

\$100,000 in research grant funding now available!



## Horses and Humans Research Foundation News & Updates

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*" Supposing is good, but finding out is better." - Mark Twain*

### Science Achievement Award to Nancy McGibbon

The HHRF board awarded their first Science Achievement Award to Nancy McGibbon, MS,PT,HPCS. Nancy helped set up the foundation's original "think tank" meeting more than 12 years ago. She has remained active in the foundation as [a scientific advisor](#) and was also a research award recipient in 2010. HHRF gratefully acknowledges her exemplary and significant contribution in the equine assisted activities research field through her time, efforts and dedication.

Nancy is a licensed physical therapist with an advanced master's degree in neurologic physical therapy. She has worked in a variety of clinical settings, including acute care, rehabilitation and private practice. Nancy has more than 30 years experience in all aspects of therapeutic horseback riding and has been practicing hippotherapy for 20 years. She is credited with multiple research studies that have been published in scientific journals. Her impact in the field has been far reaching - she is the perfect recipient of this coveted award.



Honoree Nancy McGibbon with Barbara Rector whose birthday was celebrated that same night. Both of these visionary ladies were essential members at HHRF's founding planning meeting many years ago.

### Call for Proposals: \$100,000 Available, Due July 15

Information for potential applicants, including application materials, previously funded projects, review guidelines

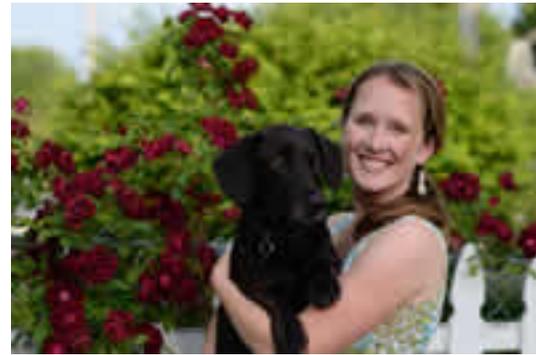
and more are available. Researchers interested in finding local EAA/T programs for possible collaborations may contact the foundation office for assistance. [Learn more](#)



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## Q&A with Megan Kiely Mueller

Megan Kiely Mueller, Ph.D. is a research assistant professor in the Center for Animals and Public Policy at the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. Megan's research focuses on the role of human-animal interaction as a context for promoting positive youth development and health outcomes. Dr. Mueller is a member of HHRF's [Scientific Advisory Council](#) and is principal investigator for the HHRF-funded project '[Effects of Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy on Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Youth](#)'.



*How did the concept for your HHRF funded research project come to be?*

I think most good research comes out of strong collaborations with experienced practitioners and researchers. I was lucky enough to be able to work with a wonderful set of collaborators and sit around a table to say: what is an urgent need in the field, and how can our project help move the field forward. By starting with this big question, we were then able to use our diverse experiences to design a research study we thought would be innovative and address some key needs in EAA.

*The HHRF BOARD is considering focusing research in specific areas of our field. What would you suggest to them?*

I think we are at a point in the field now where the time is right to move from funding smaller pilot studies to larger, field-building research that targets some of the key underlying mechanisms of equine-assisted interventions that could be generalizable across multiple settings. Innovative work with regard to methodology, understanding process, and understanding context (for who do which interventions work?) is critical. It was especially exciting to see HHRF offer their first grant at the \$100,000!

*What are the reasons we need to continue to invest in research?*

Now is a critical time in the field of EAA (and animal-assisted interventions more broadly). We are at the point where we are ready to move from many small pilot... ([read the full interview](#))

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## Task Force Members Sought for Focused Research Initiative

The HHRF Board has established a special task force

that will be developing a Focused Resource Initiative with the objective to outline a program of research targeted on Equine Assisted Activities/Therapies designed to fulfill the research most needed to best serve Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). The end result will be an established, designated research fund and a focused call for proposals directing the EAA/PTS/TBI research goals. HHRF board member Larry Pence is chairing the task force and is presently searching for resources to inform the direction of this focused veterans research initiative, and stakeholders and experts to serve on the task forces, and or to advise the task force. If you have interest in serving or suggestions, [contact Larry Pence](#).



## New Board Members

HHRF recently welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors.

**Pam Cusick, MA** is an experienced public health research professional with experience in the areas of education, communications, and research as well as strategic planning, community outreach, and public relations. Pam earned a BA in Psychology from Sweet Briar College, and a MA in Psychology from the New School for Social Research. Pam has been involved with horses for much of her life and is interested in increasing public awareness of the therapeutic benefits of working with horses.



Pam Cusick

**Michael Richardson, Hico, TX** has credentials and experience that can best be summarized by the example he has set with his own life after a jeep accident left him a paraplegic in his early 20's. For the past 30 years, Michael has committed his life to teaching small group clinics and individual lessons. Drawing from a broad base of experience in Fox Hunting, Eventing, Dressage and Jumping and then learning to ride again after his injury. His unique approach to working with horses and people allows achievement of more with less force and stress and provides the perfect focal point for students to take their horse and life skills to the next level.



Michael Richardson

Three board members recently completed their terms on the HHRF board: **Judy Lightfoot** was a founding board member and has served as an integral leader for multiple terms. Thank you Judy, we are so grateful for all you have done and we miss your smiles, optimism and friendship in a huge way! **Cindy Ruiz** and **Joanne Hart** also have served with skill and enthusiasm and have led a variety of important projects and efforts. Thank goodness none of these talented ladies have stepped too far away! [Meet the rest of the HHRF Board](#)

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As a public foundation, Horses and Humans Research Foundation is in a unique position. Our current programming is entirely focused on our competitive research grant award programming. However, we are not an endowed fund, so we must also constantly fundraise in order to award research grants. We are dependent on contributions from those who understand the importance of this research.

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