



ST. CROIX TRAIL BLAZERS

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 13 | OCTOBER 2018

2018 Special Olympics Minnesota Competition

Back in August, we took 24 riders to Special Olympics Minnesota Equestrian Competition. Our largest team ever.



There were eight teams competing with a total of 75 athletes. Our riders competed in equitation (judge dictates walk, trot, reverse, etc.), working trail (a series of obstacles), pole weaving, barrels, and showmanship. Staff couldn't be more proud



of how well our riders did. Despite a couple hiccups, we put together a plan and worked through them. While you do your best to prepare your staff and riders for competition, sometimes it doesn't always

go the way you hope. You figure out the best way to deal with the issue and move forward with the least disruption to the team.

Our riders brought home eight gold medals, ten silver medals, eleven bronze medals, ten fourth place ribbons, eight fifth place ribbons, five sixth place ribbons, and three seventh place ribbons. A job very well done!



A special thank you to Tim Hassett, Jeannie Heckel, Willie Madline, Rick Waldschmidt, and Warren Walsh for the use of their vehicles and trailers to haul our horse



partners and equipment. Thank you to staff for helping make competition a success for our riders.

And thank you to our riders and families for doing your best, showing off your hard work, and making this a special day.

Karen

MISSION

Trail Blazers mission is to provide horseback riding, training, and competitive sports opportunities to individuals with special needs in a safe learning environment through adaptive equine experience.

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Woods at Jasmine Meadows

We love the trees and woods that surround the pastures at Jasmine Meadows. But sometimes they can get in the way. We work constantly to clean up trails, clear fence lines and pastures, and cut up downed trees. We also try to fight back the buckthorn. Buckthorn is a non-native, invasive tree that seems to grow everywhere very quickly. If left unchecked, it will take over the forest and prevent all other trees from seeding and regenerating.

Washington County Sentence to Service (STS) work crews come to Jasmine Meadows about twice a month during the summer. They spend a lot of their time

trimming trees and clearing buckthorn. Kellie supervises the group while they're here and a lot of work is accomplished.

Where does all the wood go? We have three large burn piles stacked up in the pastures and the woods. Sentence to Service crews help us do controlled burn piles or we burn them in the winter when there is at least two inches of snow on the ground and no risk of the fire spreading. Those are some big bonfires!

If you are interested in having firewood from trees that are cut down, please contact us so we can let you know when it is available.

How is Your Grandson Doing?

In 2012 I completed a small book titled "Grandparenting a Child with Autism." It was a personal account of my experiences with my grandson, Micah Grubb. Micah was 16 years old at the close of the book. Since then, I am frequently asked, "How is Micah now?" and "What is he doing?" Awareness of autism has heightened over the last six years, and while the cause is still in the shadows, many treatments and therapies have been put forward.

Micah is 23 years old now. He has graduated from Stillwater High School and the three year post-graduate "Transitions" program offered there for challenged youth. He is employed by SICK Sensor Intelligence in Savage, Minnesota. That location requires his parents to drive him to St. Paul where he catches a bus to the work site.

Micah began horse therapy with River Valley Riders when he was 9 years old.

About 6 years ago he transferred to the St. Croix Trail Blazers where he was challenged to ride without assistance and trained to participate in Special Olympics.

How has horse therapy aided Micah? It has strengthened and enhanced his physical coordination. He quickly learned to ride a bike after beginning therapy and became more confident and talkative, using an increased vocabulary. Micah enjoys trail rides during family vacations. He can swim well, ski, bowl, play golf, and lift weights. He has friends at the Trail Blazers and enjoys better self-esteem.

As a grandparent, I am proud of his accomplishments and grateful for what the St. Croix Trail Blazers has done for Micah and the other riders in the program.

Sylvia Grubb

Holiday Pop-Up Shop

Do you have any special craft talents? **The Holiday Pop-Up Shop is from Saturday, November 24 through Saturday, December 1** and is hosted by Special Products again. It's the perfect place to find Christmas gifts and support a great cause.



