



Year in Review, 2024

STIRRUP COURAGE

Equestrian Learning Center

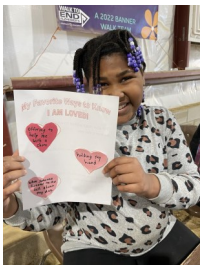
www.stirrupcourage.org



2024 brings to completion the second year of being in our beautiful big blue barn and running class sessions year-round in every season! Enjoy this season-by-season review of highlights from another great year achieved through your amazing support!

❄️ 2024 Winter Session Highlights: ❄️

- ◆ 33 kids took lessons through the winter months, even with the cold!
- ◆ We were able to fit in one new Horse Care class with 3 children off the waiting list to start off the year!
- ◆ A highlight activity was a “My Favorite Ways to Know I Am LOVED!” theme after Valentine’s Day, in which children read paper hearts posted around the arena with many different ways people can show that they love you using all different “love languages.” At the end of class, children were to go back and pick out the 3 hearts that stood out to them as gestures that would make them feel the most loved. I was able to send pictures of each child holding up their selections to their adults as a way to better understand how to show love to their child in ways that mean the most to them. Their grown-ups loved having that little insight into their children’s hearts!
- ◆ New borrowed pony, Cricket, and new donated mare, Sami, began to fully integrate into regular lessons.



Yearly Winter Banquet Celebration!

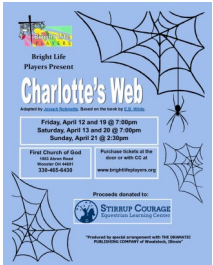
For the second year in a row we gathered all available families and volunteers who participated in our program for a winter banquet dinner at Dutch Kitchen in Dalton to celebrate everything that had been accomplished the previous year and to mark the start of a new year of lessons. Since our banquet date fell on the day after Valentine’s Day, our celebration theme was all about “Sharing the LOVE!” All students who reached the “Star” independent riding level in the past year received a medal, a handful of courageous students who experienced their first fall off a horse and got back on received a commemorative trophy, and 4 students were awarded the large rotating trophies recognizing the 4 Primary Goals for our Participants: Confidence, Connectedness, Caring, and Coping Skills. We also recognized the top MVP Volunteers for the year, and gifted every student with a newly designed Stirrup Courage t-shirt to fit the love theme.



2024 Spring Session Highlights:

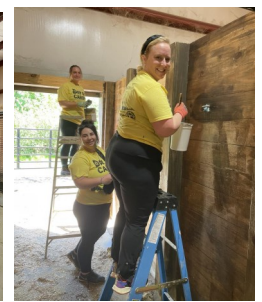


- ◆ 37 children participated in spring lessons!
- ◆ 7 of those students were from NEW Horse Care classes that we were able to take off the waiting list in May!
- ◆ The Daily Record newspaper sent a reporter and photographer to do a special story on our organization, which turned out to be not only a great article, but also was the COVER article for both our local Wooster paper and the Canton Repository!
- ◆ The Bright Life Players, a local nonprofit community theater, chose our program to be the benefit charity for their spring production of "Charlotte's Web." With their profits from ticket sales for the play, they presented Stirrup Courage with a \$2,000 check! I was invited to speak during intermission for each of the 5 performances to share about our program. It was especially fun for representatives of Stirrup Courage to be there for the production, as one of our own students, Presley, was in the cast playing the part of the Goose!



Helping Hands from our Caring COMMUNITY!

For the second year in a row, we were given the opportunity to request teams of volunteers from Orrville area businesses to come help us with completing big work projects for the Orrville Area United Way's Day of Caring on Wednesday May 1st. We were sent 2 teams of volunteers from the J.M. Smucker company, who spent their morning of community service staining our stall walls, staining the inside wood wall of the arena, washing windows, weed trimming around the barn, and installing new door handles and hardware. So many unfinished projects can get accomplished with so many willing hands ready to work at once!



A Sweet Project of a Pony: Meet Oreo

In May, I agreed to take in a new pony donation, with the background knowledge that she was severely underweight and had not been receiving the best care where she was. We still don't know if this older pony will be able to regain a healthy enough condition to be rideable or what her long-term outlook is. But for now, we are giving Oreo the best chance we can



to receive care, nutrition, and loving attention from adoring children! If you would like to help sponsor some of the special care for Oreo's rehabilitation, donate with the memo "Oreo."



2024 Summer Session Highlights:

- ◆ 38 children were enrolled in summer lessons!
- ◆ 12 new students were able to complete the Horse Care class over the summer!
- ◆ 3 new volunteer families received training to come out on designated days each week to help with chores like feeding, watering, and cleaning stalls, which was a HUGE help during the busy summer session!

