

Ride With Pride

Special Issue – Spring 2020



Sticking Together

Nando and Lucky show how much they care for each other



Dear GMTRC friend,

Thank you for your patience as we navigate through this difficult time. We miss all our riders, families and volunteers – it simply is lonely at the barn without you! Due to the current health pandemic, all programming at GMTRC has been cancelled until further notice.

We are working hard to determine how we could restructure our sessions and when we could restart our programs in a safe environment and, of course, we want to keep you informed! Our hope is to be able to re-open programming mid to late June. You will be notified closer to that time if we will be able to provide lessons. Stay tuned to your emails!

Again, thank you for your patience and understanding during this unprecedented time. We hope to see you soon and wish you all health and well-being.

Sincerely,
The Staff at GMTRC
Michelle Kaster, TRI, Programs and
Instruction Coordinator



Neptune enjoys some time in the pasture

To our GMTRC family:

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken our world like nothing most of us have seen in our lifetimes. The GMTRC board and staff miss our incredible team of volunteers and riders more than we can express in words. We want to let you know that even though we are not together, you are not alone. We decided to dedicate this issue to checking in with riders, families, and volunteers—some of whom are at the barn regularly caring for the horses and some of whom are staying at home. We are keeping you in our thoughts and we look forward to the day when we can all be together again! As always, you can call or email me anytime. We're all here for you.

Your friend,

Jenn Rummel, Executive Director

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Our Featured Rider: Meet Allegra!



Why does Allegra ride at GMTRC? We love the staff. Everyone there is like family. The horses are gentle, kind and calm; it feels a little bit like home. Allegra learns stability, balance, strength, and core conditioning while riding. All of these things add to her confidence and to her strength and abilities to hopefully progress in the future with her muscles.

How has not being around the horses affected Allegra? Allegra has been doing well being home. She remains

active in many ways. Though she misses the horses and all of you at Greystone, she remains strong. She has learned to ride her bike since she has been home which, is tremendous growth for her. She does physical therapy live on Facetime with her therapist at Schreiber. She misses Mrs. Linda (her GMTRC instructor) a ton! She misses Lacey too and can't wait to ride her again and continue progression and strength.

What does a day in quarantine look like for you? A day in quarantine for Allegra is actually pretty busy yet flexible. Depending on the day she still has live dance classes, training, and Physical Therapy. Since we got out of school, Allegra has remained in contact with her teachers and principal. St. Leo had live classes and schoolwork immediately. A day can consist of tests, quizzes, live zooms, videos, writing, math, etc. Depending on the day, we can work for many hours or can be done by lunch. We take breaks, eat a lot (haha), and play with Allegra's brother. They are continuing to play piano and she

has learned a lot of baking skills this season. We had a nice Easter as well. They build Legos, play outside a lot, and we have movie nights or board game nights, we and make dinner together as a family. It's been a lot of fun. With lots to do, we are never bored.

Why is "staying at home" important to your family? Staying home is super important because we have to remain healthy and with Allegra having a blood disorder, it's crucial we follow the rules and take smart precautions. Staying home is so important too because the more we stay in, the faster it may prevent spread. We want to see our friends and family again sooner rather than later.

What are you most looking forward to when quarantine is lifted? We are most looking forward to visiting family and friends and going back to activities and fun gatherings. We definitely can't wait to see Lacey and the staff very soon. Allegra is looking forward to riding again for sure. We are also looking forward to reminding ourselves of the importance of staying home and enjoying family time - reminding us to not be overstimulated or over-booked. Family time at home is crucial. It has actually been a great blessing. We hope everyone is staying well. God bless!



Checking in with Barn Assistant Diane!

As a Landis Homes resident, Barn Assistant Diane is unable to come to the barn at this time. We checked in with her to see how she is adjusting to the changes in our community.

How has the "Stay at Home" order changed your work schedule? It has completely shut down my normal schedule, both volunteer time and part-time work. For me, this happened surprisingly suddenly: Doug (my husband) and I are two of the younger residents at a retirement community, Landis Homes, and, of course, some of the residents are in their 80s, 90s or have health conditions which put them at higher risk for contracting the virus. When the administration asked residents not to leave campus, I realized I had to pull back completely from ALL my off-campus activities or I could put other residents, or staff members here, at risk. This was really hard, because I'm used to organizing myself to get to the barn no matter what - 'neither rain, nor snow...' And, I miss our horses and horse-people!

