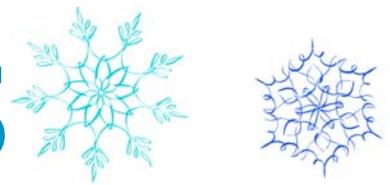


EMPLOYEES



THE MIRACLE OF M.A.R.E. by Denise O. Miller



Al Pariseau, Rain for Rent Training Manager, and **Jim Blacow**, Power Prime Pump Southwest Regional Sales Manager, may not be working with Triple Crown candidates, but they do work with horses royal in their deeds.

The two men are volunteers with M.A.R.E. (Mastering Abilities Riding Equines), a “therapeutic riding center that provides equine-assisted programs to children and adults with physical, cognitive or emotional challenges.” It has grown steadily since its inception in 1990, when founders Diane Hopkins; Ron, Dorothy and Matt Evans; Angela and Mary Litterilla; and an Arabian mare named Tana started this program in a backyard arena.

Volunteers include adults, as well as community-minded local high school and college students who contribute approximately 800 service hours every month to over 90 people per week.

Al and Jim became involved with the program with their daughters’ participation. **Pariseau** has been there since 2005 contributing over 100 hours of service; and **Blacow** has been there since 1999.

“We do whatever is necessary, from cleaning feed buckets, barns, stalls and landscape maintenance chores,” said **Pariseau**. **Blacow** manages the barn and cleanup, giving the instructors one less duty to cover.



Their daughters might have been the impetus for their involvement, but it was the children there that got them hooked. “What sold me was the first day the clients showed up. This little girl with cerebral palsy, I think, came over with her hard hat, saying ‘horsey, horsey.’ When I saw that excitement in her eyes, I knew I could do this,” said **Pariseau**.

Blacow agrees. “I enjoy it mainly because of the kids, the gratitude, and the smiles. It’s the challenge of being able to work with them.”

Both men enjoy “side-walking” and “leading” horses during riding lessons to, as **Pariseau** comments, “ensure that the students who all have some degree of motor control or range and emotional limitations are able to ride safely.”



The M.A.R.E. horses aid in helping disabled children and adults develop stronger bodies by the mere movement of their own. For the rider, the shifting of the horse develops balance; its gait provides neuromuscular and cardiovascular stimulation; while its rhythm relaxes and soothes the mind and body.

M.A.R.E. provides a variety of programs serving Kern County including sport riding, equestrian vaulting, hippotherapy (services provided by a licensed health professional), carriage driving and a Summer Teen Equestrian Enrichment Program (STEEP). With these programs, the riders are rewarded with increased confidence and self-esteem, strengthened balance and muscle tone, and improvement in cognitive and problem-solving skills.



for more information visit
www.mareridingcenter.com