



Adam on Libby enhancing his balance with the ball.

#### MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide Hippotherapy and equine assisted activities to physically and mentally challenged adults and children, promoting improved healing, function and overall well being.

**Renaissance Healing and Learning Center/Renaissance Therapy Center**

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Cypress School Student- Story on page 2

NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER  
EDITION 2009



Karen Berke with Buddy.

### *Welcome From the Director*

I would like to welcome you to RHLC/RTC. Please call us or email us to arrange a visit to meet the warm and wonderful staff which includes human, horse and CCI Facility Dog Black Lab, Max!!!

After 11 years of hard work to find the Dream Team, I wanted to extend a deep and

#### IT IS A MITZVAH!

We also have had students who are involved in community service projects prior to their Bar or Bat Mitzvah from community Synagogues. It is a "Mitzvah", or good deed to help in different ways.

#### My Mitzvah Project by Cameron

I enjoy animals of all kinds, especially horses. When I went looking for a Mitzvah project I was hoping to find a way to work with horses. My searching found an incredible organization, in Cotati, called Renaissance Healing and Learning Center. The Renaissance Healing and Learning Center has been providing hippotherapy (physical therapy with the help of the horse) for children with physical and emotional

heartfelt thank you to all our old and newest dedicated, loyal and wonderful volunteers and staff, Amanda, Michelle, Michael, Cecily, Holly, Annette, Lisa, Jack and Betty, Karen B., Lea, Ford, Bodhi, Sandy S., and Sandy L, Patsy, Kaitlin, Jessica, Lindsay, Rachel, Carron, Bethany, Taryn, Ellen, Lena, Mya, Frankie, Kristie, Emily, Connor, Ben, Elena, Harla, Cameron and all our Students from SSU; The Departments of Psychology, Kinesiology, Adaptive P.E. and to various public and private high school programs.

challenges since 1998. They work with people who have cerebral palsy, autism, Parkinson's disease, developmental delays and other conditions. I became a volunteer and was able to work alongside the horses while the students would ride. Many times the children arrived unhappy, but the minute they were on their horse and started to move their mood soon changed to happiness. I spent many weekends volunteering my time to a cause that I feel very strong about. Renaissance is an amazing place. I feel very lucky to have experienced this therapy center. I have a new respect for animals and the care and love they can give to people. A portion of my Bar Mitzvah money will be donated to this organization.





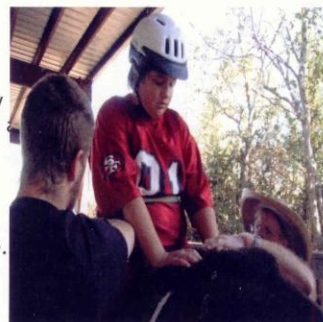
Danny is getting sensory input from the bowl while the horse "Libby" eats the carrots.  
The picture on the front of the newsletter is showing how focused and calm Danny is on the horse, with the movement of the horse (hippotherapy) and doing rings at the same time.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### *Danny and Randy come to us from Cypress School in Petaluma*

The Cypress School is a school that specializes in serving students with autism and other developmental disabilities. It is a place "to learn without limits" is their Motto. Danny came to us approximately a year and half ago with fear of getting on the horse. We let him explore his limits and go beyond them with patience and support from our staff. He now can get on the horse with confidence. He focuses on the task at hand and enjoys every minute he has on the horse.

Randy is doing Hippotherapy. The horse is providing sensory input to calm and focus him.

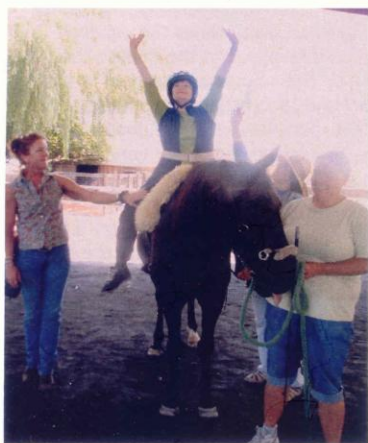


### *Renaissance Will Miss Adena Miller!!!*



Adena has been with Renaissance for almost 3 years. She is a student from Sonoma State, and is graduating this year. Adena came to us afraid of horses. After working with us, she now handles the horses with great confidence; she ground drives, lounges, and rides horses. Adena then got to ride Smoke in the Cotati parade! Adena is a Physical Therapy major and has a great talent for working with children and Adults. Adena is leaving to go to Utah in the fall to a Therapy Center that will include a variety of therapies. We will miss her very much. GOOD LUCK ADENA!

