

NDSU BISON STRIDES



Experience the Therapeutic Power of the Horse

The Department of Animal Sciences Bison Strides Program continues to celebrate the accomplishments of our beloved Bronco, as well as witness the fantastic community engagement of our minis – Tony and Spark! Check out these stories and more inside our summer newsletter.

Fall registration is open now through Aug 30 so if you know of someone who may benefit from Bison Strides, they can e-mail ndsu.bisonstrides@ndsu.edu or go to our website www.bisonstrides.org for more information.

We extend much love and gratitude to our participants, families, volunteers, staff, supporters and donors who continue to sustain Bison Strides. We would not be here without you!

Be well,
Erika Berg, Bison Strides Program Director
ndsu.bisonstrides@ndsu.edu

2022

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Giving Hearts Day



Bronco Inducted into the Horse Stars Hall of Fame!

"The Horse Stars Hall of Fame was established by the EQUUS Foundation and the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) in 2013 to celebrate the extraordinary talent of horses and their magical and powerful bond with people. The purpose of the Horse Stars Hall of Fame is to honor the contributions of amazing horses, share the stories of their athletic and humanitarian feats, and build a more informed and compassionate America that values the bond between horses and people."

The inductees include stellar, accomplished athletes selected by the USEF annually as the 'USEF Horses of Honor' and horses selected by the EQUUS Foundation that have had or are having a life-changing or inspirational impact on the public as companions, teachers and healers."

<http://www.horsetarhalloffame.org/>

Anyone who has interacted with Bronco knows of his life-changing impact as a teacher and healer and we couldn't be more grateful for this outstanding recognition! Sincere thanks to the EQUUS Foundation and the USEF for honoring him and the other incredible equines so deserving of their awards. You can read the story of TDO Blackburn Hop (or Bronco as we know him 😊) below.

http://www.horsetarhalloffame.org/inductees/147/tdo_blackburn_hop.aspx



Adapted riding



Hippotherapy session



Ground tying

Grants Awarded to Bison Strides

\$3,900

American Quarter Horse Foundation grant to support the Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning Workshop and Certification for NDSU students and Bison Strides volunteers

\$6,000

PATH Intl. VA Direct Service Grant awarded to PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Centers to support veterans programming

\$2,500

Jeromy Brown Fund awarded to support the Financial Assistance Program

SUMMER 2022

Giving Hearts Day 2022

What an incredible 2022 Giving Hearts Day Bison Strides had - \$63,154 raised! Sincere thanks to the many donors, supporters and volunteers who made it all possible, with special thanks to match dollars from the **John Ballantyne Donor Advised Fund of the Fargo Moorhead Area Foundation** and **Swanston Equipment Corporation**. Dollars have been used for:

- Horse care and maintenance (hay, feed, farrier, de-worming and veterinary needs) to support our amazing equine partners
- Financial assistance for participants who otherwise would not be able to experience the therapeutic power of the horse
- Continuing education for staff to maintain accreditation standards, deliver high-quality programming, and provide complementary services such as massage to our horses
- Purchase of properly fitted tack and equipment to ensure the well-being of our therapy horses
- Supporting our 'Minis on the Move' program

Minis on the Move!

Tony and Spark have been busy spreading joy and warming hearts this summer! They visited **Explorer Academy** in Fargo this past March for their school carnival and again in June for their end of year celebration (no photos of Explorer Academy kiddos due to privacy). They also visited **New Perspectives Senior Living** Assisted Living and Memory Care units in July and have been invited back ASAP 😊 In August, Tony and Spark along with some lambs and dairy calves, visited with children from the **Barnesville School Summer Program** and the minis will also be welcoming back **NDSU students** later this month with additional outings planned for the fall, so keep an eye out around town for this adorable duo!



The Impact of Bison Strides

"This is a really good program. I would recommend it to everyone. It is so interesting to learn about the different horses and their different personalities. There were days when I would come to the program and just watching the horses and being around them would make me laugh and bring a smile to my face. There were also days when my anxiety would be really high and I was feeling really stressed, and just the calmness of the horses and the quiet of the barn brought such a relief to me. After being there for an hour I just felt calm and my head felt clear again."

~ Veteran participant

"My daughter was able to adapt to a new environment and showed improvement every week [after hippotherapy]. Her balance and body awareness definitely improved and we saw an increase in confidence and lowered anxiety, more independence, and definitely an improvement with stairs. It's truly a great program."

~ Parent of hippotherapy client

"Bison Strides brings me so much joy! I am fulfilled when I witness the bond between horse and rider and honored to part of the transformations that take place through equine assisted activities and therapies."

~ Volunteer

"The horses seemed really great with the kids! I saw huge improvements in his core strength and his confidence on dirt and uneven surfaces."

