



## Our Staff

As a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl) Premier Center, our licensed physical therapists, licensed occupational therapists, certified therapeutic riding instructors, certified therapeutic carriage driving instructors, educators, equine specialists, horse handlers, and safety assistants all uphold the highest standards in the field of equine-assisted therapy and activities. They are active members of PATH International, Health and Recreation through Horses of New Jersey (HRH of NJ), the American Hippotherapy Association, the American Occupational Therapy Association, and the American Physical Therapy Association. The Special Strides staff is dedicated to igniting the physical and intellectual spirit in all.



# Special Strides



Special Strides



**THERAPY - LEARNING - DISCOVERY  
NATURE - PLAY - HOPE**

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*"Improving Lives... One Stride at a Time"*

# Mission

Special Strides, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with special needs.

Located on beautiful Congress Hill Farm in Monroe, NJ, Special Strides is a place where children and adults are inspired to discover their strengths through engagement with horses and other farm activities. The facility offers a variety of programs including physical therapy, occupational therapy, adaptive horseback riding, therapeutic carriage driving, experiential learning, and equine-facilitated learning. A strong team of experienced therapists and instructors, equine specialists, and dedicated volunteers develop and implement therapeutic strategies that foster growth based on each individual's strengths and treatment/recreational goals.

Special Strides is a multidisciplinary equine center and therapy clinic. Therapy, adaptive riding & driving, and learning programs at Special Strides can provide a wealth of positive results, including:

- Development of motor skills, muscle tone, balance, posture, coordination, strength, and body awareness
- Motivation for speech and communication
- Enhancement of skill acquisition, self-confidence, and self-awareness
- Improvement in overall physical, cognitive, social, and emotional well-being

## How Do Therapists Use Equine Movement In Therapy?

When incorporating hippotherapy into a plan of care, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists integrate the motion and "E-motion" of the horse to facilitate functional changes in areas such as sitting, walking, communicating, playing, and learning. The impact of these techniques on strength, mobility, balance, and coordination allows therapists to create a powerful individualized plan of care to achieve treatment goals. The emotional connection that develops between horse and client improves awareness, communication, and self-esteem in ways that other forms of therapy cannot. During a therapy session at Special Strides, clients may also explore sensory playgrounds and wooded trails. All of these therapeutic tools are offered in a peaceful natural setting not found in a traditional treatment clinic.

## What is Adaptive Horseback Riding?

Adaptive horseback riding is a recreational horsemanship program taught by PATH Intl. certified adaptive/therapeutic riding instructors. Learning horsemanship skills—including riding, animal care, and tacking—helps to build confidence, teach respect for others, foster communication, and promote exercise and recreation.

## What is the Wounded Warrior Project?

Special Strides, in cooperation with the Wounded Warrior Project and Path Intl, provides equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) for our returning soldiers. Horses are innately nonjudgmental, welcoming, and calming animals, and this fosters trust and communication. EAAT allows our returning soldiers to feel safe and secure, build relationships, and become physically stronger.

## What is Therapeutic Carriage Driving?

Therapeutic carriage driving provides an alternative to activities on horseback. Learning to control a horse while driving from the carriage seat can improve self-confidence, communication, eye/hand coordination, and spatial relations, in addition to team cooperation skills.

## What is the Steven Werthan Memorial Fund?

It is the goal of Special Strides that all individuals with special needs have an opportunity to experience our therapy and recreational services regardless of financial status. Established in 2002, The Steven Werthan Memorial Fund provides financial assistance to those families whose children would not otherwise be able to receive therapy at Special Strides. Special Strides is proud to work closely with community groups, the business sector and individuals to sustain this important fund.

## How Can I Get Involved?

- Participate in a project or fundraiser.
- Share your ideas, be an event committee member .
- Be a Sponsor (Help to fund-a-child's therapy, adopt-a-horse or sponsor an event).
- Join the Special Strides Junior Committee of Young Leaders (ages 12-18).
- Volunteer as a horse handler or sidewalker (age 14 & up).
- Intern opportunities in marketing, development, fundraising and event planning.

## . What Types of University Internships are Available?

Special Strides provides professional clinical education for physical and occupational therapy students from many universities. Other university internships (such as exercise science, nursing, marketing, therapeutic riding and public relations) are available.

