



*“Ensuring excellence and changing lives through equine-assisted activities and therapies”*

**Recipient of the 2013 Equine Industry Vision Award,  
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**Marine Veteran Passes PATH Intl. Therapeutic Riding Instructor Certification**

**Denver**—General James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps stated, "A Marine is a Marine...there's no such thing as a former Marine. You're a Marine, just in a different uniform and you're in a different phase of your life. But you'll always be a Marine because you went to Parris Island, San Diego or the hills of Quantico. There's no such thing as a former Marine."

Nicholas Montijo is in a different phase of his life. Nick is a Marine who was injured in Afghanistan in 2009 and has had a number of therapies and surgeries since then. Nick spent time at BraveHearts Therapeutic Riding and Educational Center, a PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Center in Poplar Grove, IL, as a volunteer during sessions as a sidewalker and horse leader, learning to feed and turn out horses. This past week, May 8-11, Nick was one of the candidates attending the PATH Intl. Registered Instructor Onsite Workshop and Certification at BraveHearts and applying for the certification process. Nick had completed his preparations at BraveHearts during 2013 and 2014, acquiring riding lessons and completing his student teaching hours.

Nick passed certification to become a PATH Intl. Certified Registered Instructor. PATH Intl. congratulates him on this new phase of his life.

Nick is an Alumnus of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP), which supported Nick's goals by funding many of his sessions at BraveHearts. Through a partnership between WWP and PATH Intl., veterans who are WWP Alumni and who are interested in therapeutic horsemanship may qualify to receive funding for sessions at PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Centers.

Nick most recently competed and won first place at the Midwest Horse Fair in the National Snaffle Bit Association event. He looks forward to helping on a bigger scale, both inside and outside of the arena, bringing more veterans to discover therapeutic horsemanship at BraveHearts or other PATH Intl. Premier Accredited Centers across the nation. Nick feels he now knows firsthand what horses have done for him. "Learning about horses and having something to look forward to is extremely rewarding," he stated. "This has been a life changer for me. I am anxious to share my story and instruction with others."

Nick is grateful for the session funding from WWP and also for a scholarship covering the costs for the workshop certification from the American Paint Horse Foundation. Nick is also thankful for the entire BraveHearts organization for supporting his endeavor.

As a reward for his accomplishment Nick was presented with the opportunity to ride with world renowned horse clinician Buck Brannaman, September 19-22nd during Brannaman's Foundation Horsemanship Clinic at Sunflower Farm in Bristol, WI.

If you would like information on becoming a certified instructor, visit [www.pathintl.org](http://www.pathintl.org) or [watch the certification video](#). [Click here for information on WWP](#).

**About PATH Intl.:**

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) was formed in 1969 to promote safety and optimal outcomes in equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. The association certifies professionals and accredits centers that each year help 56,000 children and adults with physical, mental and emotional challenges find strength and independence through the power of the horse.

Currently 850 member centers offer therapeutic riding, and other therapeutic horsemanship activities including hippotherapy, equine-facilitated mental health, carriage driving, interactive vaulting, trail riding, competition, ground work and stable management. Through a wide variety of educational resources, and under the direction of the PATH Intl. Standards for Certification and Accreditation, the association helps individuals start and maintain successful programs. There are nearly 52,000 volunteers, 4,232 instructors, 7,503 equines and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at PATH Intl. Centers.