



# Newsletter

Horses in Education and Therapy  
International, AISBL

May 2016

## Grecian Riding Center Suffers Flood Damage

**O**n January 17th 2016, the Hellenic Therapeutic Riding Centre of Serres (HETRICS/KETHIS) was hit by a severe storm that caused many problems to the region. Nobody would have thought that our centre would undergo such damage only 8 hours after the party we held to celebrate the New Year. At 6 am our stable worker contacted us to let us know that our horses were in danger as the stable had flooded. The president of the club and the coach rushed to the centre. The seven racing horses were moved immediately to a stable in Thessaloniki while the rest of the animals (seven horses, five donkeys, goats, sheep, dogs, chickens, geese and ducks) were transferred by volunteers to a shelter near our facilities.

On the following morning we were faced with the full-scale disaster: everything was covered with water. The hurdles were floating in the covered horse track; the stables had 40 cm of water; the food for the animals was soaking wet; the reception area was flooded. The whole centre seemed to have been turned into a lake and we were left to contemplate it feeling helpless.

As the days went by, the flooding



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subsided and we could estimate the damages at €20,000. The covered horse track needed to be rebuilt almost from scratch, the fencing had been damaged, and the food and part of the equipment had been destroyed. On top of all this, we had to cancel all type of activities for a month. There was no doubt that we were in dire straits.

Fortunately, we had the support of many people from all parts of Greece and from abroad. It has really helped us overcome our initial frustration and regroup to get down to work. The local government supplied us with human resources and machinery, and we had financial aid as friends of KETHIS did their best to raise funds. They organised concerts, a special television programme, a fashion show and

a number of other events to encourage donations to KETHIS.

Now the restoration works are well underway and we hope that our centre will soon start to function again. Having said this, the cost of damages is still rising by the day as our animals need to be fed and bills need to be paid. We are confident that you more than anyone else can understand our hardship and that you will be part of the teamwork we so desperately need. Please do give your donation to the following so that KETHIS can shine again:

Hellenic Therapeutic Riding Centre of Serres  
N Skopos, A.Argirou 1, Serres 62100,  
Greece

Please remember that every little bit helps! Thank you so much.

—Stavrula Kyriakopoulou



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# XVI Congress News

## Striking the Balance in Ireland at the HETI 2018 Congress

The key note speakers have been invited based on their experience and expertise within four key pillars of Equine Assisted Programmes

1. Learning & Development
2. Research
3. Sustainability
4. Equine welfare and management

### Learning and Development:

#### Physical and Mental

At the heart of all Equine Assisted Programmes (EAPs) is their potential in the broadest sense, to promote personal learning, growth and development. Whether it is physical improvement through therapeutic riding, vaulting or hippotherapy, or psychosocial and improved mental well-being through equine assisted psychotherapy or equine assisted learning, or a combination of physical and mental well-being. Possibly because EAPs cannot take place without horses, there is a risk of not paying sufficient attention to the importance of *you* as an EAP facilitator in being the link pin. Not to be confused with your technical ability as part of the EAPs.

Irrespective of your particular discipline, your ability to facilitate positive and rewarding experiences for young people and adults are essential. The 2018 Congress will address this area and will be addressed by William Micklem, who has worked extensively and successfully in illustrating strategies and techniques to help people improve their performance.

#### Sustainability

Sustainability or how to stay in business! – for me they are broadly similar. It is one of those things that challenges most of us. The dilemma of how much to charge, how to make EAP a viable business, writing grant applications, fundraising and many other facets related to EAP as a business. For a lot of groups, we rely considerably on volunteers. Similarly, a lot of EAP participants pay nominal or varying amounts for EAP sessions. Both of these two factors present challenges.

But we all – without exception – operate in an economic context, as failure to do so creates an unsustainable outcome – a euphemism for going out of business!. Sometimes, the word *business* conjures up all sorts of different ideas – that businesses are only for the commercial and profit making sector. Our profits are the improvements that our client's experience – improved physical and mental well.

Loosely defined, a business refers to a person's regular occupation, profession, or trade. And I suppose this is where EAPs may be at a slight crossroads. What was traditionally and originally a service provided to people at no cost by volunteer groups is expanding now to services provided at varying costs by greater numbers of professionals. There is no doubt that EAPs are effective and the research being carried out validates this though more is needed.

Creating sustainability requires a number of factors including strategic planning, budgets, cash flow projections, marketing, human resource management (volunteers and paid staff), mission statements, governance, identification of values, asking what our clients – our customers – want and expect from us.....and more!

We are delighted that one of the key note speakers addresses this very issue and illustrates how by adopting a business model approach, number of riders have increased and business is booming.

