

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Horses and Horsepower help heal at Triple H Equitherapy

By Ron Clarke

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Many cars with lots of horsepower joined the volunteers and therapy horses at the 2024 4th annual Horses & Horsepower car show and fundraiser benefitting Triple H Equitherapy in Pipe Creek. The event venue was donated and hosted by Brutal Off Road in Bandera, the Alamo Area Corvette Club from San Antonio, and volunteers from Triple H Equitherapy of Pipe Creek.

This is the second year that the event was hosted by Brutal Off Road and the fundraising show is growing larger in attendance and popularity each year. The first two years of the Horses and Horsepower car shows were at the Triple H Equitherapy facility, located on Backhaus Road in Pipe Creek. With more space needed, Brutal Off Road began hosting the event in 2023.

As is most often the case with non-profit organizations, big results come from a small idea.

“It began as a simple idea from Gene and Diane Skillrud, who serve on our board (of directors), but coincidentally own a Corvette! They asked us what we thought of a Horses and Horsepower car show in 2020, and here we are 4 years later with almost two hundred cars and massive support from Brutal Off-Road, the Alamo Area Corvette Club, Freedom Chevrolet, local businesses, and the extra special support of our own volunteers,” Triple H Executive Director Ginger Eways said. “This event is our number one fundraiser, and everyone jumps in to help as you can see by the tables of donations from local businesses for our silent auction, all of the cars here, all the volunteers, music, food trucks, and

all these people. This is an example of how Bandera and the Bandera area care about our local community organizations that give back to our Veterans and special needs clients who benefit from our services. Horse powered programs offer many therapeutic benefits, and they are fun! Our Triple H visitors are special needs clients who benefit with Life Skills that augments their normal school curriculum with academic objectives set by the student's teachers. Another program is our "Riding to Independence" program which serves those with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges. While learning to ride, they work individual therapy goals, and some become independent riders. We also provide equine-facilitated psychotherapy for children ages 6-17. Past life experiences trigger behavioral and mental disorders, often requiring residential placement. Our program helps prevent that. Our therapeutic team includes a licensed psychotherapist who helps young people learn to relate to themselves and the world around them in healthy ways. Finally, our Horsepower for Veterans program helps Veterans overcome the debilitating effects of mental health issues such as PTSD and traumatic brain injury. They learn to communicate with the horses, acquire relationship building skills that support their return to family and civilian life. Our Veterans become more confident in interpersonal relationships and develop skills to deal with common obstacles in human relationships. Every single person here today is so generous and supports these missions and are responsible for our successes both as an organization and each individual client success by donating their time, simply bringing their car here, or giving in small and large ways to make our programs possible. There is no way to thank them enough! Our volunteers and staff are extremely grateful for all of it!"

Two special volunteers are 13-year-old horse Gema, and her owner Anne Nolen. Anne has been volunteering at Triple H for 18 years. Gema is a certified horse therapist and has been providing therapy for Triple H programs her entire life.

As for the cars, with almost 200 registered for the event, everything was represented with rows upon rows of Chevrolet Corvettes, Mustangs, muscle cars, and luxury vehicles of all sorts. Cars as old as a 1928

Model A Ford and as new as 2023 Rolls Royce and all years, makes, and models of cars across nearly one hundred years of automobile manufacturing from all over the United States and the globe were represented.

Alamo Area Corvette Club President Tim Allums - one of the sponsors of the car show and a volunteer - provided the administrative support, registration services, and entertainment for this event. The Corvette Club has almost 300 members, and many members have more than one car. The club serves the San Antonio and surrounding area including Bandera County.

“We are happy to support the Triple H Equitherapy for the fourth year. As a club we have a passion for our cars, but we also have a passion to honor and give back to our local communities. This is an ideal way to do that, and our volunteers enjoy this event each year to help provide this much needed service to Triple H’s clients and elevating them. That same passion we have for our cars and each other we have for non-profit agencies such as this that give back to so many,” Allums said.

In addition to Brutal Off Road, Bandera local organizations provided support for this event. Bandera Post #157 of the American Legion provided honor guard services for the flag raising, and the Bandera Bulldogs Band played the National Anthem and provided tasty breakfast tacos and later served grilled lunch items for the crowd of hundreds.

To learn more about Triple H Equitherapy located in Pipe Creek or to volunteer, go to www.triple-h.org or call them at 830-510-9515.

They are a 501(C)3 IRS Tax Exempt Charitable Organization and all donations are tax deductible. Since being born in 1995, they are proud of the fact that 94 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to programs and services for their clients. They are accredited by the Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, which requires Triple H to meet the highest industry standards for safety and professionalism.