



Our Yearly Update from the Board President

Another year of life change and growth at Purple Pony has taken place. The special moments, the smiles, the accomplishments, friendships all the good "stuff" that takes place year after year. Twenty One years of serving our community of very special people, just never gets old.

I never cease to be amazed by what God and group of selfless loving volunteers and those who support Purple Pony are able to make happen everytime we saddle up or groom a horse with one of our riders. I see all the time what hard work coupled with compassion, patience, respect and a healthy dose of love brings about in the lives of everyone who comes into the barn. I could go on and on why I think Purple Pony is special, however I will let the newsletter tell this years story of all that has taken place.

Thank you to our community here in Genesee County for your heartfelt support. Many thanks to our donors, volunteers, board of directors and God!

See you at the barn.



Daniel J. Zilker

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THE LATEST UPDATES

In this newsletter
you can expect:

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Update

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COMMUNITY CORNER

The Hope Care Center of LeRoy visited the Purple Pony Barn, where residents had the opportunity to experience the incredible therapeutic power of the equine connection. It was a day filled with joy, bonding, and unforgettable moments with these gentle animals



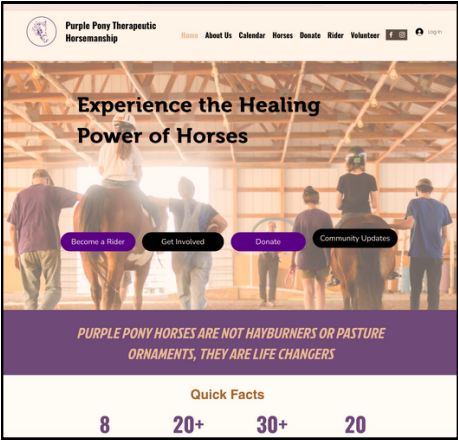
Our Redesigned Website Is Here — and Growing Fast

We're excited to share that our newly redesigned website is now live, and the response has exceeded expectations. Since the relaunch, we've seen a 120% increase in traffic, with both new and returning visitors engaging more deeply with our content.

The updated site offers a more streamlined experience, including easier navigation, a new section featuring our horses, and expanded resources for first-time riders. We've also introduced electronic sign-ups, making it faster and more convenient for new riders and volunteers to get started.

This redesign reflects our commitment to accessibility, education, and growing our community. We invite you to visit and explore all that's new.

WWW.PURPLEPONY.ORG



SAVE THE DATE!

2026 Treasure Sale

We will be having our next bi-annual treasure sale in the summer of 2026! Start saving and cleaning your closets for items that can be donated to help raise money for our programs. We are looking for quality donations (no clothing).

Donation drop off times to begin in July 2026. Keep an eye on our social media for further information.



What a year! So many amazing volunteers brought their energy, smiles, and innovation to help make our facilities better than ever!

TESTIMONIALS

Let's say 'hello' to Augie!

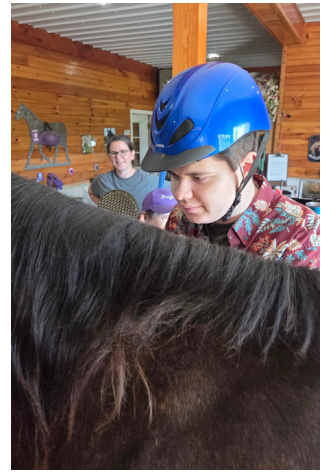


Augie was the first rider participant in our grooming program this past fall. Our PATH certified instructor, Lynnette Short shares that the first horse Augie interacted with, groomed and led was Paint. Paint is a gentle soul and loved the attention he received from Augie. Augie learned about different grooming tools and brushes and with support from his Mom and Lynnette. He seemed to enjoy his first lesson.

By Augie's second lesson, he was much more comfortable with the grooming tools and touching the horse. Augie, who is on the autism spectrum, really adapted wonderfully to his introduction to a new horse named Bailey. Bailey is a big, strong retired standardbred race horse. All involved were impressed how well Augie and Bailey hit it off as a team!