#### Equine Welfare and Management

The reality about horses that are involved in EAPs, and indeed horses that involved in all disciplines, is that we are generally asking them to do things that are broadly speaking –unnatural to them. Once we bring horses into our world, we interfere with how they naturally live, eat, behave, spend their day and this immediately poses questions as to their welfare and management. Yes, there are horses that get to live out with a herd, and once their work is done, return to live with their herd. But we still ask of them work that is unnatural to them. Andrew McLean presented on the whole

area of equine cognition at the last congress in Taiwan and highlighted the challenges for horses in our world – and the differences between human and equine cognitive processes.

There are potential welfare challenges for horses involved in EAPs and we are all aware of them. For horses in therapeutic riding or hippotherapy, we are mindful of rider weights and the need to ensure a balanced training and working schedule for horses, how bits can potentially cause levels of discomfort to horses and the need to train horses to habituate to a wide range of sudden movements by riders, loud noises and other unpredictable riders' behaviours. For horses involved in equine assisted therapy or learning programmes, we are still learning about the degree to which horses can experience stress and how they are reported to absorb peoples' emotions. The more we learn about how different factors impact on horse's well-being, the more challenging their management becomes.

The 2018 congress is highlighting equine welfare in the context of EAP as one of the four key areas and we look forward to receiving abstracts to contribute to the collective body of knowledge that exists amongst EAP practitioners.

#### Research

Research is one of those words that is increasingly creeping into our world and like it or not – a topic that most of us are having to or will have to deal with. Whilst there has been some interesting studies conducted into the efficacy of

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EAPs, in general, studies tend to be qualitative, small scale, single informant and lack control groups with few longitudinal studies. Ann Kern wrote a very concise and informative article recently in the HETI Newsletter on this topic.

Proving the efficacy of EAPs is essential. Gone is the day when it is acceptable to say that because we as practitioners know it works is enough. The very nature of EAPs means that we are providing interventions to people with particular vulnerabilities and ultimately we owe it to them to be able to say why and in what way EAPs may be associated with improved physical and mental well-being. And of course we have a duty and responsibility to respond in the same way to funders and families. It will also contribute to our own knowledge base. BUT – and this a case of striking the balance – how can EAP practitioners who may be starting off on their journey – may be part-time EAP and part-time in a different career – manage to conduct research. I believe 99% of you can resonate with this dilemma.

As the 2018 congress organisers, we are keen to bring the latest EAP research to Ireland – and we are hoping that each delegate will leave with strong and solid research findings that will help them improve their own EAP. However, we are also mindful that we all started somewhere and that there are many EAP practitioners out there who are practising very valuable work and may be at the exploratory stages.

Against this background, we are committed to striking the necessary balance to accommodate all delegates' expectations – our challenge!

– Jill Carey



## 2015 Journal Now Available

Our peer reviewed Journal is now in the mail to our Federation members. If your membership level entitles you to electronic copies of our publications, your new password will be emailed to you. Other members may view the Table of Contents and abstracts at our website: [http://www.hetifederation.org/journal\\_abstracts.html#2015](http://www.hetifederation.org/journal_abstracts.html#2015)

The editors are looking for peer reviewers and articles for future issues. Please contact them at: [editor@hetifederation.org](mailto:editor@hetifederation.org)





## New Federation Member

We are happy to welcome the Czech TR Association  
as our newest Federation member

Find out more about them at:

<http://hiporehabilitace-cr.com/>

and

<http://educationinhippotherapy.com/>

## Membership in HETI

HETI has several membership levels with specific features. Choose the membership level that suits you or your organization's needs.

**Federation Member** – This member is any organization (including for-profit organizations) desiring to be a formative member of the HETI federation. This member has voting rights (one vote per organization) and full access to all materials (journal, triennial membership directory, on-line journal articles, advertising, discount for Congress, etc.). Federation Members have a specialized area of the HETI website as well. All IEC nominees need to be affiliated with a Federation Member, so the history, foundation, ethos and governance of HETI would be continuous. Federation membership needs to be approved the International Council. For more information, please contact the HETI Office at [office@hetifederation.org](mailto:office@hetifederation.org)

**Institute Member** – This membership category for colleges and universities, research institutes (physical, cognitive and emotional) and organizations, and organizations with educational and/or certification capabilities. It does not confer voting rights. These members will receive hard copies versions of materials. Institute Members can also apply to become a Federation Member if they met the criteria established by the IEC.\*\*

**Business Member** – This level is for organizations, businesses and individuals who are active in equine assisted activities, therapy and education, or related fields such as an equipment vendor, or other equine service provider. This non-voting membership level receives publications electronically.

**Associate Member** – This member level is for individuals, organizations, and institutes whose interest in HETI is primarily to stay abreast of what is happening in the field of equine assisted activities. These members will receive the journal and the directory in electronic form.

**Honorary Member** – This membership is an *electronic* membership, granted by the International Executive Committee, to affiliated organizations and individuals.

*Download an application, make payments through PayPal,  
and get further information and news at our website:  
<http://www.hetifederation.org/membership.html>*