



Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association

at Providence Farm

1843 Tzouhalem Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 5L6

PRESS RELEASE

June 15, 2020

CTRA Responds to COVID-19

The CTRA Herd

As always, we are focused on the health of our herd. The hard-working horses of CTRA continue to be cared for by our committed barn staff, and the focus of our fundraising is to keep our bank account as healthy as our ponies. In addition, many of our instructors are volunteering their time to help keep our horses fit, healthy and ready for work by schooling and exercising them regularly.

The CTRA Facility

Our facility remains closed to the public in order to keep our essential workers safe and healthy. They are here every day looking after our most valuable assets, and so we must look after them. Safety protocols are in place according to government recommendations and equestrian industry guidelines. Although we know many of our participants and volunteers would love to visit and/or help out, we will continue to restrict access as long as necessary.

The CTRA Staff

Most CTRA staff members (administration and instructors) have been laid off due to lack of programming and to reduce payroll expenses. Only the essential barn staff remain on staff at the moment. However, many CTRA staff have continued to volunteer time towards the management of the office, herd and facility. As well, there have been regular planning sessions to work on CTRA's sustainability during these very difficult times. Several Canada Summer Jobs positions will be starting in the near future, which will help primarily with facility, barn and tack shop duties.

CTRA Summer Camps and Therapeutic Programming

CTRA is always committed to the health and safety of our participants. We are following the advice and guidelines from Dr Bonnie Henry, the BCCDC, the WHO and other reliable sources. In addition, we have guidelines and requirements from Equestrian Canada, CanTRA and other agencies to follow with regards to our herd and barn safety. When running our programs at full capacity, we welcome over 200 people through our facility per week (participants, volunteers, staff and service providers). This is simply not possible in our current state of pandemic.

Many of our participants have health concerns and underlying conditions that would make it risky to be in a group setting such as CTRA, where many people are involved in a single lesson. Being close and hands-on are a big part of keeping our riders safe and comfortable, and these are difficult to do safely with a virus that transfers easily. In addition, many of our participants have sensory issues and would find it difficult or impossible to use personal protective equipment (PPE). Much of our volunteer force is also in a vulnerable demographic who need to be cautious of their exposure to COVID. The same things that make a lesson extremely risky for participants can also make it risky for staff and volunteers. Until these can be satisfactorily mitigated, we will not ask volunteers to return to regular duties. It is almost physically impossible for us to hold a regular therapeutic lesson safely in these circumstances.

CTRA will not be running any summer riding camps for 2020. We simply cannot ensure the safety of everyone involved. We recognize the disappointment this will bring to many of our campers and indeed will miss the fun and lively days of camps at CTRA.

Phone: (250)746-1028 Fax: (250)746-1033

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Charity Number: 891723843RR0001



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We are constantly reviewing the resources and assessing the risks with an eye to regular therapeutic programming. We maintain our optimism for a Fall Session and are watching the situation carefully. CTRA wants to be proactive and careful in any decision to reopen, and so we are continuing to research, weigh the options and follow the industry to see how we might move forward. Should everything fall into place for a Fall Session, it would likely be a phased return to programming with many restrictions. Everyone desperately wants to get back to doing the work we do, but we also want to ensure a safe and healthy program for all.

CTRA Sustainability

Much of our funding is program-dependent, meaning that we only receive it when we run programs. Without camps and lessons, our income has been drastically reduced. We have taken extreme measures to reduce our expenses, but much of CTRA's budget remains the same whether programs run or not. Planning is extremely difficult with this constantly shifting situation, but we have some initiatives aimed at reaching out to our supportive community and using the resources we have.

- **Donations**

Ensuring that we have enough funding to keep the stable running is key -- that's why we created the "**Keep CTRA Stable**" campaign to reach out to our community. Every bit helps from a single donation to an annual commitment of Horse Sponsorship. To make a donation to *Keep CTRA Stable*, please click [here](#). Or contact us at 250-746-1028 or info@ctra.ca.

- **The Jane James Used Tack Shop**

Reopening soon! We hope to have our popular tack shop up and running again very shortly. Donations of used tack and apparel are still welcome and we will be instituting some new policies to keep our staff and shoppers safe during their experience.

- **Ring and Arena Rentals**

CTRA is welcoming back some select rentals of our indoor arena and outdoor ring, with COVID-specific rules and restrictions. For more information, please email info@ctra.ca or leave a message at 250-746-1028.

- **Returnables**

We continue to collect empties/returnables for our charity accounts at Island Return It. However, due to restricted access to our drop off bin, we are opting to pick up your donations.

Contact susan@ctra.ca for more information or to arrange pick up. Empties can also be dropped at the Island Return it Duncan and South Cowichan locations and put on CTRA's account.

- **Peer-2-Peer Fundraising**

Since CTRA cannot hold Ride-a-Thon this year, we have opted to go with Peer-2-Peer fundraising instead. This allows our participants, volunteers, staff and others to hold their own mini fundraisers online through Canada Helps (a third party fundraising platform that CTRA has long been partnered with). Anyone can hold a P2P fundraiser and customize it for their own community! We hope that participants will continue to do their part in our annual fundraising by transferring their Ride-a-Thon enthusiasm to Peer-2-Peer! More information can be found [here](#).

CTRA Optimism

We want to reassure our CTRA participants, volunteers and supporters that we are committed to weathering the COVID-19 storm and that we want to get people back in action as soon as possible. We continue to watch the situation, follow trusted advice and maintain our optimism. Community support and the continued engagement of our incredible CTRA participants and volunteers will get us through this!

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