



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

**For more information, contact:**

Tara Malphrus, Executive Director  
WALK ON Therapeutic Riding & Learning Center  
972-347-9616  
[www.therapyriding.com](http://www.therapyriding.com)  
[info@therapyriding.com](mailto:info@therapyriding.com)

**June 20, 2011**

**NARHA Adopts New Name**

**Denver** – The professional organization that promotes equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) to improve the lives of people with disabilities has a new name: the **Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International** (PATH International.) Formerly NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association), PATH International better expresses the scope of the 42-year-old organization whose 6,300 therapy horses and 3,500 instructors serve 42,000 children and adults with physical, mental and psychological challenges at 800+ member centers around the world.

The PATH International board and members chose the term therapeutic horsemanship because it more accurately conveys the organization's numerous disciplines. PATH International centers now offer equine-facilitated psychotherapy and learning, therapeutic carriage driving, interactive vaulting, hippotherapy, competition and programs for leadership, team building and stable management.

Therapeutic horsemanship also encompasses a wider spectrum of disabilities and needs that a skilled therapy horse and certified instructor can address to help clients improve their cognitive, emotional, social and/or behavior skills. In addition to many physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, stroke and traumatic brain injury, PATH International centers work with those with autism, attention deficit disorder, anxiety and depression and have targeted programs to help at-risk teens, injured veterans and military personnel, seniors with Alzheimer's and victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

By incorporating the terms international and professional in its new name, PATH International reflects its global growth, as the association now has members on all continents except Antarctica. Individual and center members in countries from Brazil, Spain and the Netherlands to Israel, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea and China continue to join PATH International for its excellent certification and accreditation programs and reputation for high-quality safety standards.

The professionalism of PATH International programs is matched by the expertise of its 8,000 members, half of whom are certified as PATH International instructors. Some members are also physical, occupational, speech language pathology or mental health therapists; others work closely with health practitioners to benefit their clients. Many centers partner with hospitals, schools, the Veterans Administration and rehabilitation, residential and adult day care centers.

The association's tagline best expresses the work that its centers, staff, volunteers, equines and donors accomplish: Ensuring excellence and changing lives through equine-assisted activities and therapies.

**WALK ON Therapeutic Riding & Learning Center**, a PATH Intl. Member Center, is excited to move forward with the new name. “We are proud to be associated with an organization that offers safe, ethical and humane practices in the field of EAAT,” said Tara Malphrus, Executive Director and PATH Intl. Certified Instructor. “Since our beginnings as a non-profit in 2003 we have aligned ourselves with the best practices of this global organization, and use their standards as the baseline for our weekly sessions with children on the Autism Spectrum. We look forward to continuing to serve the community as a PATH Intl. Member Center.”

For more information, contact Tara Malphrus, WALK ON Therapeutic Riding & Learning Center, 972-347-9616, [info@therapyriding.com](mailto:info@therapyriding.com). Or contact Cher Smith, communications coordinator, at the national office at (800) 369-7433, ext. 123, [csmith@pathintl.org](mailto:csmith@pathintl.org).

-30-

**About PATH Intl.:**

*Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), formerly NARHA, was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. At more than 800 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, 2,000 instructors, 5,700 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at PATH Intl. centers.*

**About WALK ON Therapeutic Riding & Learning Center:**

*Located in the small town of Celina, Texas, WALK ON Therapeutic Riding & Learning Center provides therapeutic horseback riding and brain-based listening therapy to children on the Autism Spectrum, including Pervasive Development Disorder and Asperger Syndrome.*

*Since 2003 WALK ON has assisted the special needs community by working with these kids and their families. WALK ON is honored to be in its ninth year of service to Celina, Prosper, Frisco and the surrounding North Dallas communities.*

*WALK ON is a service of Willow Wood Ranch, Inc., a 501(c)(3) Organization that relies primarily on donations from business and community support.*