is history as they say. Every rider is affected on lots of levels. There was the wee girl who smiled one day while she was riding, and her smile was the first her mom had seen. This girl was almost four years old, and we thought that we were not “helping” this child. These riders get so much more out of doing the therapy on a horse, and they get to do something their siblings can't for a change.”

— Dot Kohlbach, one of the three founders



**NCTRC has served thousands of children and adults affected by physical, social, emotional and mental challenges since 1977 through equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT).**

# Services

## Hippotherapy, therapeutic riding, summer camps and workshops

Hippotherapy is individualized therapy on a horse and involves a licensed therapist. Therapy can include physical, occupational and speech-language treatment. Therapeutic riding classes are taught by NAHRA-certified riding instructors. Summer camps are designed for children, ages 5 – 12, with or without disabilities. Workshops are for parents, riding instructors, therapists, staff members and volunteers.

*"Max is so pleased he is succeeding in something. This is improving his confidence and self esteem across all settings. He also has a desire to please us that he hasn't shown before, and he has improved in following directions."*

— Amy Gitterman, NCTRC parent

## Our Team

All of us pull together to help empower the participants to create active, healthier and more fulfilling lives. Approximately 80% of the donations go towards supporting the staff members who provide direct services to the participants in the program including the horses.

### The Board

Jeff Abbood, *board member*  
Robin Barefoot, *chair*  
Ian Buchanan, *treasurer*  
Evelyn Chojnacki, *board member*  
Debbie Finn, *board member*  
Jim Gray, *board member*  
Lara Katz, *secretary*  
Frankie Price Stern, *board member*  
Laurie Reddick, *vice chair*

### The Staff

Jackie Cole, *riding instructor*  
Monica Evans, *book-keeper*  
Audrey Ganitopoulos, *program director*  
Juliette Holden, *equine specialist*  
James Jeffries, *farm and facility manager*  
Lissa Lutz, *riding instructor*  
Margie Muenzer, *physical therapist*  
Mary Beth Osborne, *physical therapist*  
Sarah Shapard, *executive director*  
Diane Stranahan, *volunteer coordinator*

### The Herd

Danny, *therapy horse*  
Dooley, *therapy horse*  
Brew, *therapy horse*  
Daisy, *therapy pony*  
Sebastian, *therapy horse*  
Nora, *therapy horse*  
Buzz, *therapy horse*  
Star, *therapy horse*  
Six, *therapy horse*  
Buddy, *therapy horse*

**NCTRC is able to provide its services because of the involvement of more than 300 volunteers each year.**



More than 300 volunteers and 250 donors are also a critical part of this team. NCTRC could not do this work without their contributions of knowledge, time and/or financial support.

# Mission Statement

The North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center (NCTRC) empowers children and adults who face physical, mental, emotional and social challenges to create active, healthier and more fulfilling lives through equine assisted activities and therapies.



**NCTRC is the only accredited EAAT service provider in Orange, Durham and Alamance counties.**

*"Because of her relationship with her horse at NCTRC, my daughter is more focused in class at school, more talkative and more social. Her listening skills have improved."*

— Bethany Orr, parent

# Vision Statement

The North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center will be well-known and respected as a leading regional provider of equine assisted activities and therapies.

We will design our programs to help each participant realize his or her potential.

We will be a model of best practices to provide the highest quality comprehensive program to an expanding number of children and adults with a wide variety of challenges.

We will increase the knowledge of equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) through certification and training, community partnerships, and research.

We will advocate for EAAT to become widely recognized as an effective therapy and programs for children and adults with a wide range of challenges.



# Values

Horses enhance and enrich the lives of children and adults with a very wide variety of challenges through equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT). Using horses as the motivating core of EAAT treatment plans benefits our participants in ways that other therapies do not. These treatment plans can include exercise, therapy, learning through games, socialization, and/or life skills development.

- ◆ We will work to bring the significant benefits of EAAT to an ever-expanding circle of participants.
- ◆ We will endeavor to serve our participants regardless of their abilities to pay.

Our programs offer equally critical benefits to our board, staff, volunteers and animals as we collaborate as a team and learn from each other.

- ◆ We will ensure that integrity and respect serve as the foundation of all activities.
- ◆ We will care for all people, animals and natural resources held in NCTRC's trust.
- ◆ We will work to ensure the safety and security of all who come to Clearwind Farm.
- ◆ We will operate within a fun, inclusive, welcoming and community-oriented framework where we value and respect the role each one plays.

Clearwind Farm is a place of healing and vitality. Our environment with its animals and natural beauty can do much to inspire the lives of all who come.

- ◆ We will preserve the farm as a unique resource of Orange, Durham and Alamance counties.

