

# Horse culture furthers healing

Halifax's Good Hope Equestrian provides horseback therapy

By LIZAFULTON  
News & Record Staff

In July of 2021, Peggy and Murray Bass relocated Good Hope Equestrian & Regenerative Farm from Florida to Halifax County. The not-for-profit organization bills itself as a place where "the soul and the soil come together," centered around the therapeutic powers of horse care and horse riding. The mission of Good Hope, say the husband-and-wife founders, is to provide equine-assisted and regenerative farming practices to children, youth, and adults with and without disabilities, to enhance their independence, personal potential, and quality of life.

Therapeutic riding has numerous benefits. Research has proven that the rhythmic nature of the horse's gait has therapeutic qualities, helping to strengthen a rider's muscle tone. Other physical benefits of the program include improvements in balance, posture, coordination, reflexes, fine and gross motor skills, and hand-eye coordination. The repetition of various activities allows the rider to concentrate on their position while trying new activities.

"The excitement of riding horses brings new experiences and an overall sense of well-being," said Peggy Bass, Ph.D.

She started riding horses as a child at the age of ten. She fell in love with the equestrian sport within the hunter and jumper disciplines. She participated and competed in Pony Club



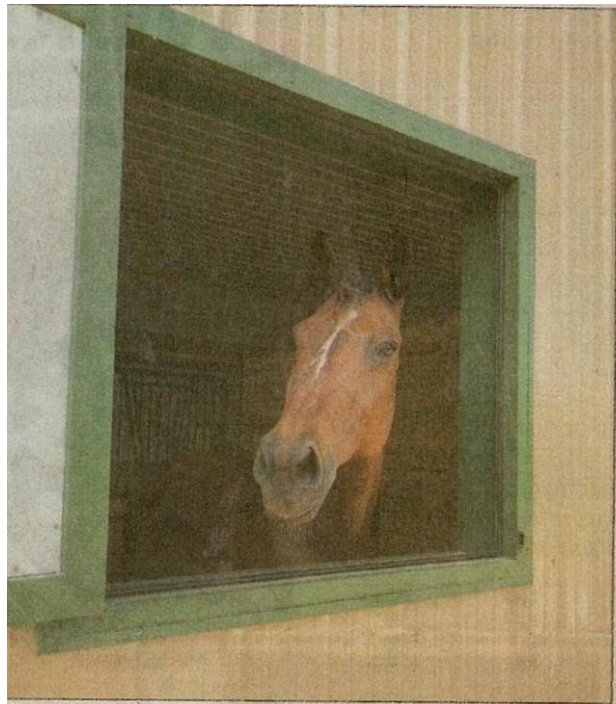
**Peggy and Murray Bass at their Halifax equine center and farm.**

lations with recreational, rehabilitative, educational, and community-based training programs. Since its inception, Good Hope has provided evidence-based, equine-assisted programming to more than 8,200 children, youth, and adults with varying disabilities and those in convalescence from various pathologies.

During its time in South Florida, Good Hope offered a broad array of specialized programs that served over 400 clients annually. In 2020, Good Hope made the decision to relocate the organization to south central Virginia to expand its mission, ensure the sustainability of the organization and to provide specialized services to communities within the region.

Peggy Bass says the programming at Good Hope has made a real difference in the lives of many of her clients.

"Due to the horse's walk closely resembles the hu-



viduals with assertiveness, confidence, developing and maintaining friendships, self-awareness, empathy, impulse control, problem solving, social skills, as well as trust in self and others.

At Good Hope, riders are provided lessons that focus on increasing their on-task skills by following simple and multi-step directions, for example, learning and

To keep up with day-to-day life of the horses subscribe to their YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/bp0MTPCYZo> Good Hope Equestrian and Regenerative Farm is located at 1108 Wild Turkey Run, Halifax. For more information check them out on Facebook @GoodHopeEquestrianAndRegenerativeFarm or visit their website [www.ghetc.org](http://www.ghetc.org) To

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She tell in love with the equestrian sport within the hunter and jumper disciplines. She participated and competed in Pony Club as well as local and rated shows.

"Horses have brought me peace, joy and unconditional love that we all seek and I wanted to share my passion with others," said Bass.

It is a family business, one that includes Peggy's husband Murray and his son Brett Bass. Also helping out at the Wild Turkey

Run farm are intern Brit-tany Brigham and volun-teers and other interns who assist with the therapeutic sessions.

"We are also in the pro-cess of setting up an orien-tation training date for any-one interested in serving as a volun-teeer at our center," said Peggy Bass.

With the 270-acre farm for a classroom, Good Hope is committed to de-veloping quality equine and regenerative fanning pro-gram services to meet the educational, vocational, recreational, and rehabili-tative needs of the com-munity. The goal of each program is to build upon the unique gifts of each individual, enabling them to successfully improve their body, mind, and spirit through the healin-gpowers of the horse.

**Good Hope was founded in 1999 with a vision of providing social needs** oou-

has made a real difference in the lives of many of her clients.

"Due to the horse's walk closely resembles the hu-man gait, I have observed many of my children, youth and adults with vary-ing physical disabilities initiate their own independent steps out of the confines of their wheelchair," she said.

All these measurable therapeutic benefits can come without the rider even aware of being in therapy. The benefits are not only physical in nature,

nor reserved for individuals with physical disabilities. There are emotional and psychological benefits as well. Horses are non-judg-mental, which provides a safe place for individuals dealing with depression and anxiety.

"Since horses can read h-wuan feelings, they tend to mirror our emotions pro-viding us instant feedback and self-awareness. They provide a strong shoulder to lean on and they do not shun people who are differ-ent," said Bass.

As prey animals, horses are hypervigilant, constant-ly scanning their environ-ment for potential dangers, which closely resembles the fight-or-flight response that wowed veterans ex-perience while overcoming trauma. Equine-assisted activities also have num-erous emotional benefits because they can help indi-

provided lessons that focus on increasing their on-task skills by following simple and multi-step directions, for example, learning and guiding their horse through an obstacle course. Also, riders are encouraged to communicate directions to the horse like "walk on" "whoa" and "trot."

"CommWlicating with the horse verbally and physically, using words, sign language and appro-priate rein, leg and seat aids helps the riders coordina-tion," said Bass.

Participants also benefit from the special relation-ship they develop with their horse. While many individuals with autism may have a difficult time relating or connecting with others, equine-assist.ed ses-sions can help them devel-op an emotional bridge as they groom, bond, hug, and Specializ.ed programs at Good Hope Equestrian include: Equine Assisted Therapy and Activities, Educational Fanning Ses-sions, and the Horses Helping Heroes and dLe Horsin' Arowld project which serves foster chil-dren in nee.ct throughout the area. Good Hope has been recognized as a Premier Accredited Cent.er by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), formerly known as NAR-HA (North American Rid-ing for the Handicapped Association). since 2001.

mation check them out on Facebook @GoodHope-Eq uestrianAndRegen-erativeFarm or visit their website www.ghetc.org. To contact the owners Peggy and Murray Bass, call 305-297-4729 or email at ghetc@bellsouth.net.



# KeJa'e Enterprises, LLC

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An advertisement for KeJa'e Enterprises, LLC. It features a photograph of a yellow excavator working on a construction site. The text is overlaid on the image in various colors and fonts. The main text reads: 'Specializing in Clear Cutting & Trenching', 'KeJa'e Enterprises, LLC', '1180 Sinal Road, South Boston', '434-476-1300', and '~ NOW BUYING ST...'.

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