

# 2015 Annual Report

Through investment in rigorous research, Horses and Humans Research Foundation will serve as a catalyst to advance knowledge of horses and their potential impact on the health and wellness of people.



**HHRF has funded ten equine-assisted activity (EAA) projects in as many years**, all are listed on the right side of this page. To date, eight grants have been completed. Three of the completed projects reported findings on Cerebral Palsy, two on post-traumatic stress disorder, two

on autism, and one regarding children with bonding issues. Two of the completed projects have been published in peer-reviewed journals. Four projects are actively submitting for publication, three have had their pilot studies published. The two remaining projects are still active.

HHRF awarded its first \$10,000 Innovative Grant (#10 at right). The study will expose twenty horses to four neurotypical humans and four humans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The team believes understanding the horse's role in the processes involved in equine-assisted therapy is essential for furthering research into EAA not only from the human perspective, but from the lens of horse welfare to minimize stressful experiences for the horse and ensure participant safety.

University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Veterinary Medicine reported findings from their research (#7 at right). Results of this study provide clear evidence that the hippotherapy program contributed to a decrease in PTSD symptoms. Participants had statistically significant decreases in PTSD symptoms throughout the study period, and the benefit increased the longer an individual was in the riding program. Participants also expressed great enjoyment when interacting with the horses as well as the camaraderie with other veterans and the research and riding center staff.

Researchers at Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University and at Washburn University completed their study (#8 at right). The unpublished data suggest that both the treatment and control groups experienced a significant reduction in post-traumatic stress symptoms, and the human-animal bond was correlated with reduction in symptoms for the treatment group. These findings suggest additional evidence regarding the role of the human-animal bond in clinically based treatment, and could be useful in advancing awareness of EFP as a viable psychotherapeutic intervention and promoting high-quality research assessing EFP as a treatment modality.

This year HHRF was especially pleased to complete its first special campaign, honoring our first decade and allowing us to grant our first \$100,000 award! The call for proposals will be placed in 2016. The HHRF "Wow What a Decade" Celebration in Magnolia, Texas in November established the perpetual "Sweeney Visionary Award", in honor of George and Molly Sweeney for their dedication and impact on EAA. In addition we added 4 new scientific advisors; Heidi Banse, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Calgary, Canada), Virginia Buechner-Maxwell, DVM (Fairlawn, Virginia), Erin Grogan, PhD, (West Chesterfield, NH), Carolyn Hammer, DVM PhD (Fargo, North Dakota).

## FUNDED RESEARCH

1. Study: **"Improvement in Trunk/Head Stability and Upper Extremity Control after HPOT,"** Washington University School of Medicine, Program in Occupational Therapy - St. Louis, MO. Funded 2006. Status: Published in the Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, 2009 Jul;90(7):1185-95.
2. Study: **"The Effect of Equine Assisted Activities on the Social Functioning in Children with Autism,"** Good Hope Equestrian Training Center - Miami, FL, USA. Funded 2008. Status: Submitted for publication (Pilot study results published in the Journal for Autism & Developmental Disorders).
3. Study: **"Hippotherapy to Improve Postural Control in Children with Cerebral Palsy,"** Université de Sherbrooke - Quebec, Canada. Funded 2010. Status: Submitted for publication.
4. Study: **"Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy,"** Central Michigan University, USA. Funded 2010. Status: Active. Pilot study published in Physical Therapy, Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association May, 2012
5. Study: **"Basic Neurobiological and Psychological Mechanisms Underlying Therapeutic Effects of Equine Assisted Activities (EAA/T),"** University of Rostock, Germany. Funded 2010. Status: Submitted for publication.
6. Study: **"Effects of Hippotherapy on Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders,"** Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO, USA. Funded 2011. Status: Pilot study published in American Journal of Occupational Therapy, Nov/Dec 2013.
7. Study: **"Effects of Equine-Assisted Activities on PTSD Symptoms, Coping Self-Efficacy, Emotion Regulation, and Social Engagement in Military Veterans,"** University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, USA. Funded 2013. Status: Study completed, finalizing statistical data.
8. Study: **"Effects of Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy on Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms in Male Youth,"** Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA. Funded 2013. Status: Submitted for publication.
9. Study: **"Examination of the effects of equine assisted activities on PTSD symptoms, quality of life and participation in combat veterans,"** Baylor University Waco, TX. Funded 2014. Status: Active
10. Study: **"Can horses distinguish between neurotypical and mentally traumatized humans?"** University of Guelph, Guelph, ON, Canada. Funded 2015. Status: Active

[Details and updates at the HHRF website](#)

## 2015 marks 10 years since the vision of Molly Sweeney

was embodied in the founding of the Horses and Humans Research Foundation. While the founding of HHRF is an event worth celebrating, I feel that it is equally important to celebrate the ten years of dedicated effort that has brought Molly's vision to life.

