

Powell River Therapeutic Riding Association

4356 Myrtle Ave, Powell River, BC V8A 0T2

Phone: 604-485-0177

[PRTRA Website](#) Facebook & Instagram @prtherapeuticriding

Message from the Board

After a tumultuous last two months of 2023, PRTRA staff, volunteers and riders are off to a new, fresh start in 2024. We are happy to be out of quarantine and are working hard to ensure we can continue to provide our service to the community.

The first ride of the Winter session was January 9th. Riders were equally happy to return to our facilities. We have new staff this year and new horses getting acquainted with our barn, fields, and trails.

Welcome to Sara Archer, our new assistant instructor, and Maxine Betts, PRTRA's latest hire and new barn manager. These competent women join Claire Robertson, in corralling and managing the herd and keeping the trail rides enjoyable and classes educational for all riders. Welcome also to our new board member, Heather Armstrong.

PRTRA had a great Open House in December, held in the Quonset hut next door to our facilities due to our stables and horses being under quarantine. It was well attended by community members. An online auction that realized close to \$3,000 for our coffers was held at the same time. Well done to everyone who participated and lent a hand.

There are lots of exciting events being planned for this upcoming session. Staff members and volunteers are signing up for ATV training; new horses are being vetted by staff; and an active search is underway for more volunteers for our organization. Stay tuned for more and should you want to help in any capacity, we would be happy to rein you in!

Our Board

Nellie Valentine – *President*

Nicki Lister - *Vice President*

Roy McIntyre - *Treasurer*

Drewen Young - *Secretary*

Daryl Magnus-Brown - *Director*

Cindy Elliot - *Director*

Linzy Elliot - *Director*

Carolyn Braun - *Director*

Heather Armstrong - *Director*



Upcoming Events

Volunteer Training for Horse handlers and side walkers

March 25th and 27th

We need more volunteers, come get trained, you won't regret it!

Thank You

We appreciate our staff, volunteers and the community for their support.

BC Therapeutic Riding Association

Coastal Breeze Residents

F.K Morrow Foundation

Greygates Foundation

Hylcan Foundation

IA Financial Group

Mother Nature

PR Community Forest

PR Community Foundation

PR First Credit Union

PR Health Care Auxiliary

qathet Regional District

Rebecca Pinch Foundation

Royal Canadian Legion PR

Rural Septic Services

Scotia Bank

Vancouver Island MS Association

Vandekerkhove Foundation

More Important News

Our Barn Manager Maxine Betts (Max)

I think I was born a horse lover, and sat on my first horse at the age of 4. My obsession officially began at the age of 9 when I got my first pony for my birthday. During high school I worked as a groom and apprenticed with a farrier. I almost attended Kwantlen Collage's farrier program, but realized I'd rather spend a life on a horse than under them.

After high school I moved to Ontario where I worked at a number of Eventing and Dressage barns including a Thoroughbred breeding farm where I started and galloped babies for the racetrack. While in Ontario I attended Kemptville College's Equine Program where I achieved the "Most Improved Student" award.

In my mid 20's I moved back to Vancouver Island, joining the team at Queen Margret's School (QMS) where I worked towards my Equine Canada Level 1 Coaching Certificate. Over the next 20 years I rode, managed many barns, taught Pony Club and specializing in equine husbandry. In the early 2000's I drove horse and carriage downtown Victoria. Before rejoining QMS to gain my Independent Teachers Certificate and taught grade 8-12 classroom Stable Management. From there I joined the team at Foxstone Stable where I became their Head Groom and assistant to the Georgia Hunt the Head Trainer. During my years at Foxstone I had the pleasure of working with high level industry professionals, and horses.

These days, I focus on the fundamentals of riding and equine well-being with and Equitation Science lens. Outside of work I can be found in my garden or out with my dog, enjoying the many lakes and trails that Powell River has to offer.

I am honored to bring my skills and experience to the amazing group of people at PRTRA.



Retirement

Barn Manager

Eilieah has retired from her position as Barn Manager at PRTRA after 8 years of diligently caring for the herd. She hasn't said goodbye to her equine friends, however, as she will continue volunteering and writing grants. Eilieah has played an integral role in the success of PRTRA, doubling as Barn Manager and as wordsmith for PRTRA's annual grant applications. Everyone, board members, staff members, volunteers, riders, parents, caregivers and horse lovers alike appreciate Eilieah's dedication to PRTRA, and her loyalty, support and love of our horses. Happy trails, but no riding into the sunset for you, Eilieah, we're happy you are still part of the gang.



Bookkeeper

Happy Retirement, Ann Nelson, Bookkeeper for PRTRA

PRTRA board members want to thank Ann Nelson for her many years of steadfast bookkeeping services for PRTRA. Ann was with the organization for 25 years and we are grateful for her guiding hand during these years, some of which were tumultuous and some when finances were uncertain. Ann's financial diligence will be continued by bookkeeper Amy Heather of Heather Bookkeeping who is seeing us through this transition with Nellie.

