

# THREE GAITS



## 2008 ANNUAL REPORT



*“A man on a  
horse is spiritually  
as well as  
physically bigger  
than a man  
on foot.”*

John Steinbeck



## Dear Friends,

This year was one of achievement, challenges and change. We celebrated twenty-five remarkable years of service, providing therapeutic riding lessons, hippotherapy and horsemanship experiences to the community. What was started in 1983 by Gail Brown and Lorrie Renker with two horses and eight riders has evolved into an impressive operation with over 240 volunteers, 21 horses and 252 participants! We are so very grateful to each and every individual who has been involved as a volunteer, staff member, donor or participant. Each person has helped to shape Three Gaits along the way.

The year of 2008 brought financial challenges to many. In this climate, as a non-profit organization relying on the generosity of others, we needed to ensure our long-term financial stability. To this end, we restructured and streamlined the organization, spreading the responsibilities over existing positions and utilizing the strengths of our board members, volunteers, parents of students and supporters. What remarkable gifts of time and talent you all have given — from organizing fundraisers, coordinating events, and providing administrative assistance to getting your hands dirty (really, really dirty!) while winterizing our barn during the Extreme Barn Makeover. Our volunteers shared over 10,540 hours this year — 1,800 hours more than last year!! What some may not have been able to give financially, they have given in time and expertise. This rally of commitment is truly heartwarming and greatly appreciated.

With this kind of support, the bar is set high to be the best that we can be. Through the years, we have focused on providing high quality equine-assisted activities and therapies at Three Gaits by maintaining a strong relationship with NARHA. We are a premier accredited NARHA center with the only three advanced instructors in Wisconsin. Our instructors are often called upon to mentor others towards achieving their certification. What an honor it is to give back — to help others provide more opportunities for adults and children with special needs.

Another milestone this year was the launching of our new driving program to assist people who would benefit from participation in equine-assisted activities, but who may struggle to ride. Sandra Faust achieved her NARHA driving instructor certification. After much hard work and training, Sandra and her equine partner, Nora, are now ready and eager to share the challenges and joys of this exciting equine-assisted activity!

In 2009, we will continue to focus on and serve the community that serves us and to be a leader in equine-assisted activities. As always, we open our doors to scout troops, school and youth groups, adult horse clubs and others who would like a peek into the wonderful world of horses. We welcome you to call us for a visit, to stroke a velvety nose, to bush a glistening coat and to see the joy in the faces of our students as they ditch their wheelchairs and muster coordination they didn't realize they had to maneuver a 1,000 pound animal through an obstacle course. It's exciting and rewarding work, and I am honored and privileged to be a part of it. Thank you for another great year.

Sincerely,

Dena Duncan, Program Director



*“Children who ride at Three Gaits develop improved head and trunk control, which can lead to improved sitting and standing balance. However what to me is even more spectacular is how very proud they are to overcome any fear, and to be able to ride this huge animal. This is especially important when the child is aware they are ‘different’ from other children because it gives them something to be proud of. Three Gaits is an incredible, valuable, unique service for children with disabilities and I give it my full endorsement.”*

*Dr. Deb McLeish, MD, MS  
Pediatric Rehabilitation Specialist at  
American Family Children’s Hospital  
in Madison.*



## The Program

Three Gaits is a Premier Accredited Center of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, Inc., and offers the following programs:

### Therapeutic Riding (Sport/Recreational)

Classes that incorporate education, competition, therapy and recreation into horseback riding

### Hippotherapy Sessions

Sessions which employ a therapist to use the movement of the horse as a treatment tool, working toward functional goals

### Driving

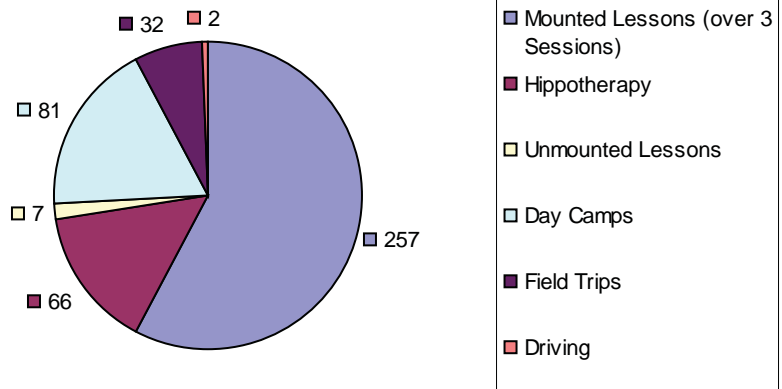
New therapeutic carriage driving program, which provides a wider-based therapeutic equine experience

### Un-Mounted Horsemanship Activities

A new Horse Club for adult participants involved with Three Gaits to learn about horse care and horsemanship skills from the ground

### Day Camps

Summer day camp sessions, which offer a multitude of fun activities, open to participants with and without special needs



2008 Number of Clients, Categorized by Participation in Equine-Assisted Activity

- ◆ 252 individuals participated in 3,325 Equine-Assisted Activities (units of service).
- ◆ 445 people (“duplicated,” meaning that one person may have taken part in multiple activities) participated in mounted riding, carriage driving lessons, therapy sessions, day camps and field trips.

