

# A BALANCING ACT

Over the course of the year, Cheff's Tam Homnick, Kim Henning, and Char Swain have been hard at work studying the effects of therapeutic riding on balance, specifically in adults over the age of 60. This project, dubbed "The Senior Study" is now gaining national attention in the world of equine assisted therapies.

The study was structured as a single blind study with twenty participants in total. The control group, comprised of ten individuals, was balance tested at the beginning and end of a ten week period by a physical therapist, with instructions to "go on living your normal day-to-day life." The study group was also balance tested (with the same tests and the same physical therapist) at the beginning and end of a ten week period, but spent about 45 minutes riding once a week for the entire ten week session. The physical therapist conducting the balance tests was unaware of which group each participant



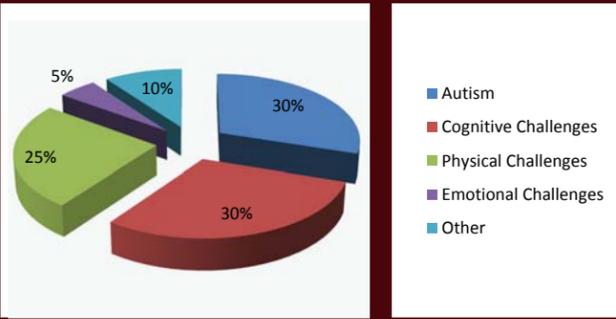
belonged to. The hypothesis was that therapeutic riding does in fact have a statistically positive effect on balance.

Study results were encouraging, but not quite as clear cut as our researchers had hoped. The data showed a statistical trend towards the hypothesis, but was not all together conclusive. Not to be discouraged, Tam and Kim presented the study design and outcomes at the NARHA national conference this November and got nothing but great feedback. By sharing this information, Cheff has given other centers a road map of how to conduct their own studies and contribute to the industry's data bank.

Armed with the experiences that came with conducting the first study and pointers from other researchers, Cheff is now planning on conducting phase two of the senior study. This study will involve more participants and have slight changes in study design.

Scientific studies regarding the effects of therapeutic riding are becoming more of a necessity within the equine assisted therapies industry than ever before. Those who work in the field see the positive effects on a daily basis, but those on the outside sometimes have a harder time understanding the validity of services offered. Statistical information based on sound research is essential for gaining support from the traditional medical community and growing client numbers. Cheff is proud to be blazing the trail with this new wave of investigation.

## Cheff Students By The Numbers



### Our Mission:

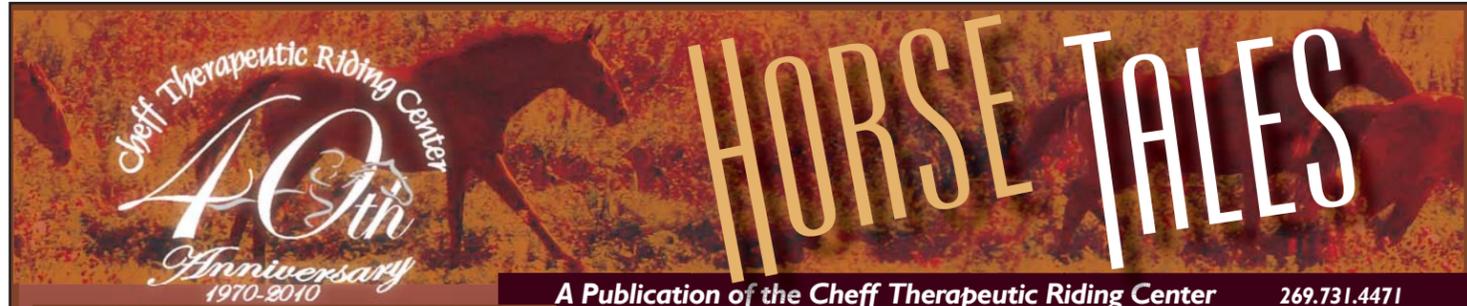
To improve the emotional and physical well-being of individuals through the therapeutic use of horses, and to serve as an international training and education center for therapeutic riding programs.



