

Handi Kids Therapeutic Riding Center Provides Support to Returning Veterans

As wounded veterans return home from Iraq and Afghanistan, organizations such as the Veteran's Administration (VA) and North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) are working in cooperation to provide equine assisted activities and therapies. The Horses for Heroes Program was created for individuals with special needs, with the goals of improving muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, motor development as well as emotional well-being. Utilizing the VA and NARHA programs as an inspiration, the Handi Kids Riding Center is honored to offer a therapeutic riding program at no cost for our Boston & Providence area wounded service personnel and veterans.

Working with the local Brockton VA Hospital Recreational Therapy Department, our first group of veterans began a weekly riding program in November of 2007. These amazing individuals are conquering a variety of physical challenges resulting from wounds received during active service. Although some arrive at Handi Kids with previous riding experience, many have never been on or around horses and the experience is truly unique. In addition to providing the opportunity to ride, our participants are learning to groom and saddle.

We continue to gain inspiration from watching an individual discover the magic of riding astride a horse. It is heartwarming that we can share this experience with veterans who have given so much by serving our country. It is truly one of the highlights of our week!