What work activities have changed for you? ALL of my work and volunteer activities are on hold! That's (1) Monday PM barn duty at GMTRC; (2) Volunteering for one or two lessons a week at GMTRC; (3) Volunteer work one day a week at a TR program in Dauphin County, (4) Working one day a week at a training stable; (5) Volunteering one morning a week at another TR program in Lancaster County (which I had just started); and (6) Occasional volunteer work at Landis Homes delivering mail, etc. Along with hospital workers,

EMTs, I'm grateful for everyone who is able to be 'essential' for our horses!

What work activities have remained the same? Well, I am supposed to be retired. I share a bit more of the housework with my husband, since I'm home more. But he still does the cooking. For years I've thought how great it would be to have a couple weeks without commitments, just to stay home and catch up with family photos, organize closets, etc. Be careful what you wish for! And, my mantra for the shutdown has been Winston Churchill's "never let a good crisis go to waste." I pulled fabric out of our storage room, planning to liquidate my stash and (finally) make bit-warmers for each barn, comforters for our church's overseas relief organization, crafts for relief sale... But the bigger pieces of fabric just sit there, since I soon switched to making face masks for residents here, and now for hospitals, etc. It helps to be busy.

What do you look forward to the most when the quarantine is over? I can't wait to get back to the barn...well, barns. I love and miss the collaboration with horses and humans. And seeing friends, getting together in the SAME SPACE instead of on ZOOM, and seeing our grandson.



More Stories from Home

We're checking in with some of our GMTRC family who are social distancing in their homes!

One of our 2019 "Step Up Award" Winners and former Volunteer of the Month, Rita Andrescavage, is eager to get back to the barn. Right now, like most of us, she is social distancing at home. We checked in with her!

How long have you been volunteering at the barn? I started volunteering in March of 2017.

What volunteer activities do you do at the barn? I bring horses in from the pastures and groom them for schooling... I also love them. I am a side walker and a leader.

How has the "Stay at Home" Order affected you? "Stay at Home" has made me sad as we have granddaughters and family we miss very much and want to visit. We have a new granddaughter (Willow) who was born in March in Colorado. We were to go see her and family in April but that did not happen. I sooo want to hug and kiss that baby and our granddaughter in Boston (Ella). (Their families too!) Thankfully hubby and I like each other so that part has been fine. Also friends that I have lost contact with have called and I have reached out to some also. It seems to be bringing us together even if we are far apart.

What do you miss most about the barn? I very much miss

coming to the barn. I miss the comradery, the smell and feel of the horses and seeing the riders improve. It is such a rewarding thing for me to be doing and now I feel a bit empty. I'm not being useful and that is important to me. That will change ASAP.

What do you most look forward to after the pandemic restrictions are lifted?

"Doing lunch", meeting with friends and family, going to GMTRC, going to concerts, going to NYC, and just getting to some sense of normalcy and giving HUGS. Although that may not happen for a while. :(And in a few years, going on the cruise that was cancelled. Maybe!!



Rita Andrescavage with Makeda



Over the last several weeks, our new volunteer coordinator, Lindsay Steiger, has taken on some new responsibilities as she works from home.

How has the "Stay at Home" order change your work schedule? The order has definitely made an impact on my day to day work schedule! I have been working 100% from home. I have not had the daily interactions with volunteers that I have been used to. I miss getting to connect with everyone through personal interactions at the barn! Sharing an office space with horses, people, and cats is one of my favorite things about working at GMTRC! While I love working at home with my own people and pets, I am eager to get back to my GMTRC family :)

What work activities have changed for you? Most of my activities have changed at this point. Because most of our volunteers are on a temporary furlough, I have been working on special projects including PATH accreditation, donor relations, learning about grant writing and other nonprofit business foundations. I have been able to leverage my background in policy formatting, compliance, and program development during this time which has been a great challenge!

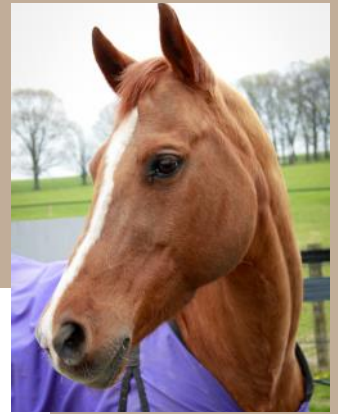
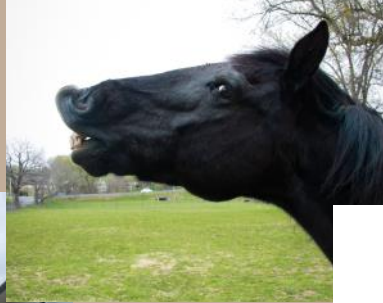
What work activities have remained the same? Right now, it is hard to find a lot of foundational similarities in my day-to-day job description. What has stayed the same, though, is GMTRC! Our

purpose-driven mission, our student-serving team of staff, our dedicated volunteers, and our fantastic herd of horses are all waiting to get back in stride right where we left off. Nothing has changed in the sense that we are all still eager to remain involved in the lives of our students and their parents/families/guardians.

