

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

I am the Director of the Palmer Home for Children therapeutic riding program, Palmer Hope Reins. Our center is unique, as we are a residential care facility for children in foster placement; our riding program offers no-cost therapeutic riding sessions to mentally and physically disabled members of the community using our resident children as volunteers. The riding program offers the children of Palmer Home an opportunity to pay it forward to members of the community that gives so much to them. We are currently serving approximately 30 riders outside of Palmer Home, and our 75 resident children each have the opportunity to participate in service to these riders in exchange for their own riding lessons. The participating Palmer children are able to see that although their situation is less than ideal, there are other members of the community that struggle in different ways than their own. This allows the Palmer children to see that they can make a difference in someone else's life rather than focusing solely on their own set of internal struggles. Thus, the therapeutic riding experience is benefitting two populations equally.

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

At Palmer Home, we strive to provide quality therapeutic riding sessions, while simultaneously helping our resident children learn riding skills, responsibility, and caring for horses and others. We want steady growth in our program, serving moderate-to-low income riders at no cost to them. Our main goal is for our resident children to learn that they can make a difference in their community and in their own lives, no matter their current living situation. At Palmer Home, our main goal is to break the cycle of failure, and give them the opportunity to be productive, caring citizens.

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?

PATH International is the leader in the therapeutic riding industry, and the conference offers a setting not readily available otherwise. I have attended the last two national conferences, and have benefitted from the educational sessions and networking with others in the therapeutic riding field. I would like to attend again this year to further my education and stay up-to-date on the agenda of PATH International. From the opportunities mentioned, I will be able to bring back the knowledge obtained at the conference and apply it in our program.

APR 16 2012