More Important News

New Assistant Instructor Sara Archer

A dedicated and passionate outdoor enthusiast and entrepreneur. Sara has been committed to inclusivity in sport. Her aspirations are now fixed on growing as a Therapeutic Riding Instructor. Sara has unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals through equine-assisted therapy. Her expertise, empathy, and dedication have made a positive impact on the well-being of her riders. She creates a safe and supportive environment for therapeutic growth and personal empowerment.



Sara Archer

New Board Member Heather Armstrong

Heather is no newcomer to PRTRA, she's been a horse handler and volunteer for the past ten years. In 2014 Heather and her husband Jim moved from the lower mainland to Powell River. While out in the neighbourhood walking their dog, Gus, Heather ran into Nellie who told her about PRTRA and the good work they do. "I've been a volunteer ever since," Heather said. Heather is a great asset to PRTRA as she has a long history with horses. "I was a trail guide for Wild Rose stables in Naramata," she said. "So, being a PRTRA board member is a good fit."



Fund Raising

Hay is for Horses

Your donation of \$50 will help us purchase a bale of hay or grain for one of our therapy horses. Tax receipts will be issued for donations \$20 or greater.

Adopt a Pony

Here's a great way to help PRTRA. Consider sponsoring one of the therapy horses through the Adopt-a-Pony program. Your sponsorship will maintain one special therapeutic riding horse of your choice for one year.

Manure

\$2.00 per litre tub, tote, bag or bin
\$20.00 per truck load

Rent our Arena Facilities

1 hour drop in (members only)
\$6.00 per hour
Booklet of 10 tickets \$55.00

Arena ONLY

Clinics & Other Events:

1/2 day - \$50.00

Full Day - \$100.00

2 Days - \$200.00

3 Days - \$275.00

Building ONLY

1/2 day - \$50.00

Full Day - \$75.00

2 Days - \$150.00

3 Days - \$225.00

Arena & Building:

1/2 day - \$75.00

Full Day - \$150.00

2 Days - \$300.00

Fri/Sat/Sun - \$375.00

prtravolunteer@gmail.com

More Important News

Equine Newcomers



George is a Fjord/Quarter Horse cross gelding. George is at PRTRA on a free-lease from Abbotsford, BC where he resided on a dairy farm, getting lots of love and attention by his loving family. George is an absolute love-bug, with a big beautiful walk, making him great for riders who need to develop core strength. George has quickly proven himself as a very important part of our program, and we feel very lucky to have him here.

Gomuwka's Nomad "Pete" is a registered Norwegian Fjord gelding, born in 2009. Pete came from Alberta, where he was used as a driving horse, with his half-brother, Dudley. Both Pete, and Dudley ended up at Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association. Pete has proven to be an amazing addition to our program. Pete is trained in wheelchair lifts, and can carry our highest needs riders, with no hesitation.



Our Promise

Heroes who have devoted their lives to serving as therapy horses found their way to us through unique journeys. Regardless of age or ailment, we made a solemn vow to provide unwavering care for each of them until their earthly journey concludes. These noble creatures have selflessly showered us with love, and in turn, we are committed to reciprocating that love by ensuring their well-being and comfort.

In Memory Of

"We who choose to surround ourselves with lives even more temporary than our own, live within a fragile circle; easily and often breached. Unable to accept its awful gaps, we would still live no other way.

We cherish memory as the only certain immortality, never fully understanding the necessary plan."

— Irving Townsend

Desi



Buddy



Sitka



More Important News

PRTRA Instructor Claire Robertson

Being Claire Robertson, Head Instructor of PRTRA since January 1, 2023.

Since Claire started working at Powell River Therapeutic Riding Association (PRTRA) last April, she has completed her CANTRA B[2] Instructor's level. This allows her to instruct two students at a time.

When I asked Claire what she most enjoyed in this new role as Head Instructor, her response was quick, yet in the same calm measured tones she uses when speaking with all members of the PRTRA community of: students, board members, volunteers and staff. "The kids." She spoke of how she learns from them, of how in many ways each rider needs to be taught differently, of her observations that each rider is gaining confidence, and, how most riders are calmed when they are riding out on the trails. In Japan, there is a name for the medically documented physical and emotional benefits of being in a forest environment. It is called "Shinrin-yoku". The translation into English is, "forest bathing."

When I asked Claire what strength she brought to her position, she felt that it was standing up for horses, while at the same time, being able to provide therapy for children. To that end, Claire's vision is to maintain the class size of two riders as it has become clear that while the therapeutic riding is a suitable vocation for some special horses, even for those who are suited to its demands, there is a lot of stimulus the horse internalizes when they experience so many students, all of whom have different needs and disabilities during their work week. In Claire's words, "each disability is carried by the horse." Add to that, class rotations of horse handlers and side walkers. There is a lot of stimulation present during each class, that we humans do not notice. However, current research in the Equine Science (ES) field is confirming that our equine partners internalize all environmental sounds, sights, smells and touches all the time, as we use horses for competition, recreation and therapy. To prevent burnout amongst the herd, ideally no horse should provide no more than two rides a day. The ES data bank based on collected scientific studies and evidence is re-evaluating how to best provide for the health and well-being of a horse, with degrees and certificate programs now available from several universities around the world in this science. Winner of the highest Australian Science Award, Dr Andrew McLean has been leading the ES field of study on humane treatment for the health and well-being of our equine partners for the past thirty years, and is in demand to teach and speak around the world.

