

9. Please describe the nature of your work at the PATH Intl. center or describe your career plan after completing your EAAT coursework.

Since 2004, I have been volunteering as a horse handler at a PATH Int'l. Premier Center. Although I have been a horse owner all of my life, my experience there taught me how to work with riders with special needs. I learned a lot about safety and standardized procedures, and became part of the training team for their horses. Wanting to further my education, I became a PATH (then NARHA) member and a PATH certified TRI a few years later. Recently I received my ES certification.

While volunteering, I also started a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization (Mini Miracles, Inc.) which provides animal assisted learning and activities to children with disabilities, those in foster care, and at risk in southern Arizona. We are the only organization of this kind in our area and have been providing programs with our miniature horses and donkeys since 2008. Although we are a small organization, with no paid staff, we typically serve 400-500 children a year. My duties include grant writing, marketing, continued training of our minis and presenting most of the programs.

10. What are your goals in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies?

My most challenging goals are to incorporate an EAL Anti-Bullying program into our curriculum for next year, and to team with a MHP, to provide EAP at a local crisis nursery we have worked with over the last three years. I recently became certified as an ES with these goals in mind and would like additional education and guidance in these fields.

To grow in areas of administration, grant writing and program development, I want to increase the number of children we reach, along with the quality of our programs. Our budget is so small; it has not been possible for me to attend a National Conference, to draw from the information and experienced presenters available there.

Knowing what it takes to become a TRI and an ES, I appreciate the help I received along the way. Becoming a mentor would allow me to "pay it forward" in helping other members reach their goals. Hosting an ES certification workshop would also align with this.

Becoming an Advanced Instructor to provide a higher level of education and learning to my students is something I would like to work towards.

11. How do you think attending the PATH Intl. National Conference and Annual Meeting will help you in your work and goals in the field of equine assisted activities and therapies?

Attending the National Conference would provide education and resources not available to me locally, to assist me in attaining my goals in these areas:

Provide me with valuable information and resources to use in designing and providing quality EFL/EFP programs, along with the opportunity to learn from experienced individuals in these fields.

Participating in a PATH Mentor Program will give me with the skills to help others who want to become certified as an Equine Specialist.

The lectures and networking with experienced individuals regarding the most current guidelines and information for PATH Equine Specialists, will provide additional information in correctly conducting my programs (as an ES certified through the fast track process, this information would be a great benefit).

Gathering information for improving operating procedures (so that we can safely grow to accommodate more children and provide them with programs that foster growth), marketing strategies (to let more people know about us and our services), new ideas (for innovative programs and measurable outcomes) and grant writing tips (to continue and expand our EFL programs, and keep our miniature horses and donkeys fed).

Networking with advanced level instructors, finding a mentor and attending workshops will help me to pursue my advanced level certification.