

How Can a Horse Teach You to Walk?

Hippotherapy at White Star Farm

Story by Rachel R. Peine/Photos by Rich Peine

Mary Bonnen of Key Largo keeps her horse at White Star Farms in Homestead. Mary discovered that the farm's owner, Diana Stearns, not only shows, breeds, and boards horses, but also opens her five-acre farm to the Healis Hippotherapy program. Mary has been working with kids for over 30 years, and she was so touched by the children and so excited about Hippotherapy that she urged the Coconut Telegraph to observe the therapy sessions and spread the word about this innovative program.

Hippotherapy, derived from the Greek word for "horse", is based on the idea that the rhythmic repetitive movements of the horse improve cognitive skills, balance, posture, strength, communication, sensory processing and overall motor control. During a hippotherapy treatment, the horse's movement is used as a therapy tool.

Since the 1960's, Hippotherapy has been used by Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech-Language Pathologists to help children and adults who have conditions including

Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Autism, Down Syndrome, Seizure Disorder, Developmental Delays, and Impaired Communication. Children in the Healis Rehabilitation Hippotherapy program currently range from age 2 to 12.

The horse's movements provide a repetitive pattern that is very similar to the pattern of movement of a person's pelvis during normal human walking. As a result, spending time on the horse

allows the patient to develop new posture and movement strategies. forward and backwards. It is as if they are walking while sitting on the horse. One of the benefits is that it trains the pathways of the brain. When they're on the horse for an hour, there's a carryover when they walk on land because it's training the brain to use those muscles."

As we entered the beautiful, tree-lined



patient in our horse therapy program. Several hands had to hold her up when she started about three years ago, but now she can sit up with the help of just one therapist. At first, even to straddle the horse was a feat for her due to tightness in her leg muscles. Now we're trying to get her back muscles and stomach muscles stronger." She's made significant progress. Riding forward, backwards, and side-ways facilitates the activation of different muscles.

Next, we walked with Jaiden, a small boy who loves horses (see top photo right). Jaiden's therapist is Lili Dietsch. Lili is an occupational therapist trained in the use of behavior analytic approaches and certified in therapeutic listening. Lili has the help of volunteers Victoria and Ashley to guide the large brown horse.

Because Jaiden doesn't communicate with words, Lili is trying something new today - an augmented communication device. She's holding a black plastic box about the size of a square grapefruit with a big round red button on top. It's been programmed to say

Continued on page 9



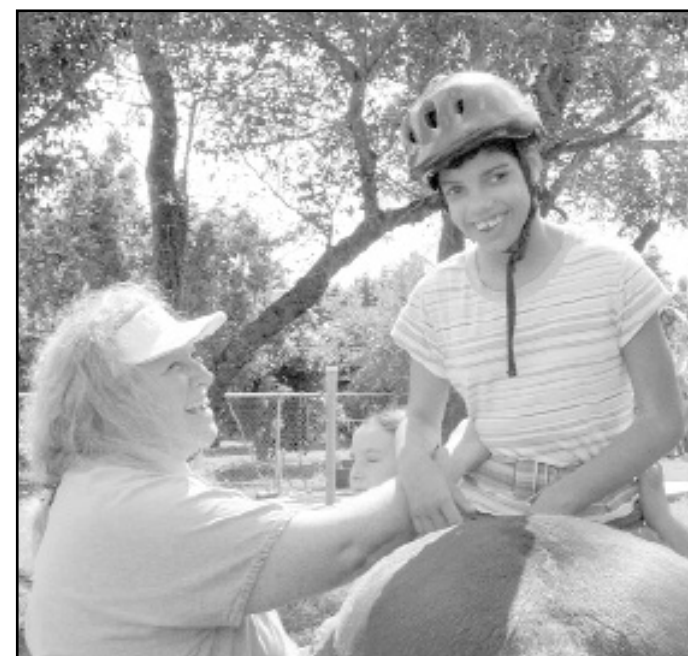
Healis Hippotherapy's therapists and volunteers.

allows the patient to develop new posture and movement strategies.

