



A Message from Equest CEO, Eric Lindh

Dear Equest Community,

Since our last newsletter, the Equest staff and board have been hard at work developing a new strategic plan to guide the next chapter at Equest. After several rounds of data collection and three board retreats, we are excited to begin executing a three-year strategic plan designed to enhance our operational performance, deepen our community engagement, and invest in our most important assets: our facilities, our staff, and our horses.

As our fall semester is in full swing, there is much to celebrate. We are deeply grateful to the Equest Women's Auxiliary for another fantastic fundraising luncheon and fashion show, which helps sustain our life-changing programs. We also give thanks for our incredible team of instructors, volunteers, barn crew, and therapists whose dedication makes it possible for our clients to achieve their goals. And we pause to remember our beloved clients and friends, Bert Headden and Stacey Johnson, whose generosity, kindness, and joyful spirits will continue to inspire all of us at Equest.

If you haven't visited Equest before, or maybe its been a few years, the fall season is the perfect time to come out to the beautiful Texas Horse Park and see our mission in action for yourself. I would love to personally welcome you for a visit and share the many ways you can get involved. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at elindh@equest.org to schedule a tour.

With gratitude,

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you can expect:

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From Client to Champion, Bert's Journey with Equest

Equest celebrates the life and legacy of Bert Headden, a beloved rider, volunteer, and former board member whose warmth, generosity, and laughter brightened every arena he entered. Bert's Equest journey began in 2004, when his wife, Cindy Thomas, introduced him to the program. Under the guidance of Boaz Or, Bert discovered a passion for riding that combined his love of horses with his competitive spirit. Riding his trusted AQHA partners, Lili and Amigo, Bert competed in horse shows, earning five championship buckles, all of which he later donated to Equest as a reflection of his gratitude and generosity.

His dedication extended beyond the saddle. As Treasurer on the Equest Board of Directors, Bert's steady leadership and thoughtful insight helped guide the organization through years of growth. His laughter, optimism, and kindness made him a cherished friend to staff, volunteers, and fellow riders alike. Cindy shared, "He had an enthusiastic sense of humor and a hearty belly laugh. He loved giving. He enjoyed competing with other Equest clients." Those who knew Bert will remember that unmistakable laugh, it could fill the barn and lift everyone's spirits. Beyond Equest, Bert was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather to eight grandchildren, all of whom were the light of his life. His generous heart, twinkle in his eye, and ability to make everyone feel special will be deeply missed but never forgotten.



**Bert Headden with his wife
Cindy Thomas**



**Bert with Tony Green
and Boaz Or**

Volunteer Spotlight: Aaron - Leading with Dependability and Heart

Aaron Hubbard has made a lasting impact at Equest since joining in May 2024, dedicating over 500 hours with his calm, kind energy that instantly puts clients, instructors, and horses at ease. Aaron is also a natural leader, and the apple doesn't fall far from the tree - his son, Mathew, can often be found helping our barn crew during the week. Thank you, Aaron, for your dedication, kindness, and the example you set for our entire Equest family.

Instructor Kirsten shared, "Aaron shows up with a positive attitude and is always willing to help, whether assisting a client, lending a hand in the barn, or making sure a horse is ready to go. He is constantly looking for ways to grow and improve. Horses adore him too. He is reliable, hardworking, and genuinely caring, and we are beyond grateful to have him as part of our team." Instructor Michaela added, "Aaron goes out of his way to check in with instructors he isn't scheduled to help,

asking if they need anything." Aaron's thoughtfulness and quiet leadership extend beyond daily program support. He has helped at Gala events, assisted with prep work for Equest events, and has even been known to hop on the riding lawnmower to take care of landscaping on the property.



