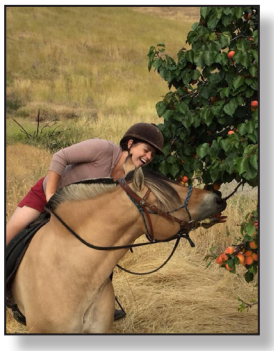
Alatheia Riding Center

Around the Arena

May, 2020 Newsletter



Anna Speer
Alatheia Program Director

Congratulations!!!

We would like to extend a HUGE congratulations to our Program Director, Anna Speer, on her recent acquisition of her permission to test for the PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor (CRTI) credentials! Anna joined the Alatheia team in 2018 and, once certified, she will become our 4th instructor to hold this honor.

The rigorous process of certification often takes 2 years to complete. It requires exceptional skill and knowledge in horse handling and management, teaching methodology and instruction, and an additional 25-hour documented internship. Once a candidate has demonstrated those skills, submitted an application and been approved by PATH, there is a lengthy final exam to pass. Anna hopes to complete this last step sometime this summer and looks forward to leading other instructors through this same process in the months and years ahead.

PATH Certification is important to Alatheia for many reasons. We strive to be the standard for therapeutic and adaptive riding. When staffed with instructors armed with the knowledge, the skill and the support that comes with these credentials, we know that we can provide great services to our community that will exceed excellence.

Nancy Grette
Executive Director/Founder

Director Update...

Life at Alatheia Riding Center looks a little different than usual right now. It's beautiful, peaceful and quiet, but terribly lonely. With a delayed spring opening we are missing the people that make Alatheia such a special place. Now, more than ever, the power of and the need for community is clearly evident.

The winter break and the COVID 19 closure has provided me with the opportunity to reflect on the years we have shared. This year marks our 10th season of providing therapeutic horseback riding to the special needs communities of North Central Washington! Because of your involvement we have grown in numbers, services, and community engagement. The ripple effect of goodwill you, the Alatheia family, have created is significant!

Whether by putting your hand to service as a volunteer, participating as or caring for a rider, supporting us financially, or offering a kind word of encouragement, your place in the Alatheia community is valued and powerful. Although we are in a season of uncertainty about many things, know this: Alatheia is strong. Alatheia is healthy. And Alatheia is waiting for you.

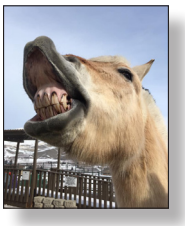
Center Stage

Here to Stay..

We are thrilled to announce our newest addition to the therapy team, Kjeks, is here to stay! Kjeks (Norwegian for Biscuit and pronounced, "Shecks") came to us last fall on a trial basis that was to end in April. Although he passed all our suitability tests and we wanted to make his stay permanent the uncertainty of our current world put keeping him in jeopardy. As a result, we reluctantly began making plans to send him back to his home in Stehekin. Then, to our surprise and delight, long-time Alatheia fans and supporters, Jean and Clark Vanderlinden, stepped in to save the day with a donation to cover the cost of Kjek's purchase! He is now here to stay!

Bred and initially raised by the Courtney family of Stehekin Valley Ranch, Kjeks is a lovable and mischievous 2-year old Fjord horse. He is adored by his two grand-uncles, Blakken and Rikky, who teach him the ropes. Kjeks is smart, willing, a fast learner, and in-your-pocket kind of guy. He won't be ready to ride for another couple of years, but in the meantime has an important role in our Warriors & Horses veteran's program. Thank you, Jean and Clark!

FUN FACT...



What is really going on when a horse 'smiles'?

We've all seen it. We've all laughed and "aww"ed over it. It certainly is cute, but what exactly is the horse doing when they lift their upper lip and show their teeth?

It's called the flehmen response. Horses use it to analyze unique smells. It can also be an indication that the horse is relaxing after a hard workout or challenging training moment. Some horses can be trained to 'smile' on command, like Blakken. So the next time one of our horses shows you the flehmen response, take a sniff around and see if you can figure out what it is they are smelling!

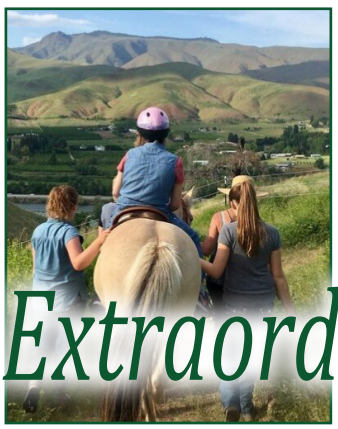
Rider Spotlight...

Meet Esther, a bright and bubbly 5 year old who loves to play with babies and barbies. Still awaiting a formal diagnosis, Esther struggles with the results of low muscle tone that affects swallowing, digestion, gross and fine motor skills and the muscles around her lungs. Eating is especially tiring so Esther is fed with a G-Tube. A growth disorder makes her grow faster on the right side of her body and makes her susceptible to abdominal tumors that could or could not be cancerous. Frequent trips to Children's Hospital for careful monitoring and testing are a way of life.