Michelle Christiansen, Our Volunteer Coordinator and horse handler, with Adena Miller.

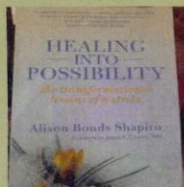


## BACK PAIN -ABOUT ELLEN

Ellen has a history of intractable back pain for over 15 years. She has tried other forms of typical clinical physical therapy, without much success. With a morphine pump and neuro stimulator implants, she reported that she still was going through her everyday life with a pain level of "7/10". Earlier this year she found Renaissance Healing and Learning Center. While she was visiting a store called Marin Tack and Feed in Fairfax, the owner recommended RHLC. She saw the literature revealing possibilities of "healing on horseback" at Renaissance.

Ellen now has been participating in hippotherapy sessions twice weekly, with Fran the Physical Therapist and her team, which includes the horse Stormy, volunteers and staff. The results were immediate, not altogether surprising, but significant. Her pain level reduced from "7/10" to "5/10" by the end of the first session. Since then, she reports that while the pain is still a major issue in her life, she has been able to increase her activity level, on a day-by-day basis. The pain level has reduced to as low as "2/10" after hippotherapy.

Another remarkable feature of rehabilitation through hippotherapy has been not only a significant change in her posture but it also has helped her depression. Initially we saw her walking as if she was a solid block, precariously moving through space, as if the slightest movement might cause her to break like a glass, forward, bent-over, looking at the ground. Now "I am enjoying life more than ever", she says. Ellen now walks with head high, looking straight ahead, with a straighter back and a smile.



Book signing in Marin  
RHLC is talked about in  
this Wonderful book.

We did a Hippotherapy  
demo at the Petaluma  
Fair  
Demo at the Santa Rosa  
Fair

Radio Interviews on  
KPFA  
KZST  
KJZY  
106.3

Infineon Raceway Walk-  
a-thon-For Autism, with  
Buddy our mini horse.

Article in Press Democrat

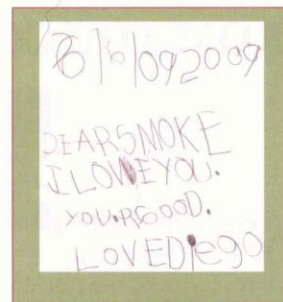
## Diego's Story



Diego, Smoke and Michelle

## ABOUT THE NORTH BAY REGIONAL CENTER

Exciting News! This past year, North Bay Regional Center has been helping families fund Hippotherapy at Renaissance, for their Developmentally Delayed children, by offering a trade of respite hours. If a family is interested in acquiring our services, they need to contact their CPC coordinator at NBRC to ask how to get started. Renaissance and Fran are vendors of NBRC, and could also provide physical therapy if authorized.



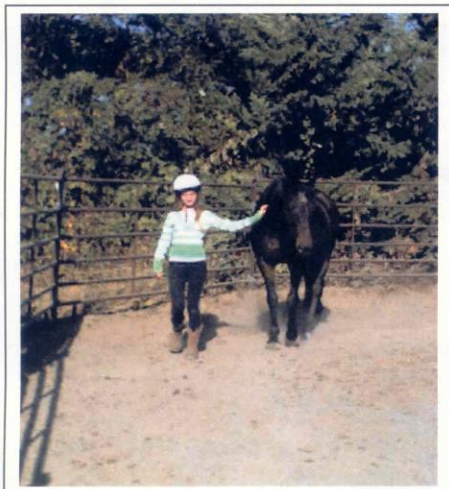
Diego is a student who becomes very focused after hippotherapy. He sat down and wrote this letter to Smoke.



One of our dedicated volunteers Ford side-walking with Braden on Stormy.

## Therapeutic Riding at RHLC

Hana Musgrove at Liberty with Allie.



Michelle Krespi on Allie with Therapeutic Riding Instructor Amanda Prestyly-Belka.