~ Parent of hippotherapy client

"Bison Strides has been an incredible experience for our family. After years of therapies I had little hope of finding one that would make a difference for the complex emotional and behavioral challenges our daughter faces. We were so thankful to find that Bison Strides bridges the gap between autism therapy and trauma therapy. The staff has been fantastic! The time they have taken to help facilitate her connection with the horses has been the catalyst for incredible breakthrough for our daughter. Through Bison strides she has gained a sense of self-worth, the ability to connect and care, and the ability to control her own impulses and behaviors. Through interacting with the horses the spark we first saw when she met Big Blondie has turned into a flame of self-confidence. We are grateful that Bison Strides is able to meet the needs of children with a wide range of disabilities, both visible and hidden ones. We are so thankful that our daughter has been able to experience healing through the horses of Bison Strides."

~ Parent of an equine assisted learning participant

"As parents of a son with a disability... you have no idea how grateful we are to all of you. There are a lot of beautiful people in this world and all of you are a part of that. Thank you again."

~ Parent of an adapted riding participant

"We noticed improved emotional regulation, confidence and skill building in our child [after hippotherapy]."

~ Parent of hippotherapy client

"As a volunteer I expected I would be giving back to my community, but it turns out I have gotten so much more in return from the riders and horses. I am thankful to be part of this incredible program!"

~ Volunteer

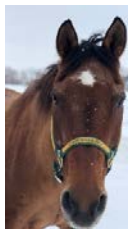
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Sponsor a Bison Strides Program Horse

The work we do simply would not be possible without the incredible horses of Bison Strides. Annual maintenance of our herd now costs Bison Strides between \$2,700 (minis) and \$8,000 (seniors / hard keepers) per horse. Equine Sponsorships make it possible for us to deliver top-notch care for our horses so they can continue to provide life-changing interventions for the people we serve. Please contact Erika Berg at erika.berg@ndsu.edu or 701-231-9611 for details on how to become an Equine Sponsor.

- Platinum Equine Sponsorship – gifts of \$8,000 and above
- Gold Equine Sponsorship – gifts of \$5,000 to \$7,999
- Silver Equine Sponsorship – gifts of \$2,500 to \$4,999
- Bronze Equine Sponsorship – gifts of \$1,000 to \$2,499

2022 Bison Strides Program Horses



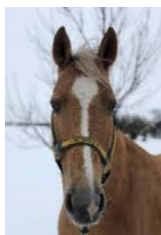
Bronco a 29-year-old dun QH gelding loaned by the Berg family, Kindred, ND



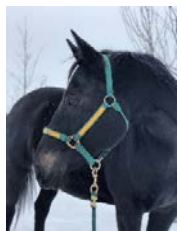
Winston a 24-year-old bay QH gelding loaned by Malinda Olhoft, Moorhead, MN



Cutter a 12-year-old Palomino QH gelding loaned by Keith Johnson, Sharon, ND



Blondie a 23-year-old draft cross mare owned by Bison Strides.



Pepper a 16-year-old dark brown Hanoverian mare loaned by the Berg family, Kindred, ND



Lizzie an 8-year-old sorrel Quarter Horse mare loaned by Jennifer Thorsen, Fargo, ND



Spark 4-year-old mini owned by Bison Strides



Tony 4-year-old mini owned by Bison Strides

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Saddle Purchase

Tremendous thanks to **Schleese Saddlery**, **Jubilee Equine** and **Lori Kaeslin** for hosting a fantastic saddle fitting clinic in June. And special thanks to volunteer and supporter **Leanne Jordahl** for sponsoring a saddle purchase that will fit multiple horses in our program, helping to ensure their welfare and longevity.



Photo Highlights



Lizzie giving some love



Tony sharing some peace



FM Special Needs Support Network



Blondie with one of our veterans



Summer time field rides!



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Staff Highlights



Bison Strides Program Assistant **Jessie Moe** attended a 4-day Equine Intensive Massage Certification through Armstrong Massage in Becker, MN. Investing in this training gives Bison Strides an in-house staff member able to better support and maintain the well-being of our horses who are the heart of our program.

Jessie says “I learned a ton about how horses’ muscles take on and hold stress over time and when that doesn’t get released, it can affect horses mentally and physically. Massage helps release that tension. It will be especially beneficial for our program horses who experience many different riders that may have challenges with their balance.”



NDSU alum and Adjunct Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor for Bison Strides, **Shania Robinson**, graduated in May with her Masters in Clinical Mental Counseling from Minnesota State University-Moorhead. She works as a mental health therapist on the White Earth Reservation and was recently accepted into the University of Denver’s Equine-Assisted Mental Health Practitioner Certificate program.

Shania states that “**Bison Strides and the minor in Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies at NDSU are the reason I am where I am today.** Through the minor, I learned and experienced what psychotherapy incorporating equines is, and that's when I knew what I wanted to do as a career. Thanks to Bison Strides, I have my master's degree in counseling and am starting a post master’s program in Equine Assisted Mental Health! I am blessed to say that I get combine my passion of horses and helping others and make a career out of it.”