Esther's two brothers, Orion and Liam, have Autism and ADHD as well as struggles with Anxiety. On top of all that, Liam has sleep apnea and low muscle tone. Both boys are challenged with making social connections, regulation of emotion and learning. Orion enjoys drawing and creating games while Liam can be found building things and playing outside.

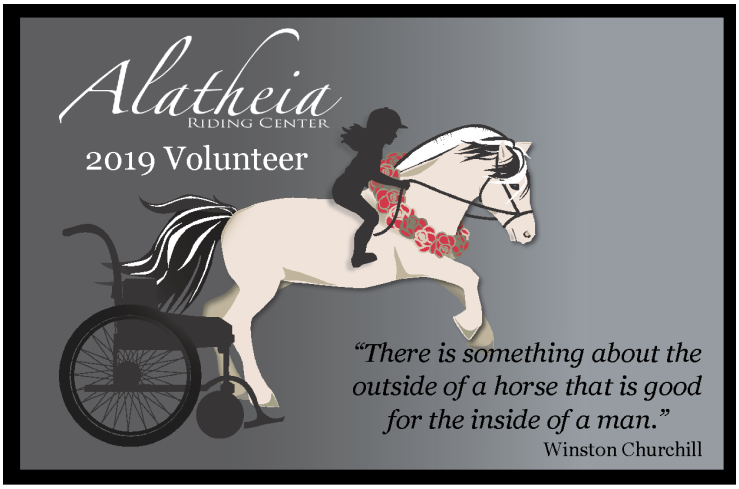
All three children participate in therapeutic riding at Alatheia. Their mom and dad, Molly and BJ, tell us Esther loves riding the horses, especially Solvi. Riding helps strengthen her muscles, build stamina and feel powerful and in control. It helps her to be more social. Orion feels accomplished on Jon and now understands how to treat and care for an animal. Riding is strengthening his core and helping him to overcome fear. Liam loves the relaxed and calm feeling he has on Jullee and how riding strengthens his muscles and gives him an opportunity to be social with the kids and people around him.

In spite of these challenges this family is characterized by determination, patience, a deep peace and love. When we hear Esther's booming voice shout, "WALK ON!" we know it means so much more to this family and we are honored to be a small part of what makes a difference.



Experience the Extraordinary

Volunteer Highlight...



Alatheia celebrated and thanked their volunteers at a reception in February at the Mercantile in downtown Wenatchee. Volunteers are a crucial part of the Alatheia workforce who most often work in the lessons either leading the horse or providing support from the ground as a side walker. All volunteers were recognized for their hours of service in 2019 and several were honored for their unique service contributions as follows:

Julie Davis, ***Volunteer of the Year Award***

Sherri Carrerre, ***Fjord Award***

Pat Fitzgerald,
Years of Service Award including the Board of Directors

Marilyn Martin, ***All Around Barn Hand***

2020 Alatheia Board of Directors

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NANCY GRETTE - Executive Director / Founder

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Questions/Comments email admin@alatheiaridingcenter.com

Then and Now...

Ava & Frid • 2010

Volunteer Ava • 2019

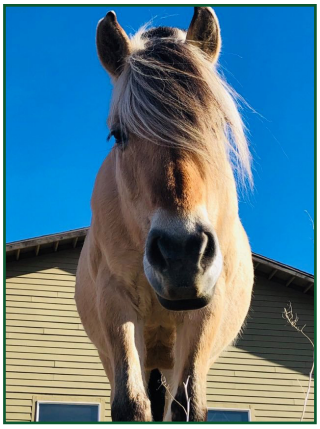
Miss Ava Mott

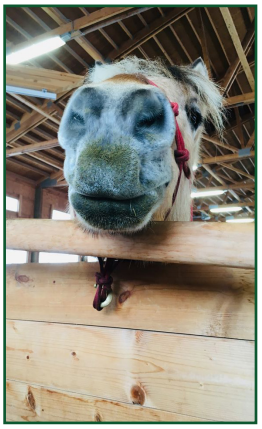
We love it when volunteer stories come full circle! Ava was with Alatheia in the early days. In fact, as a good friend of our first rider, Ella Mae, Ava was here as a five year old with Frid at our first photo shoot in 2010 when we captured some of the images that still brand us today. She has always loved the horses and wanted to be a part of the work we do, but had to wait nine long years to come back as a volunteer. Ava has a lot of promise as a horsewoman and essential part of the of the volunteer team. Welcome back, Ava – we are so glad to have you!

Mark Your Calendars...

Back by popular demand...

Alatheia's 2020 Little Black Dress Party is set for **Friday evening, July 24th.** We are making plans for this annual fundraising event that celebrates the extraordinary women who support Alatheia. It may look a little different this year, but we promise to have all of your favorite elements – dining, dancing, and discovering the magic of Alatheia will be there. So be sure to mark your calendars and watch for more information.





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Alatheia RIDING CENTER

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