

EDITORS FACT SHEET, CHASTAIN HORSE PARK (CHP), CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA

HEALING THROUGH HORSES CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GROUNDBREAKING

WHO: Mayor Andre Dickens and City of Atlanta Dept. of Parks & Recreation,
WHAT: Reception and groundbreaking
WHEN: Wednesday, August 24 at 11:30 a.m.
WHERE: Chastain Horse Park – clubhouse, 4371 Powers Ferry Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30342
PARKING: Yellow Lot, 4371 Powers Ferry Road

WHAT IS CHP

A horse park devoted to one mission: empower individuals of all abilities through life changing relationships with horses. Premiere accredited center by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International. Therapeutic riding sessions have increased 46% over 2020, and 36% of its estimated five thousand annual therapeutic riding participant sessions are endowed through scholarship and grants. The \$9 million expansion broke ground in August.

SERVICE MODEL

Three programs: Therapeutic Programming, Riding School, Horse Boarding. Facility rental, boarding, and riding school help underwrite therapy, financial aid, along with partners, grants.

85% of CHP's impact (number of individuals served) is through their Therapeutic Programming. Remaining programs operate as community recreational offerings for City of Atlanta residents.

WHERE

15-acre campus in City of Atlanta, within a larger city park, Chastain Park. One of two remaining urban horse parks in the U.S.

PROGRAMMING AT CHASTAIN HORSE PARK

THERAPY SERVICES: CHP offers occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech-language pathology as prescribed by a doctor and conducted by specially trained and licensed therapists involves the purposeful manipulation of equine movement as a therapy tool to engage sensory, neuromotor and cognitive systems to promote functional outcomes. They are also launching a mental health pilot in September.

EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES: CHP offers Therapeutic Riding and Adaptive Horsemanship involving mounted and unmounted engagement focused on improving fine motor skills, gross motor skills, muscle tone, verbal skills, cognitive acuity, social skills, self-confidence, and so much more. These services are conducted by PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors.

WHY HORSES: Experiencing the motion of a horse can be very therapeutic. Because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider’s body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance, and muscle strength. In addition to the therapeutic benefits, riding a horse also provides recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors. Therapeutic/adaptive horsemanship contributes to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being of individuals with disabilities.

From a psychological perspective, the horse’s brain is primarily made up of the limbic system, a network of neurons governing emotionality. This gives horses a remarkable ability to read human feeling and intention—and respond to it. * They are herd and prey animals, *not* predators, which means that they have a strong emotional sense and use this sense as a survival tool; they feed off and respond to other horses in the herd. If one horse in a herd is scared, the others will become frightened. They respond similarly to humans. If a person approaches a horse with anger, the horse will respond by shying away or becoming stubborn. Horses never hide their emotions. Because of these qualities, horses can be used to help people heal from a variety of psychological and physical issues. Horses can be an emotional mirror for humans, helping them identify their feelings.

COMMON DIAGNOSES AND DISABILITIES

Diagnoses (subset) that Equine Therapy Can Help:

Sensory Impairment	ADD/ADHD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Traumatic Brain Injury	PTSD	Cerebral Palsy
Down Syndrome	Depression	Anxiety
Speech/Developmental Delay	Trauma	Chromosomal Disorders

WHEN:

Ground clearing has begun on the new facilities. Construction crews are clearing parts of the campus for the \$9 million initiative.

OTHER FACTS about CHP

- 55 horses: 30 owned by CHP for therapy programming and other activities, remainder boarders
- 15 acres: 3 barns, 3 arenas, 1 event facility
- Future state: 2 barns, one of which is a therapeutic horsemanship center, which includes clinical and educational spaces as well as offices for therapists, instructors, and staff
- 25 years as a non-profit. 83 years as a horse park, founded in 1939
- 1 of only 2 remaining urban horse parks (other is in Dallas, TX)
- 1,250 volunteer slots filled monthly
- 5,400 therapeutic sessions in 2021
- 3 staff therapists, 5 staff PATH Certified instructors
- 36% of participants are on scholarship. Insurance, including Medicaid and Medicare, generally does not support equine-assisted therapies. It still may not be covered by insurance benefits. Despite evidence, healthcare professionals often resist therapy that mentions “horse

HOW PSYCHOLOGY TODAY DEFINES EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY

*“Equine-Assisted Therapy... is a treatment which uses horses to reach rehabilitative goals that are bounded by a medical professional’s scope of practice. Equine-Assisted Therapy is not an activity run by local horse clubs, church groups, or trainers. Instead, it is overseen by a medical professional, usually a licensed psychotherapist or physical therapist. *Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy*, which is used by addiction treatment facilities, veterans’ groups, and trauma centers, is always overseen by a licensed mental health professional. These types of therapies rarely involve riding the horse.” **

HELPFUL LINKS

*Psychology Today, “Therapeutic Value of Horses”

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/helping-kids-cope/201903/equine-assisted-therapy-unique-and-effective-intervention>

NIH Insights, Data on Equine Assisted Therapies

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27767943/>

[Newest Research, 6.28.2022: “Self-Regulation Mediates Therapeutic Horseback Riding Social Functioning Outcomes in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder”](#)

EXPLANATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

THE JOURNAL OF ALTERNATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE Volume 27, Number 1, 2021, pp. 88–95 Mary Ann Liebert, Inc. DOI: 10.1089/acm.2020.0415

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/acm.2020.0415>

[Eating Disorders and How Equine Assisted Therapy Can Help](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/chastainhorsepark>

<https://www.instagram.com/chastainhorsepark/>

[WSB TV Report on Chastain Horse Park Equine Assisted Therapy](#)



Healing through Horses