**Volunteers Aaron and Mathew Hubbard
with Hickory**

Life and Legacy of Stacey Johnson



Our beloved client and volunteer, Stacey Johnson, who was part of the Equest family for more than 30 years, recently passed away. Stacey's gentle spirit, radiant smile, and boundless love left an indelible mark on everyone who had the joy of knowing her. She was the daughter of Martha, a former Equest employee, and carried forward a family legacy of compassion and dedication. A remarkable equestrian, Stacey competed at the state, national, and international levels. In 2003, she proudly represented Equest at the Special Olympics World Games in Dublin, Ireland, winning a gold medal in English Equitation and a bronze in Dressage, achievements that reflect not only her skill but her unwavering determination and passion.



Stacey approached life with courage, joy, and an inspiring sense of purpose. She overcame challenges with grace, always finding a way to pursue her dreams and inspire those around her. Her warmth, perseverance, and love of life will continue to guide and uplift our Equest community. Stacey's spirit will forever remain in our hearts.

To honor Stacey's extraordinary legacy, a scholarship fund has been created in her name. Each year, this award will recognize an Equest rider who exemplifies Stacey's spirit of perseverance, love for horses, and enthusiasm for life. If you would like to contribute to this fund or learn more, please visit <https://equest.org/support-us/#scholarship>.

**Top: Stacey with horse Cody.
Bottom: Stacey with her mother,
Martha Johnson**

Stacey's spirit will forever remain in our hearts.

Equest Barn Bash

On Saturday, October 25, Equest hosted our first-ever Barn Bash at Equest, and what an unforgettable evening it was! Clients, volunteers, families, and friends gathered together for an evening filled with music, dancing, and pure joy. Events like the Barn Bash remind us what Equest is all about, connection, confidence, and community. A huge thank-you goes out to everyone who helped make the evening a success, especially our dedicated volunteers and staff who worked behind the scenes to bring it all together.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the first ever Stacey E. Johnson Scholarship, awarded to client Jamie in recognition of her dedication and growth through Equest's programs. Special recognition goes to Instructor Michaela McKinney for her hard work and creativity in planning this wonderful event, her efforts truly made the Barn Bash an unforgettable celebration!



Our Mission

Equest enhances the lives of individuals with diverse needs through therapeutic activities with horses. We serve clients ages two and up with physical, intellectual and emotional disabilities.

Building a Stable Future



Boski Sharma speaks to Equest guests at Communities Foundation of Texas.

On October 16, Equest, in partnership with the Communities Foundation of Texas, hosted a luncheon to explore ways supporters could extend their impact beyond their lifetime. Guests learned about opportunities such as [Asset-Based Giving](#), [Estate Gifts](#), [IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions](#), and [Life Income Gifts](#), and how these options can help sustain Equest's programs for years to come.

Planned giving allows your support for Equest's mission to endure for generations, ensuring that the life-changing work we do continues for future clients and their families. Whether through a gift in your will, a trust, or another asset, your legacy helps us continue transforming lives and creating lasting impact for those we serve.

Attendees left inspired, gaining a deeper understanding of how thoughtful planning today can make a difference tomorrow.

For more information about making an estate gift, please contact Boski Sharma, Director, Donor Relations at Communities Foundation of Texas at bsharma@cftexas.org or visit www.equest.org/give to learn more.

Support Our Mission



Client Olivia with Sweetie

Your support can unleash a wave of inspiration and change at Equest. By participating in horse sponsorship or joining our Equest Monthly Giving program, you help us provide hope, strength, and joy to those we serve. Learn more [HERE](#)

Horse Sponsorship:

\$7500 provides overall care for horses: feed, shots, farrier, shavings, transportation, veterinarian, and chiropractic care. These donors get a photo session with their horse. Recognition includes stall plates with donor's names, listing on our website, certificate of sponsorship with photo and special communications about the great work of sponsored horse.

Two of our beloved therapy horses, [Vito](#) and [Tessa](#), are currently in need of a sponsor. Your support helps provide essential care for these incredible animals who make a difference every day in the lives of our clients. Learn more about sponsoring one of these horses [HERE](#)

Our Vision

At Equest, we envision a world where everyone, regardless of abilities can experience the profound benefits of therapeutic horsemanship and equine-assisted activities, further leading to positive and long-lasting changes in their lives.

Volunteer Services



Our volunteers helping in hippotherapy class at Equest.