What do you look forward to the most when the quarantine is over? I am really, really excited to return to GMTRC and see everyone again! I am still really new to the organization, but I have already grown close to the team of horses AND people. I don't think I have ever had a job that has ever made me laugh or smile as much as I do at GMTRC and I am really eager to get back to smiling at work again. Aside from GMTRC, I am really hopeful that things can just return to being somewhat "normal". There are the obvious activities to look forward to, like hugging my grandmother again or being able to simply reconnect with people without the fear of getting too close, but I would rather focus on more lighthearted normalcies - like the candle aisle at Home Goods- that has been calling my name since all of this started! My husband and I have been in the process of buying our first house since January and are supposed to be closing in late April.



Hey! From the Horses!



Nando, Violet, Sam, Wiz, and Lucy can't wait to see you all back at the barn!

GMTRC Family on the Frontlines

Thank you to our staff and volunteers who continue to care for the horses and the barn!

As part of GMTRC's agricultural designation, we are permitted to designate "essential staff and volunteers" to continue to care for the horses during the pandemic. Dorothy Tilley, GMTRC's February 2020 Volunteer of the Month, is an essential volunteer. She continues to donate her time and talents to the barn during the mandatory shut down. We thank her for her commitment!

How long have you been volunteering at the barn? I began volunteering at GMTRC 2½ years ago.

What volunteer activities do you do at the barn? I have participated in several activities. I started with afternoon barn duty, a great way to get to know all of the horses. I added in sidewalking and then moved on to being a leader. Six months after I joined I passed my test to become a schooling rider! So, now, on Monday and Wednesday mornings, you'll find me saddling up to school a couple of horses, usually Violet and Neptune, and sometimes Big Sam. Then I'll lead for a lesson or two. I have also enjoyed helping out at the annual horse show and during the visits from Aaron's Acres.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your day-to-day activities? I have to admit I'm kind of a home body, so staying at home during this time isn't terribly hard for me. I do miss being able to visit with friends and family though. And I can't just pick up and run off to the store for that one thing I forgot. So, aside from excessive hand washing and sanitizing everything, my hubby and I are doing ok.

How has the pandemic affected your activities inside the barn? Since most of the outside world has been cut off, coming to the barn as an essential volunteer has become extra precious to me. Not only is it my one chance to get out and be with (but not near!) other people, but I feel so blessed to be able to help keep our herd in good shape so they will be ready when the time comes to open the doors to students again. All of us are diligent about keeping our distance from each other, and putting a horse between us is pretty effective. At first, remembering to use hand sanitizer after touching almost anything was a little tough. But we are becoming used to the new routines; washing hands and using sanitizer frequently, and wiping down everything after using it.

What do you most look forward to after the pandemic restrictions are lifted? Once the world has opened up again, what I want most is to see and hug my family: My dad out in Colorado, whose 93rd birthday we missed due to all of this; my mom, sister, and brother in Ohio where I grew up; and my three boys, one who is in Maryland, and the other two, who are also in Colorado. And then, maybe, run off to the store for that one thing I forgot.



Violet and Dorothy

Sue Knadig is another essential volunteer. She continues to donate her time and talents to the barn every week. Her buddy, Sam, looks forward to her continued visits. We thank Sue for her ongoing commitment.



Sue and Sam

What volunteer activities do you do at the barn? My volunteer activities are morning barn duty 2 or 3 times a week. Occasionally I will fill in as a side walker for lessons.

How long have you been volunteering? I've been volunteering for a year and 3 months.

How has the COVID-19 Pandemic affected your day-to-day activities? My day-to-day activities are affected by not being able to go out to eat or to the movies.

How has the pandemic affected your activities inside the barn? My activities inside the barn are the same as before except we're wearing masks, using hand sanitizer, and disinfecting areas of the barn.

What do you most look forward to after the pandemic subsides? I look forward to visiting family and having places of business open back up after the pandemic subsides.



Taking Care of Yourself!

GMTRC Board Member and School Psychologist Kristin Glass shares this information for self-care.

We might all be in this storm together, but it's important to recognize we are not all in the same boat. For many of us, our lives are different and we are having trouble adjusting. According to the Harvard Business Review, "that discomfort you're feeling is grief." Now is the time for self-care and self-

The CDC recommends looking out for these common signs of distress:

- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety or fear.
- Changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares and upsetting thoughts and images.
- Physical reactions, such as headaches, body pains, stomach problems, and skin rashes.
- Worsening of chronic health problems.
- Anger or short-temper.
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs.