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## Calendar of Events\*

- November - January - Horse Angel Tree
- December 18- January 10 - Cheff on Break
- January 10 - Session 1 Begins
- February 18 - Ladies Night Out
- February 26 - NARHA Prep Clinic
- February 28 - Session 2 Begins
- March 5 - Equine Extravaganza Horse Fair
- March TBD- Spring Frolic Fun Show/  
Cheff Student Horse Show

\* For more information, please visit  
www.cheffcenter.org or call us at  
269-731-4471



## A Year in Review



Inevitably, the end of a year brings about a sense of reflection and an excitement for what is next to come. Consideration of past events can help to positively shape future occurrences, so it is important to take some time to do just that. As I look back at the year 2010 from Cheff's perspective, I can say with a great amount of honesty that 2010

hasn't been easy, but it has still been good.

We hit the ground running in 2010. It was all hands on deck planning, promoting, and hosting the regional conference in March. The event received rave reviews. Presentations from guest speakers Angela Graham (Bronson Foundation), Ron Kitchens (Southwest Michigan First), and Brad Black (HUMANeX) helped to make the administrative track better than it has ever been. As always, the presentations done by Cheff instructors were outstanding and as a result, Cheff has become the regional expert and national reference for both Horses for Heroes (veterans) and Senior programming.

Starting in April, Cheff took the senior programming to a new level by conducting an official study testing the effect of Therapeutic Riding on community dwelling adults over the age of 60. Over the course of the ten week testing,

our staff was busy working on summer programming which included exciting partnerships with Bronson and the Gull Lake Community Schools Foundation.

Summer flew by as a blur of fundraisers and camps. The Read and Ride camp made possible by the Gull Lake Community Schools Foundation was a great success. Hippotherapy numbers began climbing as a result of our new relationship with Bronson and the Bronson Foundation grant, and the planning for our annual "Shindig" event was in full swing.

By fall, results of our senior study came in (see back page for details), the Shindig had come and gone, and our instructors were feverishly planning presentations for the national conference and putting together a fall schedule that included more students than previous years. Amy Newman was named Region 4 Instructor of the Year, and our Senior Study was embraced by the not-so-easily impressed research community. In the midst of all the excitement, and as a result of increased demand, we've even increased our instructing staff by two!

The past year has been a blur. As we sit on the brink of another 40 years there is no reason to anticipate anything less than greatness. Please stay tuned!

If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail or would like to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Cheff at 269-731-4471.

# MEET THE STAFF

A Look At Our New Instructors

Cheff is thrilled to introduce you to our newest staff members. These individuals are passionate about Cheff and excited to bring their talents to our team!

## Ellen Bennett



Ellen completed the certification process through Cheff at the beginning of this year. Her magnetic personality and sense of humor made her an instant hit with staff and students alike. She's a self-proclaimed "late transplant" to the horse industry but has made up for lost time by soaking up every ounce of knowledge available.

When she's not at Cheff, Ellen can be found horsing around at her farm in Hickory Corners, working on creative writing pieces, or coaxing music out of a variety of instruments.



## Hannah Homnick

Hannah is also a member of Cheff's graduating class of 2010. She became a certified instructor because she "knew it would be a great way to work with horses and people and to give back to the Center. I always respected the instructors at Cheff and I was excited to become one." Riding since the age of eleven and volunteering at Cheff since the age of thirteen, Hannah brings horse experience as well as energy and enthusiasm to the team.

Hannah is currently studying at WMU with a focus on theatre and practical writing. She has remained active in the horse world as a member of WMU's dressage team and a competitor in the eventing world. When she's not doing something horse or school related, Hannah fills her time with music, film, theatre, and traveling.

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1. What makes a horse get furry in the winter?
2. Do horses sleep longer in the summer or winter?
3. On average, how much weight does a horse gain in the winter?

DID YOU KNOW?