Three Gaits had 21 equine partners that participated in equine-assisted activities at Three Gaits throughout 2008. Evaluated for their soundness, temperament and movement, these horses and ponies were either leased or donated to Three Gaits, and undergo countless hours of training before ever entering a class.



“My son Adam started in your program for the 2008 Spring Session and then proceeded on to the Summer Session. Adam has a multitude of disabilities so our goals were to have him gain better trunk control for posture and be aware of his surroundings. The staff did a wonderful job working with Adam! They were attentive to his needs as well as the horse’s needs. The staff works well and supports each other, which I feel is an important feature in this therapeutic endeavor. Sandra was Adam’s instructor. She connected well with him and encouraged him to sit up on the horse himself without support and at the same time recognized his limitations and responded accordingly. Sandra is very good about seeking input from me as well as providing information back based on her experiences. Because of Adam’s experience with Three Gaits, his posture, balance and endurance have improved and this is documented in his Educational Plan (IEP) at school. Adam loves the horse he trained on (Beau), he enjoyed the hands-on attention from the staff, and I love our experience there as a whole! We look forward to coming back for the 2009 Spring Session.”

Deb Notstad, parent of student

## Financials

### INCOME

Client Fees (hippotherapy, day camps, driving & riding lessons)	29.0%
Boarding	4.5%
Fundraisers/Special Events	16.1%
United Way	14.8%
Donations	24.3%
Grants/Restricted Income	11.0%
<hr/>	
Total	\$ 315,501.65

### EXPENSES

Insurance	8.9%
Volunteer Management	1.8%
Horse Care/Tack	15.6%
Payroll/Staff	47.3%
Continuing Education	4.5%
Printing/Mailing/Postage/PR	5.8%
Bad Debt	.6%
Farm/Mortgage/Loan	6.6%
Farm Maintenance/Repairs/Snow/Trash/Utilities	5.6%
Professional Fees/Services	2.3%
NARHA Dues	1%

### SCHOLARSHIPS

\$10,555 was provided in 2008 through Three Gaits’ Scholarship Fund (Susan Beth Louis Scholarship Fund). Many riders’ fees are supported through programs such as the Family Support & Resource Center, Lutheran Social Services, or foundations such as the Hans and Anna Spartvedt Trust through M&I Trust.





## The People

### PARTICIPANTS (by Ages)

2-5	10.8%	31-50	8.3%
6-10	32.8%	51-64	2.8%
11-18	31.7%	65+	3.3%
19-30	10.6%		

Three Gaits served riders with the following disabilities and special needs in 2008: ADD/ADHD, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Delay/Disability, Down Syndrome, Emotional or Behavioral Disability, Head Trauma/Brain Injury, General Hearing Impairment, Learning Disability, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Paralysis, Spina Bifida, Spinal Cord Injury, Visual, Metabolic, Orthopedic Impairment



## STAFF

### Full-Time

**Program Director:** Dena Duncan

### Part-Time

**Office Administrator:** Melissa Lawrence

**Occupational Therapists:** Stephanie Bruschi, Karen Diegel

**NARHA Advanced Instructors:** Dena Duncan, Angela Frank, Betsy Kelly

**NARHA Registered Instructors:** Sandra Faust (also NARHA Driving Level I Instructor), Rudi Meyer

**Maintenance:** Jesse Morales

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Andrea Strayer

**Treasurer:** Robert Gooze

**Secretary:** Deb Gunderson

**Directors:** Jay Gunderson, Steve Link, Pam Moen

## VOLUNTEERS

- ♦ 240+ Volunteers shared 10,540 Hours of Service (1,800 hours more than last year's total of 8,735).
- ♦ 27% of our volunteers come from Madison; 11% from Stoughton. The remainder come from 23 other nearby towns and two other states.



*We are proud of our program's accreditation as a NARHA premier accredited center, and of our instructors' and therapists' NARHA certification. There are currently three NARHA Certified Advanced Instructors in Wisconsin — and all three instruct lessons at Three Gaits. Our instructors share their expertise by mentoring other individuals seeking NARHA instructor certification, helping to expand availability and improve quality of regional programs.*





*“For about 10 years, Three Gaits was the place where my wife, Bev, went every Thursday, giving me a guilt-free day of golf or napping, depending on the season. Over the years, I’d heard some stories about the kids and the horses and other events at Three Gaits, but I didn’t really grasp what it was all about. Finally, curiosity got the best of me and I asked if anyone could show up and volunteer. Just like that, I was hooked.*”

*I came to Three Gaits that first day with no experience with horses beyond picking losers in horse races and admiring them in pastures. My familiarity with kids with special needs was at about the same level. Together, they are a powerful force. From a volunteer’s perspective, it is tremendously rewarding to see kids’ confidence grow from week to week as they learn riding skills. You see kids who will barely talk to you in September telling long-winded stories in December. It’s way cool. And for anyone who thinks they might have a fondness for horses, the experience is very educational. The Three Gaits horses all have distinct personalities — not surprising, but fun to discover.*

*The other special element at Three Gaits is the people. The staff and instructors are great to work with and I’ve learned much from them, directly through observation. And the other volunteers are all helpful and cooperative. Altogether, the riders, horses and the people involved make Three Gaits a tremendous experience.”*

*Dennis Punzel*



## **Three Gaits**

THERAPEUTIC HORSEMANSHIP CENTER

3741 STATE ROAD 138  
STOUGHTON, WI 53589-3713  
(608) 877-9086