



ATRC OF THE MONTH: JANUARY 2021

The monthly newsletter for our families, followers, and supporters of the Albany Therapeutic Riding Center.



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ATRC CELEBRATES 40 YEARS!

ATRC was founded in 1981 by Chris Lehman. As the heartbeat of the organization, Chris served as the Certified Instructor and Board President while operating the program out of her family's farm in Voorheesville, NY. In 2013 she was named Volunteer of the Year by the Schenectady Gazette and Direct Energy. Sadly in early January 2017, Chris passed away.

In the summer of 2018, Taylor Huntley was hired on as Program Director and the new PATH Certified Instructor. That Fall she started lessons back up with 6 riders before having to shut down again for the winter. By the end of the Summer of 2019, ATRC had grown to the point where we hired Lauren Longtoe as a second instructor and Volunteer Coordinator. It was becoming clear that ATRC would need to move to somewhere we could ride year round in order to continue our growth. So in February of 2020, we moved to a location in Slingerlands, NY. The indoor arena at this location allowed us to grow even more with 40 active riders and 54 volunteers which required us to move yet again to Gansevoort, NY. Looking ahead, we are excited to begin our 40th year launching our Capital Campaign in order to find our own permanent location.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH: KATE FITZPARTICK



According to the staff at ATRC, Kate is "always super excited to be at the barn and always ready to take on any task, big or small!" To get to know Kate a little better, we asked her a few questions:

What is your favorite part about volunteering with ATRC?

I started volunteering with ATRC because I love horses and it's been great getting to interact with them during lessons and feeding times. However, the best part has been watching the riders work through their lessons and make progress even in the short time I've been volunteering.

When you're not at ATRC, what do you like to do?

Typically, I prefer to spend a lot of time travelling, disc golfing, bike riding or hanging out with friends. This year I've gotten to focus on some hobbies I didn't always make as much time for like crafting, baking, reading and playing my violin.

If you won a million dollars, what would you do with it?

I'd pay my and my siblings student loans off and donate to a few Capital Region charities.

If you could meet your hero, who would it be and why?

I don't know that I have a particular hero per se but I do love chatting with people about their passions. It can be a lot of fun to listen to people nerd out about a given topic and you can learn a lot that way.

Why do you volunteer with ATRC?

I think it's important to give back to your community and working with ATRC is a great way to serve while also learning new skills.

2020 Volunteer of the Year: Kara Leonard

ATRAC would like to recognize Kara Leonard as our 2020 Volunteer of the Year! She is always enthusiastic and ready to help out in any situation she is put in. Kara always takes initiative with tasks around the barn or helping out with lessons.

When asked about why she volunteers with ATRC she had this to say:

"I really like volunteering at the ATRC. It's a great opportunity, not only for the volunteers, but also the riders. Everyone there is super supportive and amazing. I'm really happy I can be part of such a great program."



Thanks for all you do, Kara!

A Message From The Board

My ATRC journey began by volunteering once a week doing evening barn chores. Our boys had "flown the nest," and I returned, like I always do with any spare time, to horses. They are therapy for me. It is the simple connection with these gentle, goofy, giants that brings me joy. Volunteering with ATRC allows me to support the herd that gives so much to our riders and their families. It is such an exciting time to be a part of this organization. We turn 40! We are securing our forever home. We have new Board members. We have a growing base of riders and supporters and we have an exciting schedule of events this year to bring our ATRC community and network together to fundraise for our next chapter. Staying true to the commitment of our founder, Chris Lehman, we are striving to meet the needs of all of our riders. In order to keep our lesson fees low, we are embarking on a comprehensive fundraising campaign to meet our operating needs and to fund our forever home. A major supporter has offered a very generous loan with a deeply discounted interest rate to secure our own facility. Very soon we will be launching our first ever capital campaign to fulfill our requirements under this loan. And we have to find our new location!! This is going to be an amazing and pivotal year and we will need your help. I look forward to meeting you and hearing your ATRC story as this journey unfolds.

-Mindy. Scott, Vice President

ATRC'S Sweetheart of the Year



Show your favorite horse some love this February with our Sweetheart of the Year Competition! Through the month of February you can send your horse, your instructor, or a participant a valentine for \$10. Each valentine an individual receives will be counted as a vote for them in our competition. The individual that receives the most valentines/votes will be named our 2021 Sweetheart of the year! Valentines can be purchased at the farm or by using

our PayPal link:

paypal.me/albanyTRC



NEW PROGRAMS



As we've grown through recent years we have been able to incorporate several new programs in addition to therapeutic riding while still staying true to Chris Lehman's original mission.

One of these new programs is our Mental Health program, headed by Lauren Longtoe our Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning. Equine Assisted Mental Health uses horses to facilitate the therapeutic process. Participants can learn to groom, feed, and lead their horse. There are also various team building and bonding activities. The goal of the program is to develop emotional regulation, self-confidence, and responsibility. The session is supervised and guided by an Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning. Equine Assisted Mental Health can be geared towards specific groups of participants such as; Veterans, Domestic Violence Survivors, Support Groups (i.e. cancer survivors, etc.), People struggling with Addiction, Depression & Anxiety, and Trauma Survivors.

As we look ahead to our next 40 years, we are looking forward to the many opportunities to begin even more new programs so that we can continue to grow and serve as many people as possible!

