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### **Research Published in Journal of Child and Family Studies: Effects of Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy on Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Youth**

Chagrin Falls, Ohio, April 20, 2017– The findings from Tufts University’s equine-facilitated psychotherapy research studying effects on youth with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Symptoms was just published in the Journal of Child and Family Studies. The project was funded by Horses and Humans Research Foundation and lead by Principal investigator Megan K. Mueller, Ph.D.

Equine-assisted therapy has become an increasingly popular complementary mental health treatment approach, but there is limited empirical research assessing the effectiveness of this practice. In particular, equine-facilitated psychotherapy has many potential benefits for the treatment of trauma in youth. The purpose of the proposed study was to investigate changes in levels of post-traumatic stress symptomatology and levels of the human-animal bond in children and adolescents ages 10–18 over the course of a 10-week equine-facilitated psychotherapy (EFP) intervention.

Youth in the treatment group participated in 10 weekly two hour EFP sessions, and were compared on changes in post-traumatic stress symptoms with a control group of participants who continued to receive the already existing traditional therapeutic services provided by their treatment facility or outpatient therapist.

Findings suggested a significant decrease in post-traumatic stress symptoms across the intervention for both the treatment and control group, but the treatment group did not decrease significantly more than the control group. These findings suggest that EFP may be an effective additional treatment modality for post-traumatic stress symptoms, but there was no evidence from this initial study that EFP was significantly more effective than traditional office-based therapy. Further research and discussion of the relative benefits of EFP compared to traditional treatment modalities is warranted.

Paul Haefner PhD, of the Horses and Humans Research Foundation board of directors, stated “This research project was exceptionally significant because it put Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy on the map. It shows that this professionally facilitated treatment is a viable option. It gives us an important recognized tool when working with troubled youth who urgently need a treatment option that will help them progress during vulnerable time in their lives.”

*Mission: Through sustained investment in rigorous research, HHRF serves as a catalyst to advance global knowledge of horse-human interactions and their impact on health and wellness.*

*Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) is dedicated to funding research to investigate the equine-assisted activities and therapies field. Since its founding, HHRF has awarded over \$500,000 in professional research efforts led by eleven research teams in the United States, Canada and Germany. HHRF is a non-endowed foundation dependent solely on donations. To make a donation and/or learn more about this and other Horses and Humans Research Foundation projects visit <http://www.horsesandhumans.org>*