NDSU alum, Associate Program Director for Bison Strides and School Psychologist at Explorer Academy, **Emily Dilliard**, is pursuing her Specialist in Educational Leadership at Minnesota State University Moorhead. Students successfully completing specific state required programs of study may gain school administrative licensures in their respective state. Emily will also be leading the collaborative pilot program in literacy and social emotional education between Bison Strides and Explorer Academy this fall. Find out more below!

Bison Strides and Explorer Academy Pilot Program in Literacy and Social Emotional Education

With the help of our minis, Tony and Spark, Bison Strides will be collaborating with **Explorer Academy** to develop a literacy and social emotional education program this fall. The program will be modeled after an Equine Assisted Literacy Program at Equest, an equine assisted services program in Dallas, TX. Future plans include developing curriculum that can be replicated at other schools in our communities.

SUMMER 2022

Meet the NDSU Student Instructors in Training



Morgan Hanneken

Hometown: Pierz, MN

Major: Art Education

Minor: Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies

Post-graduate plans: Move back toward the mid Minnesota or west South Dakota region to teach art at a smaller school. Many small schools are not up to date on modern art and I would like to change that for the area I teach. I also plan to teach riding lessons of some sort. It really depends on where I end up.

Favorite thing about Bison Strides: I love watching the human and equine bond firsthand. A lot of people do not realize that animals, especially horses, all have their own personalities as well and watching the riders and the horses' personalities meld together as they get to know each other is truly awe inspiring. They grow together and better each other. They learn to work together and get past each other's faults. It is very lovely to watch from the middle of the arena.



Maria Franks

Hometown: Roseville, MN

Majors: Equine Science and Psychology

Minor: Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies

Post-graduate plans: I am planning to work in a residential facility for youth and implement mental health programming that incorporates horses

Favorite thing about Bison Strides: My favorite thing about Bison Strides is getting to learn more about how to work with horses and seeing the connections made with participants.



Kat Cohrs

Hometown: Glencoe, MN

Major: Psychology

Minor: Equine Science and Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies

Post-graduate plans: I am thinking about going to graduate school to get my master's in counseling, but I do plan to get my EAGALA certification and work in the mental health aspect of equine assisted services.

Favorite thing about Bison Strides: I enjoy seeing how happy the participants are to be here and their interactions with the horses!

Education



PATH Intl. Region 6 Conference March 11-13, 2022

Many thanks to MN programs **Hold Your Horses**, **Equul Access** and **We Can Ride** for hosting an outstanding PATH Intl. Region 6 Conference. Erika Berg, Emily Dilliard, Jessie Moe, and NDSU student Miriam Seitz attended this 3-day conference packed with excellent information that we have been able to implement to improve our equine conditioning program, gain new ideas for lessons, as well as better understanding the impact of core strength, muscle tone and balance on rider posture and position.

SUMMER 2022

Fall Volunteer Training

Volunteers are the heart of Bison Strides and without you, we cannot do this work! **Fall Volunteer Training will be held Aug 29 from 6-7:30 p.m.** at the NDSU Equine Center. Check announcements via Facebook and on the [Bison Strides website](#). Interested individuals can also e-mail ndsu.bisonstrides@ndsu.edu. Thank you!

Fall Registration NOW OPEN

Session	Days and Times	Financial Assistance Application Due	Registration Due
Fall 1	Sept 11 to Oct 21 Sun 5-7 p.m. Equine Assisted Learning Mon 6-8 p.m. Adapted horsemanship Tues 9-11 a.m. Adapted horsemanship Fri 8:30-9:30 a.m. Military and Veteran	Aug 20	Aug 30
Fall 2	Oct 23 to Dec 2 (Dec 4 to Dec 9 make-ups) Sun 5-7 p.m. Equine Assisted Learning Mon 6-8 p.m. Adapted horsemanship Tues 9-11 a.m. Adapted horsemanship Fri 8:30-9:30 a.m. Military and Veteran	Oct 1	Oct 15

Physical and Occupational Therapy

Individuals interested in physical or occupational therapy services incorporating equine movement should contact our partners at Beyond Boundaries Therapy Services directly. Katie Havelka is the program manager and can be reached at Katie@beyondboundaries.us or 701-356-0062 at Beyond Boundaries <http://www.beyondboundaries.us/>.



Session	Dates
Fall I 6 weeks	Sept 7 to Oct 12 Wed 8:30-12:30 am.
Fall II 6 weeks	Oct 19 to Nov 23 Wed 8:30-12:30 am.

Save the Date!

Bison Strides Open House and Volunteer Appreciation Event

Sunday, December 11 from 4-6 p.m.

LOOKING AHEAD 2023



We are grateful to announce that
Bison Strides was once again accepted into
Giving Hearts Day 2023! Stay tuned for more information.



PATH Intl. Region 6 Conference March 10-12, 2023

NDSU Bison Strides is excited to be hosting the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) Region 6 Conference again in 2023. We are eager to host the event in-person for a second time and look forward to sharing our campus, program and facility with folks from WI, ND, SD and MN

www.bisonstrides.org

ndsu.bisonstrides@ndsu.edu

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