Profits from what we sell come back to us. *If you have anything you would like to contribute to our "shop", please let Karen Harjes know before November 17.*



St. Croix Trail Blazers Clothing



Check out the new St. Croix Trail Blazers clothing! T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and jackets will make great Christmas gifts. Use this link to connect directly to the store:

<https://stcroixtrailblazers2018.itemorder.com>

Our Changing Seasons

As the seasons change from summer to fall, the birds in field, forest, and wetlands begin to move. It is migration time. While only a few move into the area for the winter, most are passing through or are flocking together as they get ready to migrate. The newcomers include White-throated Sparrows and Juncos among others. For me, I know that winter is coming when I see the first Juncos and observe the white alongside of their tails contrasting with the gray of their wings and bodies as they fly.

Many of the birds that we welcomed last spring at Jasmine Meadows, and which became summer residents, are on their way south. They built their nests here, raised their young, and now they are moving out. They slip away silently, flying at night. One day they are here and the next they are gone. Around the first of September, other species make a more dramatic preparation for their departure.

On a fishing trip with my son on Bald Eagle Lake, we witnessed flocks of swallows flying back and forth over the lake in a great cloud made up of thousands of birds. In that flock there were Purple Martins, Tree Swallows, and Barn Swallows among others. That display continued for a few days, and then suddenly they too were gone. Meanwhile, out in large open fields, huge flocks of Sand Hill Cranes can be seen along their migration route as they too move through the area heading south. Many of them will winter over in Florida and in the south. Raptors also are on the move and while some winter over not far from here, most will not be seen again until the snow begins to melt and the lakes thaw.

Among the birds that are passing through are a variety of warblers. Frequently referred to as "Confusing Fall Warblers," they still show some of the yellow from their breeding plumage but most have undergone a molt with bright feathers being replaced by those of more muted colors. To the untrained eye, many varieties

may appear the same hence the confusion. Now they move through the woods and fields in mixed flocks, finding nourishment for their long flight beyond our borders into destinations as far as South America. One of the most numerous is the Yellow Rumped Warbler which, even with muted colors, still retains the characteristic yellow spot at the base of its tail.

The change in the season is also noted in wetlands and on the water. Ducks, geese, swans, and White Pelicans are all on the move as are the wading birds like the egrets and herons. Many ducks stop off at Jasmine Meadows along the way. The lucky ones manage to make their lay-over in Ramsey County where there is no hunting. This is the hunting season for Canada Geese and ducks.

There are some birds, however, that stay with us all year around. They are true Minnesota residents. With the exception of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and most of the Northern Flickers, all our woodpeckers remain. At our feeders through the seasons we may see Cardinals, Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nut Hatches, Gold Finches (though now they are brown), House Finches, and House Sparrows. The latter two are not native to the area, but have made their home here and throughout the country. Our owls, though seldom seen, also remain with us all through the winter. And occasionally their cousins from the north, the Great Gray and Snowy Owls, make their way here for a brief winter visit.

Like the trees whose leaves change and then fall, the birds also let us know that the season is changing. Autumn is here, and winter is not far away.

Harlan Baxter

New Email Addresses

We've updated our email!

You can reach these people now at separate emails:

Karen: karen@stcroixtrailblazers.org

Kellie: kellie@stcroixtrailblazers.org

Keri (treasurer):

keri@stcroixtrailblazers.org



Please remember to check your spam or junk folder for any updates from St. Croix Trail Blazers.



If you bring a new rider who joins the team, we'll give you \$50 off your next month's fee!

Rider must pass evaluation with instructor.



Special People Needing Special Horses

Contact Us



Email: karen@stcroixtrailblazers.org

Website: www.stcroixtrailblazers.org

Facebook: [St. Croix Trail Blazers](https://www.facebook.com/St.CroixTrailBlazers)

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St. Croix Trail Blazers is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service.

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