Claire's vision is for the program to retain a herd of eight healthy horses. While that number sounds adequate, there are no shortage of reasons why members of the herd need time off work. In the five months Claire has been head instructor, horses have had days off due to: hives and other allergic reactions, arthritis, miscellaneous injuries, and temporary lameness, to name a few. At the same time it has also become clear that the oldest members of the herd cannot manage the work load they could when they were younger, so their work week has had to be decreased.

It has been a lot of responsibility to assume during the past five months, and big boots to fill in Shannon's absence, so let's give a big "high five" to Claire for doing an amazing job!

Written by Lesley Armstrong

In the works

ATV training

The first ATV training session was held February 17th with three staff, Cynthia, Claire and Max attending. A big thank-you to Andy Perkonig for doing this training and to Darryl and Cynthia for coordinating it. More training to come.

Footing

A project is nearing completion for the Arena Footing Level Remediation and the purchase of a new grooming machine to help maintain the footing.

Round Pen

We are working on replacing the footing inside the round pen.

Claire Robertson



More Important News

PRTRA Volunteer Sue Kirkpatrick

Born in the Year of the Horse, PRTRA volunteer Sue Kirkpatrick always wanted her own horse as a child. But it wasn't a possibility. Sue had to wait until she was in her teens before she could afford to take some lessons. But once she did, she got the bug. For the next five years, Sue drove from Calgary out to the foothills to go trail riding. Still smitten many years later as an adult, Sue recalled being green with envy watching her two young nieces taking riding lessons.

Life prevailed; fast forward to 2015. Living ten minutes from the Powell River Therapeutic Riding Association barn, and wanting to volunteer in a physical, outdoor capacity, with children and with horses, Sue began volunteering at PRTRA as a side walker. That quickly mushroomed into horse handling, grounds maintenance, feeding three nights a week with her partner, Lloyd, and walking individual horses to grazing areas in late spring in preparation for their summers on pastures. While Sue knows most members of the herd's birth dates, she has a fondness for Zora and is often assigned to horse handling that spectacular silver Fjord. Zora has some quirky habits, but Sue's affection and patience with this mare are endless, so they make a good team as Zora has been frequently called upon to fill in for other members of the herd.

"What do you like so much about all of this?" was posed to Sue. "Everything," was her enthusiastic response. "The staff, the volunteers, and especially the learning!" Sue explains how it has been a huge learning curve becoming aware of not only different horse's dietary needs and care, but also their distinctive, individual personalities.

"I just really think they are such beautiful animals," she concluded. Sue is currently practicing her grooming and tacking up skills in anticipation of the upcoming spring session at PRTRA.

Written by Lesley Armstrong



New board member Heather Armstrong and Sue Kirkpatrick

Volunteering

We need more volunteers

Training March 25th and 27th

- Horse handlers
- Side walkers
- Fundraising events

Recruitment is on-going so any time you are ready to join a great group of people and feel good about being a part of your community contact us!

What's involved

- No horse experience necessary
- Several 45-minute classes throughout the day, you only need to do one!
- We are very flexible and try to accommodate everyone.
- We will provide all the training required.

Contact Us

Cynthia Perrie, Office & Volunteer Coordinator

Ph: 604-485-0177

Email: prtravolunteer@gmail.com

[Volunteer Handbook](#)

[Volunteer Application Form](#)

Thank You

A very big Thank You to all our Volunteers. We couldn't do it without you!



Thank You

To the volunteers who helped with our Open House and to following Businesses for your contributions to the Silent Auction held at our Open House on December 2nd, 2023.

We appreciate your support which helps support therapy on horseback for the people in our community.

- Aaron Service and Supply
- A & W
- Afterglow Hair Lounge
- Anytime Fitness
- Armitage Men's Wear
- Beyond Bliss
- Canadian Tire
- Chopping Block
- Coin Jewellery by Bill
- Fresco
- Julie's Airport Cafe
- Lordco Parts Limited
- Massullo Motors
- Muscles and Mindset
- Nancy's Bakery
- Pacific Coastal Airlines
- Panago
- Paperworks Gift Gallery
- Powell River Farmers Agricultural Inst.
- Pet Value
- Pollen Sweaters
- Point Group Hospitality
- Powell River Trail Riders
- Quality Foods
- SaveOn Foods
- Shingle Mill
- Springtime Garden Centre
- Sublime Fashion & Accessories
- Starbucks
- The Caboose & Train Station at Tranquility
- Top Shelf Feeds Inc.
- Tug-Guhm Gallery & Studio
- Westview Bowling & Billards