For more information on self-care during a pandemic, tips to cope with your anxiety, and advice on talking to your child about the pandemic, visit the CDC's emergency response website at <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/>, call 1-800-232-4636, or text the Crisis Text Line at 741741.

COVID-19 Mental Health Reminders

Get Dressed. Even if it's just into comfort clothes, this will help you feel more productive and less in a rut.

Do Your Hair/Makeup. Even if you're not going anywhere, this can help make you feel "normal" in a very chaotic time. People often feel relaxed when doing hair or makeup and you deserve that.

Eat New Healthy Recipes. If you can, eat a variety of foods and try different recipes. This will give your day variety and keep your body feeling healthy.

Get Some Fresh Air. Fresh air will help you not to feel so cooped up or "stuck" in your home. Getting outside would be best but even standing at a window would be beneficial.

Be Creative. Try doing new activities or bring back old ones. Getting creative is a great way to keep your spirits up and your mind relaxed.

Unplug. Everyone everywhere is talking about the virus. Turn off your devices and get some well-deserved time away!

Stay Connected. Even though we can't go visiting, make sure you stay connected. A good idea is video chatting or even just making a phone call. This will help you and the people you are talking to feel less isolated.

Reach Out. Mental health is always important, but it is especially important during times like this. Reach out if you need to and remember to check in with your friends and family. We are all in this together!

Information provided by *More Than Mental Health More Than Mums*

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How has the COVID-19 crisis changed the barn's operations? At GMTRC, we are staying up to date with any changes in regards to health and safety protocols. That could include limiting the number of people at the barn at any given time, having everyone wear masks, and disinfecting anything we touch. Some of our employees are working from home, as well as exercising or taking care of the horses.

How are the horses reacting to the changes? It is definitely an adjustment period for the horses as they get used to being schooled up to 3x/week but with no therapeutic riding lessons. We try to keep things as consistent as possible for them.

What is the atmosphere at the barn? The atmosphere at the barn is optimistic, but we are being careful of course. Health and safety of staff, riders and the horses come first! We are looking forward to re-opening in the safest way possible!

What are you most looking forward to when other people are able to come to the barn again? I am excited to see my riders, our volunteers, and all of our staff! We miss you!

What would you like the GMTRC family to know? We are taking great care of our horses, and we are doing our absolute best to manage our operations during this difficult time.

If the horses were able to talk, what would they want us to know? I think the horses would tell us that they are happy and healthy but missing all of their riders, volunteers and "favorite humans."

What would YOU like us to know? We miss everyone but are looking forward to having everyone back soon!

Checking in at the Barn

GMTRC has dedicated and skilled staff providing care for the barn and horses during the COVID-19 pandemic. We checked in with Terri Kutz and Michelle Kaster for a barn update.

How has the COVID-19 crisis changed the barn's operations? We have



Terri Kutz, Barn Leader and Board Member

had to close the barn to the public to maintain the integrity and safety of our facility, horses and staff, volunteers and riders. At this point we are functioning with a limited team for barn duty which is limited to a staff person and essential volunteers plus utilizing approved schooling riders consisting of staff and essential volunteers to exercise the horses. This is limited to 5 people at the barn at any one time.

How are the horses reacting to the changes?

Horses are very intuitive and are used to a set regimen. We have discussed and implemented a plan to maintain their regimen through normal turnout, exercise, and having grooming sessions which provide the one-on-one bonding time with staff/essential volunteers.

What is the atmosphere at the barn? The atmosphere at the barn is upbeat. Everyone is doing

their part to keep the horses happy and healthy plus continuing to enhance the cleaning of our facility for everyone's safety.

What are you most looking forward to when other people are able to come to the barn again? GMTRC is a special place. It fosters friendships and achievements that you don't get to experience anywhere else! The synergy is infectious. I will enjoy the excitement of the riders coming in for their lessons and achieving their goals. I will enjoy the smiling faces of the volunteers and their encouragement to the riders.

What would you like the GMTRC family to know? Every team member, volunteer and board member is invested in this program. We believe in what we do and the community we serve. We are pulling together as a team to discuss, communicate, and make prudent decisions on how to navigate this difficult time.

If the horses were able to talk, what would they want us to know? Thanks for keeping me happy and healthy. Thank you for my turnout and exercise program, as I love to work and stay busy. I appreciate being able to visit with riders and volunteers through Facebook until we are able to spend time together!

What would YOU like us to know? We are committed to being part of an incredible team that can come together and figure out how to navigate this unprecedented time. We are being creative and thinking outside the box to come up with ideas on how to continue the program in a different way.

Lead Instructor and Programs and Instruction Coordinator
Michelle Kaster with Lucy