Do you have an annual family gathering, company picnic or big bash? Would you like to get rid of all the hassle of planning, setting up, and tearing down? You should party with us!

This year, Cheff is opening up the annual "Country Fair" to host personal and professional family-friendly gatherings. For a fee, you and your group can have a stress free day of fun. Cheff will provide the tent, tables, chairs, food, drink, and entertainment. Activities include games, prizes, face painting, bounce inflatables, pony rides, hay rides, a magic show, and interactive crafts.

If you are interested in booking a party at our Country Fair In July, please call Cheff today at 269-731-4471.

Answer 3: Most horses gain about 10% of their body weight during the winter months (around 100 - 200 lbs.)

## Horse News



### Equine Extravaganza



Mark your calendars for March 5th, 2011! Michigan Equine Partnership is teaming up with Cheff to present a whole day of fun-filled learning. The schedule will include demonstrations and talks on everything from getting your horse and rider pair ready for the big shows, to equine chiropractic care, massage and equine liability law. This event is ideal for horse owners and horse enthusiasts of all ages. Interactive hands on horse attractions will also be part of the lineup. Be sure to check Cheff's website at [www.cheffcenter.org](http://www.cheffcenter.org) as the date gets closer for specific speakers, topics, vendors, and activities.

## Volunteer Spotlight



## Julie Wolfe is Volunteer of the Season!

Enthusiasm, willingness, dedication, curiosity and a ready smile to brighten your day, Julie has it all. By volunteering here at Cheff she has given of her time and talents in a number of different classes helping a number of different students, but she doesn't stop there! Over the course of the time she has spent here with us she has also found a way to be a part of just about all of our fundraisers. Whether it is working in class or doing clean up duty after an event, Julie approaches it all with enthusiasm and a level of energy that is contagious. She gives her all every day and does so with that trademark smile. For her efforts, for her time, for her commitment to the organization as a whole we honor Julie as the volunteer of the season.

## Holiday Shopping

This year, as you're checking off wish lists and hustling around for the holidays, please keep Cheff in mind! We are registered with igive, goodsearch, and Harding's Friendly Markets in programs that donate a percentage of your purchase back to the charity of your choice.

If you're an online shopper, please visit [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com) or [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and see how you can help. You will be surprised how many stores participate in this program! Anyone who shops at Harding's can contribute by picking up a Harding's card and swiping it for Cheff every time they shop. The best part is, none of this will cost you a dime!

Answer 2: Summer!

## Instructor of the Year!



Continuing the tradition from last year, Cheff is proud to announce that once again, we have a NARAH Region 4 Award Winner in our midst! Cheff and R.E.I.N. Therapeutic Riding instructor, Amy Newman, has been selected to represent Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ontario as

Instructor of the Year.

This very prestigious title is well deserved. Over the last 15 years, Amy has dedicated her time to educating both the able bodied and special needs population on the finer points of horseback riding. She serves the Cheff Center as an instructor, herd manager, and a member of our grant writing team. An avid rider herself, she is consistently striving to further her equine education and credentials, as evidenced by the NARHA Master Level Certification (highest level available) she attained last year.

Congratulations Amy!



## Horse Angel Tree

As has been our holiday tradition, starting mid November, Cheff will have an "Angel Tree" in our lobby. This tree offers Cheff supporters and clients the chance to buy a holiday 'gift' for their favorite horse or for the center that they know will be used and appreciated. If you would like to contribute to this year's Angel Tree, stop by the Cheff and grab a tag, or visit our website and click on the "Wish List" tab.



## From The Horseshoe



This riding session, the front desk will be missing a very familiar face. Our own Lynn Martin has been diagnosed with cancer and is currently undergoing treatment at the University of Michigan.

Though her treatment is in its early stages, Lynn is very optimistic about the outcome and fully intends to get back to Cheff as soon as possible. Please keep her in your thoughts this holiday season.

If you would like to send Lynn encouragement or support, please drop off or send to Cheff and we will see that it gets to her.

Answer 1: It's the change in daylight time, not the cold!