

Class offers kids therapy a la horseback

By LORA CUYKENDALL
Of the Emerald

"Keep those heels down, Andy. Good girl."

"Do you want to try a trot, Patsy? Sure, you can do it."

"Good Lori, you're doing fine. You're learning real fast."

"Can you get down by yourself today, Tonia? Put your hand here and swing your leg over. That's the way. Good job."

Marie Wynn's riding class at Woodside Stables on Erickson Road off of Crow Road sounds

like any other riding school. And it looks like any other riding school, too — blonde pigtailed bob in the wind as docile mares trot bumpily around the ring, fearful pats turn into loving hugs as childish trepidation wears off by the end of the lesson — but the children in this class sometimes ride better than they walk and often smile more on horseback than anywhere else. The class is one begun only about a month ago by Wynn and involves handicapped children from the Pearl Buck School in Eugene. Each Friday afternoon about four children spend nearly an hour of

fun and therapy learning how to ride.

Wynn, a 37-year-old horsewoman who is putting together a riding therapy degree for herself at Lane Community College (LCC), says working with handicapped children has been a part of her life since childhood. "I grew up with a girl who had cerebral palsy," she says. "Sonya was so bright and looked so intelligent but all she could do was smile — it was very sad."

That concern for the handicapped found an outlet in Wynn's other great life interest — horses. "I'm constantly trying to become a better horsewoman myself and I like to teach other people what I've managed to learn," she says. "There's a therapeutic value in riding for everyone. It means a lot to see yourself improving at something."

So the two loves merged and found life in the Horsemanship for the Handicapped Program Wynn is presently organizing.

She has recently filed for incorporation as a non-profit organization and hopes to develop a stable of suitable horses and equipment through the help of donations, fund raising activities, some federal grants and personal donations. She presently is a part-time manager of Woodside and has the use of owner Dee Stechlein's and riding instructor Sue Pruitt's ponies and horses.

Wynn's program is being modeled on one started by Jean McCally in Columbia, Maryland. McCally had studied at a school of riding therapy in England before coming to the United States.

According to Colleen Clark, a riding therapist who assists McCally at her school, the natural rhythms of the horse can help cerebral palsy victims. Riding spreads the legs, and the body heat and regular rhythms of the moving horses are natural muscle relaxers. McCally found that child and horse working together could sometimes overcome a variety of handicaps.

"When I read about the success Jean McCally was having I was determined to find a way to provide an adequate facility for handicapped children to learn in here," says Wynn.

"I've become so involved in it I think of the kids who come as 'my kids' and I've enlisted most of my family and friends in the project."

Although Wynn's class has only been meeting for about four weeks, Wynn says she already can see a marked improvement in some of the children. "It's ego building to be good at something special. For these kids riding is a little more difficult but some of them are going to be really good — by anyone's standards. They

Stable sponsors benefit for children's program

Woodside Stables is sponsoring a benefit show for the Horsemanship for the Handicapped program Sunday beginning at 9 a.m. This is a schooling show and chaps, lariats, hobbles and slickers are optional, according to coordinator Marie Wynn.

Silver jewelry boxes will be awarded to first place winners and ribbons for persons placing fifth or better also will be given in all classes. The high point trophy will be a baroque silver goblet and the reserve high point award will be a set of individual salt and peppers in silver and blue glass.

A drawing will be held during the high point presentation for raffle prizes which will include a variety of handmade items. During the noon break, local mule trainers will exhibit a few prized driving and riding mules. "Together Again," a country and western band, will play throughout the day and food will be sold on the grounds.

Tickets are available now at stations KEED, 1245 Charnelton St. and KATR, 130 East 13th Ave. They will also be available Friday at the Lane Community College (LCC) cafeteria and on the Woodside grounds Sunday. All proceeds of the show will go to the maintenance and acquisition of animals and equipment for the Horsemanship for the Handicapped program. Donations of saddles and bridles are also welcomed. Persons with horses who would like to arrange loan agreements for use of their horses in the program can contact Wynn at Woodside Stables at 687-0979.

Woodside Stables is located one half mile off of Crow Road on Erickson Road, and is about five miles off West 11th Avenue.



Photo by Lora Cuykendall

Learning to ride is a fearful and ego-building experience but this student from the Pearl Buck Center, along with her classmates, is rapidly losing her fear of the big animals. For one hour each Friday, Tonia practices the techniques that make for a "real horsewoman" in Marie Wynn's special riding program at Woodside Stables.

Rent increase gripes get hearing

The battle over the proposed \$10 rent increase for the Amazon Married Student Housing project may reach its climax tonight as officials from the University Housing Department and Amazon Community Tenants (ACT) give their testimonies at a public hearing at 7 p.m. in 101 EMU.

The testimonies will be recorded and submitted to Ray Hawk, vice-president of administration and finance. Hawk will evaluate all input to decide the University's rent recommendation at a May 27 meeting of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education.

Of the three proposals, the \$10 increase for Amazon and a \$1.50

increase for the Westmoreland project are the most likely to be implemented. The other proposals would increase Amazon rent by either \$6 or \$12.

Over 140 Amazon tenants have placed their May rent checks in escrow with an ACT account protesting the planned rent increase. ACT also demands a separate Amazon decision-making council be set up and a review of the housing department's budget be initiated by an outside accounting firm.

The State Board announced Wednesday that the chancellor's office along with Haskins & Sells, an independent accounting firm, will review the housing depart-

ment budget and turn over their findings to the board by May 27.

ACT claims the rent increase would be their fourth in four years even though no property taxes or mortgages must be paid for the project. They claim they are paying for the housing department's budgetary and managerial inefficiency.

The housing department says they must raise the rent to meet current and future maintenance costs and pay off debt service.

All persons interested in expressing their views on the proposed rent hike may do so by signing an agenda list just prior to the meeting.