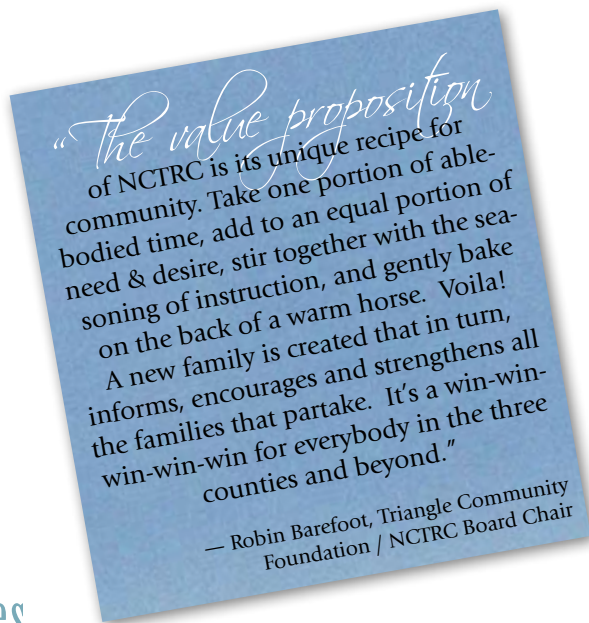
The colleges, universities and major medical centers located near Clearwind Farm offer NCTRC unique opportunities.

- ◆ We will actively pursue collaborations and partnerships which are mutually beneficial.



*"My son loved  
the time he spent at the farm  
more than I anticipated. His  
attitude towards all his "must  
do" activities of the summer  
is more positive than usual.  
Perhaps there is a correlation!"*

— Anonymous,  
first-time NCTRC parent



## Goals / Objectives

### Goal #1: Participants

We will design our programs to help each participant realize his or her potential by:

- ♦ redesigning current programs toward the best outcomes for each of our participants;
- ♦ identifying, prioritizing and adding new outcome-focused programs; and
- ♦ securing critical resources to promote and facilitate best outcomes.

### Goal #2: Communications

NCTRC will be well-known as a leading regional provider of equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) by:

- ♦ communicating our mission, vision and values to engage key stakeholders with the NCTRC community; and
- ♦ cultivating and involving other sectors including corporations, medical, educational and other nonprofit organizations, and city, county and state government leaders.

### Goal #3: Resources

We will nurture and cultivate our resources to sustain our vital mission by:

- ♦ assuring the financial resources to sustain and enable NCTRC to further its mission;
- ♦ ensuring Clearwind Farm is used to its full potential; and
- ♦ stewarding our volunteers, and ensuring each has a rewarding experience and their contributions are meaningful for each of them.

### Goal #4: Governance & management

We are committed to defining clear roles, effective planning, excellence in operations and oversight in correlation with our growth by:

- ♦ assuring complete and effective board oversight; and
- ♦ encouraging NCTRC's culture and structure of safety, excellence, inclusion, leadership, efficiency, and creativity.

*In most organizations the steps outlined within the strategic plan are led by the executive director. At this point in NCTRC's growth, however, this position is only part-time. The board members and the executive director have created nine board working groups to assist in making the goals and the objectives a reality. These groups will work in coordination with the executive director.*

Want to join us  
and the horses  
in empowering  
children and  
adults in our  
community  
affected by  
different types  
of challenges?

# Volunteer Application Form

Please complete and turn in the volunteer application form to the attention of Sarah Shapard, executive director.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Please check any of the committees or taskforces that interest you the most. We will contact you to discuss the details and answer any questions.

- Board Affairs Committee.** This committee is responsible for creating a plan and putting it in place to recruit Board Members and to ensure their training and development.
- Development Committee.** This committee is responsible for creating a plan and putting it into place to secure funds through individual donors, events, and grants.
- Finance Committee.** This committee is responsible for reviewing fiscal information and reporting to the board on the fiscal status of NCTRC.
- Outreach & Education Committee.** This committee is responsible for creating a plan and putting it into place to recruit participants and educate the community on equine-assisted activities and therapies.
- Program & Farm Stewardship Committee.** This committee is responsible for reviewing proposals to design the programs and for the use of the farm.
- Strategic Planning Committee.** This committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the 2011 – 2013 strategic plan.
- Personnel Taskforce.** This taskforce is responsible for creating a personnel handbook.
- Technology Taskforce.** This taskforce is responsible for creating a plan and putting it in place to implement the technology necessary for NCTRC to operate more efficiently.
- Board Governance Taskforce.** This taskforce is responsible for creating a full set of Board policies including clearly defining the roles and authority of the Executive Director and the Board. development of the board members.

**North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center**

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