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Professor Philip Tedeschi at NARHA Conference

Denver— If you have ever looked deeply into the eye of a horse and felt that you were known, or had a beloved pet wait patiently for you to get home from work and welcoming you home like a best friend, or cried at the movie *My Dog Skip*, you have experienced a human-animal bond. The presence of animals stimulates communication with individuals who are socially marginalized, isolated or no longer trust human relationships. Animals provide a socially normative source for touch and physical contact while reducing blood pressure, anxiety, loneliness and depression. They have been shown to decrease the debilitating impacts of trauma and stress-related conditions. Have you ever wondered why this kind of connection occurs?

Professor Philip Tedeschi has not only wondered but has researched why. Some of his best friends are animals, and he will be sharing his stories and research at the 2011 NARHA National Conference and Annual Meeting luncheon, November 10, 2011, in Lexington, KY.

Philip is a clinical Professor at the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver and the clinical director of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection. He coordinates the **Master's in Social Work's Animal-Assisted Social Work Certificate** program, The Animals and Human Health Professional Development course and more recently carries out anti-poaching research in East Africa. A NARHA-certified Master Therapeutic Riding Instructor and former course director/instructor with Outward Bound, Philip has many years of experience in non-traditional therapeutic approaches with children, adults and families. He has served on the NARHA Medical Committee and was co-chair of the NARHA Research Committee. He currently serves on the Delta Society Board of Directors and The Horses and Humans Research Foundation Advisory Committee.



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Philip has been a presenter at numerous conferences and workshops on the connection between humans and animals, including at the 2010 NARHA National Conference. One attendee writing about the desire to have Tedeschi as a keynote speaker at this year's conference said, "His presentation on 'The Ethics of Human Animal Interaction' should be heard by everyone at the entire NARHA conference."

NARHA's conference is in Lexington, KY, this year and features an impressive array of educational sessions presented by equine industry experts. For information about the NARHA 2011 National Conference, visit www.narha.org and click on national conference or call (800) 369-7433.

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About NARHA:

NARHA was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. At over 700 member centers, a total of 42,000 children and adults find a sense of independence through involvement with horses. These member centers range from small, one-person programs to large operations with several certified instructors and licensed therapists. In addition to therapeutic equitation, a center may offer any number of equine-assisted activities including hippotherapy, equine-facilitated mental health, driving, interactive vaulting, trail riding, competition, ground work or stable management. Through a wide variety of educational resources, the association helps individuals start and maintain successful equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. There are more than 24,000 volunteers, 2,000 instructors, 5,700 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at NARHA centers.