Augie led Bailey down the road to the Sensory Trail and they both enjoyed a relaxing fall stroll. The crunch of the fall leaves, warm breeze, calmness of the nature trail, were all sensations that provided a valuable experience for Augie.

Augie led his horse with support from Lynnette through the trail and back to the barn. For Augie and Bailey, a bond of familiarity and comfort has begun.



Anna and Bailey

SPECIAL FOUNDATION THANK YOU CORNER

We would like to extend a very special thank you to our amazing donors:

- Western New York Harness Horsemen's Association
- Vic Blood Foundation
- Sam Dilcher/Rose Campbell Family
- The Shanley Family Foundation
- David Klos Family Memorial Fund
- Rotary Club of Batavia
- Batavia Downs Gaming
- Give716



Taya's Journey with Purple Pony

Taya has been participating in equine-assisted activities with Purple Pony Therapeutic Horsemanship for over nine years. She started her adventure with our therapy program riding our gentle but stubborn CJ. He would carry her ever so carefully around the arena and on walks along the Sensory Trail. He was a great pony for her to begin her adventure.

Taya would practice giving commands to CJ with a small color coded picture symbol felt board draped along CJ withers. With a prompt to her hand, Taya pats twice on the picture command "walk on" and along CJ goes. When time to stop, Taya pats twice on the picture symbol "whoa" and CJ stands at a stop. Taya frequently would look at her side walkers with a pout on her face expressing her disinterest in stopping her beloved pony as she always wanted him to keep moving!

Spring Session 2023

Taya has PURA Syndrome, an extremely rare neurodevelopmental disability. Her participation in Purple Pony lessons has helped with her hypotonia, communication and overall engagement with her side walkers and of course, her lesson horse. Her parents have shared that she can be sound asleep on her ride to the Purple Pony barn but as soon as they turn into the driveway and pull up next to the arena, she is awake and looking for her volunteers and horse. They say Taya has improved her core muscle strength and endurance.



"It's a wonderful feeling when our daughter's eyes light up and she starts clapping as we pull up to the Purple Pony's barn for her horse therapy. She grins from ear to ear when she's in the saddle, and absolutely loves the attention and interaction she gets from her team of volunteers. What's even more magical is that those rides have helped give her better stability and core strength to walk (with assistance)... something her doctor's doubted would ever happen. We are truly blessed to have Purple Ponies in Taya's life."

-Rich and Shannon Gannon

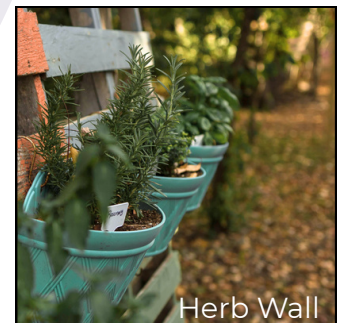
This year, Taya has begun lessons riding Bubba. Bubba, a lumbering, kind, sometimes befuddled Halflinger horse who behaves like a true gentleman during her lessons. Taya enjoys her rides with her favorite music playing in the background. This past fall Taya engaged in sunny walks on the Sensory Trail as she navigated the sensory activities and musical instrument stops.



Taya really enjoys the Sensory bridge with its different materials for the horse's hoofs to make noise on, for example wood chips, rocks, sand and a wooden bridge as she sits up and listens to each sound. The side walkers get a kick out of Taya's reaction as she smells mint, basil and lemon dill at the Herb Wall.

Fall Session 2025

Purple Pony is grateful to be able to provide its mission to serve our community and our friends with disabilities and their families. Our volunteers contribute time, talents and resources to foster a better quality of life. Watching Taya grow throughout her years participating in our program has brought immense joy to her, her family and her volunteers. AND of course CJ and Bubba!



Herb Wall

Ways to Give

1 Website

www.purplepony.org/donate



2 Amazon Wishlist

<https://tinyurl.com/purpleponyamazon>



PURPLE PONY HORSES ARE NOT HAYBURNERS OR PASTURE ORNAMENTS... THEY ARE LIFE CHANGERS