HHRF has funded 10 research projects since its founding. The focus of these projects has ranged from the investigation of the impact of therapeutic riding on trunk stability in children to the investigation of the neurobiological and psychological underpinnings of equine-assisted activities to the impacts of equine-assisted activities on post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms in combat veterans.

HHRF's Focused Research Initiatives (FRI) is a new opportunity to target your investment in research and maximize the impact of the research dollar for all of those who benefit from equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAA/T). FRI teams are asking our stakeholders

how we can best promote the highest quality research to advance our knowledge of the relationships between horses and humans. Each FRI is committed to focusing and supporting research efforts through partnerships with researchers, practitioners, clients, organizations and many others who are passionate about serving people through the best of EAA/T. The ultimate goal is to create and fund rationally conceived programs of research which prioritize our funding efforts in a way to best advance our knowledge base in support of EAA/T.

We anticipate the coming years with great excitement. We also look forward to your input regarding future direction for the research we support.

With gratitude,  
Paul T. Haefner, PhD  
President, Board of Directors



## Grant Application Recapitulation 2006-2015\*\*

Research Grant Applications Received: 243

Number of Universities represented in applications: 176

Number of EAA/T programs represented in applications: 171

Number of Organizations (including Veterans Admin. programs): 28

Number of USA States: 41

Number of worldwide countries: 17

\*\*Some applications are from combined sources

# Finance Summary

The primary changes in our financial position in 2015 resulted from the successful completion of a special 10-year anniversary campaign. This campaign brought in \$120,000 in gifts primarily from HHRF individual donors, and will fund our first \$100,000 level research grant. The rest of our income and expenses remained very comparable to previous years with continued moderate growth.

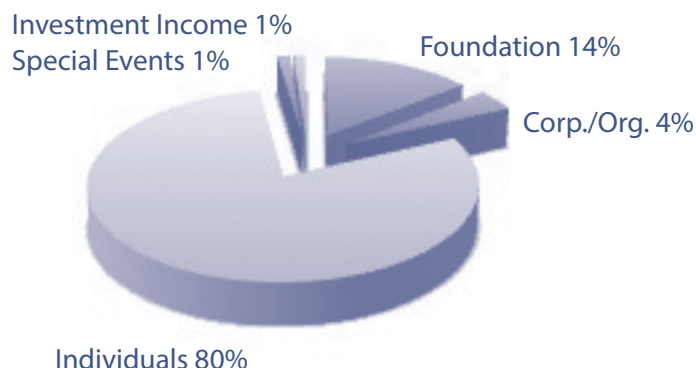
### INCOME

Foundation	\$31,500
Corp./Org.	\$8,435
Individuals	\$175,568
Investment Income*	\$2,798
Special Events	\$2,400
<b>Total Income**</b>	<b>\$220,701</b>

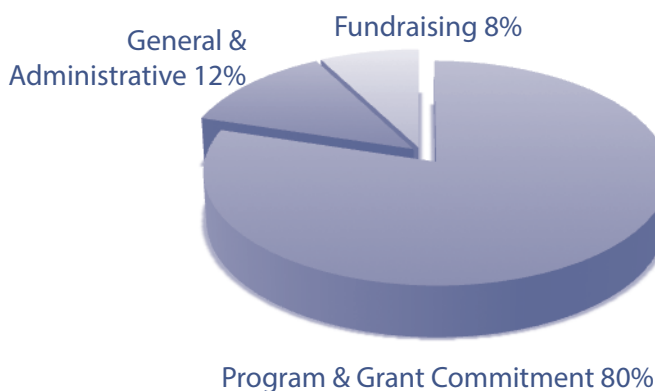
### EXPENDITURES

Program (awards/education)	\$76,965
General & Administrative	\$27,791
Fundraising	\$17,146
Grant Commitment***	\$100,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$221,902</b>

### 2015 INCOME



### 2015 EXPENDITURES



\* Includes earnings from \$120,000 in our endowment fund

\*\* Includes special 10 year anniversary campaign for \$100,000 research grant

\*\*\* Commitment to grant award, CFP to be made in 2016.

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Image courtesy University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine

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