◆ Our students completed challenges with bubbles, played cooperative card games like Go Fish with their classmates, and balanced scoops of “ice cream” on Styrofoam cones. During the hottest week of June, many of our classes got to experience “Horse Bath Day” in place of a regular riding class, so everyone could stay cool—some even came in their bathing suits!

◆ Payshence, my most advanced student who we sponsor to complete in 4-H, showed Buddy this year for her first year cantering, and they made a great team! At the end of the summer they competed at the Wayne County Fair in contesting, Western and English classes, took home plenty of ribbons, 2 first place trophies, and High Point Champion awards from points they earned at fun shows throughout the summer in the Beginner Canter division!

◆ We were excited to partner with some other community programs this summer to share our horses in new ways. First with the opportunity to work with the summer field trips program

from Lighthouse Ministries in Canton, who brought students on two different days in July to complete classes in our Horse Care curriculum. Then we got to know teens and their mentors in the STRIVE mentoring program through Catholic Charities, hosting their monthly meeting for August at our facility, sharing about our program and giving them the basic intro lesson to grooming and leading.

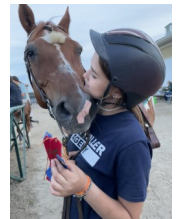
Youth on a Mission!

This summer I was offered an amazing opportunity to host a week-long summer service project with the most hard-working, motivated group of teenagers you could hope to work with! When the Youth Pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Kidron approached me about bringing the high school youth group to Stirrup

Courage to serve for their local service trip, it wasn't hard to dream up a list of possible big projects a group that size could help us accomplish over a week of work!

One of those big projects was to finally add an outdoor playground area for our families to use when they come to lessons! The youth group got right to work their first day on the job clearing sod from the site, laying weed guard, transporting and stacking foundation stones for the border, and spreading a giant mound of mulch. Then they all pitched in with figuring out assembly of the playground set like a giant puzzle, helping each other lift and hold the heavy pieces in place, and teaching each other to use power tools.

Other projects completed by the group throughout the week included helping me lead new children in a Horse Care class, clearing riding trails in the woods behind our pasture, finishing the family bathroom, giving our barn a thorough cleaning, and planning a community fundraiser event to end the week. On the last day of their service trip the youth hosted a Cornhole Tournament that started with a hotdog cookout, and concluded with the triumphant cornhole teams taking home fun donated prizes and trophies, all to help fundraise for the cost of the playground project! The tournament and cookout raised \$2,251 in entries and donations, then the youth group themselves chose to donate an additional \$2,000 from their own funds!



🍁 2024 Fall Session Highlights: 🍁

- ◆ With the addition of 3 new students that I was able to fit in off the waiting list for a Horse Care class starting at the end of November, we reached a total of FORTY students who were enrolled in fall sessions!!!
- ◆ Our Fall theme was Friendship. Riders played games and that focused on what it means to be a good friend. The “Create-a-Pumpkinhead-Friend Challenge” brought out lots of creativity as always!
- ◆ Some of our Star independent level riders had the special treat of being able to experience an outdoor fall trail ride while the weather stayed warm for us in October, and we got some beautiful blue sky views behind the fall tree colors!
- ◆ We launched the “Courage C.R.E.W. (Caring Responsible Equestrian Workers)” Incentives Program to reward students who choose to give extra time to volunteer in the barn with cleaning stalls, feeding and watering horses. We have some great workers on the Courage CREW who are already off to a great start in earning points by learning the responsibilities that come with caring for a horse!



STIRRUP COURAGE Equestrian Learning Center

INVITES YOU TO OUR 3RD ANNUAL

“DECK THE STALLS”

CHRISTMAS

OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, December 8

From 1:00-4:00pm

FREE hot chocolate bar and holiday cookies, contests, crafts and prizes for kids, Christmas photos with a horse or pony, prize basket raffle and silent auction full of great Christmas gift ideas!

Join us at the big blue barn!

823 South Kohler Rd, Orrville

Please remember us as you think about year-end giving to causes that are important to you!

You can find multiple ways to donate online through PayPal, debit, or credit card, at our donation link:

paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/4463055

Or send a check by mail to: Stirrup Courage, 645 S Kohler Rd, Orrville OH 44667. Your year-end gift helps sustain our program through the harsher winter months, and allows us to provide scholarships so that lesson cost is never a barrier for any child in need to share a love of horses!

Stirrup Courage, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, all donations are tax-deductible (EIN 86-2771772).

We are so THANKFUL for all your amazing support this year!

Tara Steiner, Executive Director — stirrupcourage@gmail.com