

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

As an aunt of a HETRA rider, I can relate to both the parents/families and as staff of the organization. I hear/ see my sister struggle for services for her son, which makes me more determined to offer our services to our community. I see/hear her searching for resources she needs for both her son and herself. I see others who care for and work with my nephew who have the same passion as I do and want to learn and provide assistance to families like mine.

I believe I am a vital member of the HETRA (Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy) team and wear many hats – from stall cleaner, instructor to staff. I am always in marketing and fundraising mode to assist in raising funds for students who cannot afford this unique form of therapy. I am the co-chair or committee member of many HETRA events. – I want to see the riders succeed in a sport their disability has not taken away and continually work to secure funding for the program.

I am supportive of other groups in my community. I attend other nonprofit events and believe attendance at these events is very important and shows I /HETRA supports our students in other activities they participate in as well as a way to get free marketing regarding HETRA programs. – I want to be a part of other organizations and their successful events.

Because of my passion for the EEAT industry, I choose to leave a career in the for-profit world two years ago to change careers and become full time at HETRA. Although my new position is lower in pay and longer hours, I believe in the advancement of the industry. With an hour commute each way to the office, I have lots of free time to plan for our organization.

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

To promote others so they can succeed!!!! I believe I succeed when others succeed. In all areas of the organization, in students, volunteers, staff and donors. I continually nominate others so they can be recognized for their contributions. Many people I have nominated won awards and I'm always there at their award ceremony to cheer them on. I am a strong supporter of networking and enjoy learning of other services in the community and how I can link my connections within my network. It never fails there is a parent or family member at an event who is looking for a resource in the community.

I have attended national conferences in the past on a yearly basis when I was employed in the for-profit world. With the change in my position to HETRA, I have not been able to afford the cost of conferences. I gained so much from the PATH Intl conferences, but when the choice came for me to gain education or pay for a networking opportunity here locally, my limited dollars were spent at home. I would love the opportunity to attend the national conference again so I can bring back the great education / experience of the national conference to others at our center.

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?

The classes offered at Conference will assist me in all areas of my job. Instructing, business/grant writing, and networking – all areas! I am in the mist of co-organizing an instructor certification workshop at our center, and have completed the PATH Intl mentor training workshop. Along with another staff member, we submitted an abstract for both national and regional conferences. – I want to see those with a passion to work in the EAAT industry be an educated driving force in our community.

Our center in on the cusp of starting a capital campaign (looking within the next two years) and the resources I can gain from conference will be wonderful. With college loans for two bachelor degrees, I feel neither have prepared me for the work that is ahead with this endeavor like a national conference could. (It is amazing how life experiences can change your career path!) I continue to pay for current classes through the University to receive a certificate that is tailored to the nonprofit fundraising world. Attending the conference this year is even more important than the past, with our capital campaign in the mist!!!