Diane Sampson, the Healis Hippotherapy Coordinator explains, "If you carefully observe a person on a horse, you will notice that their pelvis moves forward, backwards and rotationally with their legs swinging

lane into the farm, we saw three therapy sessions in progress. Each child on a horse was wearing a helmet, and was supported by a therapist. One or two volunteers guided the horse and a side-walker was also present who helped in the treatment activities.

We started by walking along with Diane while she worked with Aracelis "Muky", a long time Healis client, who is riding facing backwards (see bottom photo left). Her horse is walking rhythmically across the field. Diane tells us, "Muky was the first



Artist of the Month

Maxine Lubow



Story and photos by Rachel R. Peine

Maxine Lubow's Key Largo home is a showcase for her mosaic and collage art works.

As you approach the front yard, your eye is captivated by a whimsical sculpture - an ancient bicycle, covered in mosaic ceramic and glass.

The glass is from her father's stained glass studio, revealing that Maxine is a second-generation artist.

The bicycle isn't the only found object incorporated into Maxine's art. See the photo where she's holding a flower on top of a mosaic stalk? The "flower" was once a baking dish. Then, of course, there's the alligator crawling out of her back wall.

The mosaic wall parallels the ocean and extends the width of the patio. If you look closely, you'll see egret tracks in white ceramic, a green coconut palm, an egret, and a starfish.

The inside of Maxine's home contains more of her work - my favorite is a found lamp that she painted with contrasting colors on top and bottom, and then adorned with swirls of mosaic.

Maxine loves to give new life to found objects, and she shows what imagination and humor can do with old crockery, broken glass, and a broken-down bicycle.





Commercial - Residential

ELECTRICAL SERVICES

- 24 Hour Emergency Service**
You will reach a real person. Guaranteed.
- 1000's of Parts in Our Trucks**
For fast on the spot repairs at your site.
- Up Front Pricing**
You know the price before the work begins.
- Same Day Service**
Call by 10 a.m. and we'll be there today.
- 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed**



ON TIME OR ON US

KC Electrical Services, Inc.
(305) 451 0447 - keyselectrician.com



Sue Finney
305.394.3736
Buying or Selling
in the Keys...
CALL ME TODAY!



www.keyshomesrus.com
keyshomesrus@bellsouth.net



GREAT INVESTMENT OR SECOND HOME
IN UP-AND-COMING NEIGHBORHOOD WITH TWO FABULOUS HOMEOWNERS' PARKS FEATURING BEACH, PICNIC AREA AND BOAT RAMP. MOBILE HOME FEATURES HUGE PORCH SET ON CONCRETE FLOOR, SOME UPDATING AND T.L.C. NEEDED. CALL TODAY AND BRING OFFERS! \$269,900.



FABULOUS VIEWS, DEEPWATER CANAL, DOCK & BOAT SLIP!
MOVE-IN READY SPACIOUS 5BR/3BA WATERFRONT HOME ON NEWPORT BAY. EASY ACCESS TO OCEAN AND BAYSIDE. ALMOST 1/3 ACRE LOT ON BAY AND CANAL WITH DOCK AND BOAT SLIP. NEW METAL ROOF, PORCELAIN TILE FLOORS, REMODELED BATHROOMS, IMPACT WINDOWS. TWO FAMILY ROOMS, EACH WITH A KITCHEN. SEPARATE ENTRANCE AND BALCONIES. LOTS OF PARKING AND STORAGE. \$1,890,000.

PRIME US1 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY



AT MM106 AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE FLORIDA KEYS AND KEY LARGO. PROMINENT HIGHWAY FRONTAGE AND THE FIRST BUILDING TRAFFIC WILL SEE AS THEY ENTER. SPACIOUS 2-STORY BUILDING SUITABLE FOR RETAIL/OFFICES AND WITH GREAT RENTAL POTENTIAL. THE BUILDING FEATURES VAULTED WOOD CEILINGS, 2 BATHS, LOTS OF PARKING FRONT & BACK, AND COVERED STORAGE AREA. PROPERTY ALSO INCLUDES A 2 BR/1 BA HOME WITH POOL. \$1,650,000.