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NARHA Makes National News

Denver—NARHA, previously known as the North American Riding for Handicapped Association, made national news in two separate stories in March.

Vanguard, the magazine of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, featured an article in its March/April 2010 issue about NARHA's Horses for Heroes program. "High in the Saddle" highlighted several NARHA centers that have a Horses for Heroes program and the vets whom they serve. For information about NARHA's Horses for Heroes program, visit www.narha.org or contact Mary Jo Beckman at mibeckman@gmail.com. Beckman has been the volunteer liaison for the program since 2007, answering emails from NARHA centers, Department of Veterans Affairs employees, veterans, wounded service members and stables. She links the military and veterans with established NARHA centers. She is also part of the NARHA Horses for Heroes task force.

The second national news story came when ABC News 20/20 aired a story on kidnap survivor Jaycee Lee Dugard, who has been receiving equine therapy as part of her trauma recovery. Therapist Michael Kaufmann, who is the Farm and Wildlife Director at Green Chimney's School and is not affiliated with the Dugard case, was quoted in the story about the healing properties of horses. Kaufmann is a past member of the board of NARHA and a founding board member and committee chair for the Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association (EFMHA).

"It is so encouraging to see NARHA continuing to make progress in showing people how equine assisted activities can contribute significantly to human health and well being," Kaufmann said. "Thirty five years ago, few people recognized the impact of



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equine assisted activities. So it is especially exciting to see how NARHA member centers across the country and the thousands of professionals and participants that represent this work are now finding acceptance in the mainstream as contributing significantly to human well being via purposeful contact with horses.”

For information about NARHA or EFMHA or any of its member centers, visit www.narha.org or call Cher Smith, communications coordinator, at 800-369-7433, x 123 or email her at csmith@narha.org.

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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, 2000 instructors, 5,700 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at NARHA centers.