Equest relies on the dedication and compassion of hundreds of volunteers each year to bring our mission to life. From assisting in therapeutic riding classes to helping with special events or maintaining our beautiful facility, volunteers play an essential role in every part of what we do.

We offer a variety of meaningful opportunities to get involved, including:

- Class assistance
- Barn help
- Event support
- Internships
- Group volunteering



Volunteer Ashley with client Donovan

Whether you have a few hours a week or want to volunteer as part of a team, there's a place for you at Equest. If you're ready to make a positive impact and be part of a supportive, horse-loving community, we invite you to visit our website to complete the online volunteer application and get started. Learn more [HERE](#).

Our next volunteer training dates are:

January 24, 2026

January 31, 2026

Equest Annual Blue Ribbon Gala

Mark your calendars for an unforgettable evening at the 2026 Equest Blue Ribbon Gala Run for the Roses, a night of celebration, inspiration, and community at Gilley's Dallas! We're thrilled to announce Gala Chairs, Melinda and Mark Knowles, and Honorary Chair, Lynn McBee, who are leading a powerhouse committee dedicated to making this event truly spectacular.

Proceeds from this signature gala support Equest's mission to enhance lives through equine assisted services, helping children and adults build confidence, connection, and independence. Join the excitement by becoming part of our Host Committee or explore sponsorship opportunities to help make a lasting impact.

[Blue Ribbon Gala Event Page](#)



**Gala Chairs
Melinda and Mark
Knowles**



**Gala Honorary Chair
Lynn McBee**

Women's Auxiliary Luncheon & Fashion Show

A heartfelt thank you to the Equest Women's Auxiliary for hosting the Luncheon and Fashion Show on October 7 at Brook Hollow Golf Club. The day was filled with fashion, friendship, and philanthropy, a beautiful celebration of style and support for Equest's mission. We are deeply grateful to our presenting sponsor, Highland Park Village, and to the incredible designers who brought energy, creativity, and elegance to the runway.

A huge thank you goes out to our luncheon co-chairs, Lisa Singleton and Victoria Snee, along with our committee members, underwriters, and advisors, for your dedication and hard work in making this annual event such a success! A special note of appreciation to Louise Griffeth, Founder of the Equest Women's Auxiliary, for her inspiring vision and unwavering support. We are truly grateful for all you do to champion Equest.

[Click here to view event photos](#)



L to R: Lisa Singleton, Eric Lindh, Louise Griffeth and Victoria Snee



Lucia and Mary LeDonne Banks with Ranger and Dare



Darling mini-models Annie and Elizabeth Laughlin



Teamwork in session during recent TeamUp event at Equest

Equest offers a unique corporate team building experience that harnesses the power of horses in the picturesque Texas Horse Park in Southern Dallas. This interactive session is tailored to align with your company's specific goals and team dynamics, conducted entirely on the ground in our covered arena. Horses provide immediate feedback by mirroring human emotions, making them exceptional partners in team building. Led by qualified professionals, this transformative experience enhances team cohesion and productivity, leaving a lasting impact. Learn more [HERE](#) or email teamup@equest.org for more information.

Team Up for Corporate Groups

SAVE THE DATE

Equest events are an excellent opportunity to showcase the power of the human-horse connection and the benefits of equine therapy for individuals of all ages. We believe that by increasing awareness of our programs, we can raise the necessary funds to expand Equest's offerings and positively impact even more lives.

Equest Holiday Open House
[Event Details](#)

Saturday, December 6
at Equest
811 Pemberton Hill Rd, Bldg. #4
Dallas 75217

Volunteer Training
[Learn More](#)

January 24
January 31

Equest 45th Annual Blue Ribbon Gala
[Event Details](#)

April 25, 2026

Amazon Wish List

At Equest, we are continually looking for ways to enhance our programs and support our clients. One way you can help is by contributing through our Amazon Wishlist, which features essential items that will directly benefit our mission. Click here to view our Amazon Wishlist: [CLICK HERE](#)

DONATE NOW

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