## FROM THE CORNER STALL:



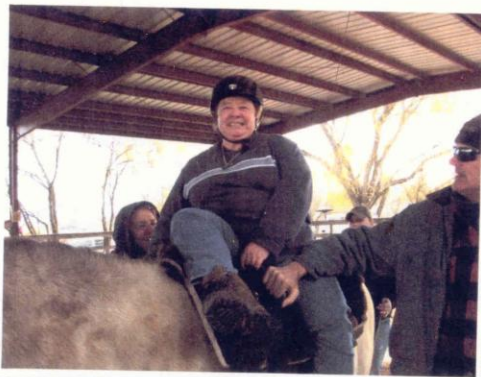
### A Poem for Stormy

By Lea Blum

STORMY.....GLISTENING BLACK COAT, SHINING BLACK MANE.....  
THICK AND WAVY, FLYING FREELY IN THE BREEZE.  
STORMY.....THE COLOR OF THE NIGHT, THE COLOR OF NEW BEGINNINGS, THE COLOR OF REBIRTH, MAGIC AND CREATIVITY.

STORMY.....YOU CAPTIVATE MY HEART. I LOOK AT YOU AND THINK  
OF MAGICAL PLACES.....LONG LOST LANDS THAT YOU CAN ONLY FIND BY PASSING THROUGH THE THICK AND MIST-  
FILLED FOG OF SLEEP.  
DREAM LAND, FANTASY LAND.....THE PLACE OF PRINCESSES, KNIGHTS AND UNICORNS. THE PLACE OF BEAUTIFUL  
WOODS AND WATERFALLS, OF FLOWERS GROWING IN THE MIST.  
THE LAND OF MERLIN AND HIS MAGIC.

STORMY.....I LOOK INTO YOUR BEAUTIFUL BROWN, MARBLE LIKE EYES AND FEEL CAPTIVATED.....DRAWN INTO A  
PLACE OF ADVENTURE AND IMAGINATION. IT'S AS IF YOU ARE INVITING ME ON A MYSTICAL  
DREAM-FILLED JOURNEY.  
I RIDE UPON YOUR BACK AND FEEL AN AMAZING ENERGY, A POWERFUL CONNECTION BETWEEN OUR HEARTS. I FEEL AS  
IF THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF AN AMAZING JOURNEY.....AS IF YOU AND I ARE FACING MANY ADVENTURES  
TOGETHER. ALTHOUGH IT IS AN UNKNOWN ROAD, I LOOK FORWARD TO TRAVELING IT TOGETHER AND WITH OPEN  
HEART AND SPIRIT.



Lea Blum is on Smoke, having a hippotherapy session. Lea also likes to ride Stormy. Lea is an artist and a social worker. She volunteers her time to help us with our clients and the horses. Thank you Lea.

### RHLC WISH LIST

VOLUNTEERS  
SPONSORSHIPS for Riders/Horses  
NARHA Conference-Scholarships  
(for employees)  
FENCING/nonclimb/wood  
SHELTER for HORSES  
THERAPEUTIC RIDING EQUIPMENT  
PIPE CORRAL  
ROCK FOR STALL DRAINAGE  
BARN PROJECTS-New Construction  
LEGAL ASSISTANCE for NON-PROFIT  
LAPTOP COMPUTER/OFFICE SUPPLIES  
HORSE SUPPLIES: Shampoo,  
flyspray, supplements, Sand clear products,  
Hay and Grain, flymasks, blankets, etc  
HORSE CARE - DENTISTRY etc.



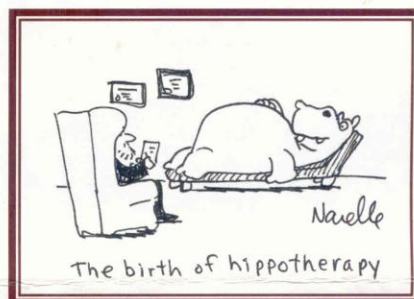
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renaissanceconcept@yahoo.com

www.rhlc.net  
office: 707-664-8919

If you wish to make a donation, contact  
Our office or place in donation envelope.

If you wish to be taken off our mailing list  
Please contact our office.



*We would like to extend a special thank you to all our fund donors, gifts of tack and supplies, and Volunteer work days at the barn.*

Steve Sagehorn  
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Brian Narelle-Cartoonist  
(see web site [www.bnarelle.com](http://www.bnarelle.com))  
Lea Blum-Volunteer Horse handler

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of the Northbay  
for Sponsoring  
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GPM Printing  
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**Special Thanks to:  
Bohan Canelis Quarry  
in Cazadero for the 100  
tons of sand for our  
Arena.**

**Special Thanks to  
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