



Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association

at Providence Farm 1843 Tzouhalem Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 5L6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Anne Muir, Executive Director
Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association
250-746-1028 (phone)
info@ctra.ca
www.ctra.ca

Duncan, Vancouver Island, BC

Thursday, June 7, 2018



Although entirely separate entities, the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association has called Providence Farm "home" for the past 30 years – thanks, in large part, to the Sisters of St. Ann

Sisters Continue Partnership with CTRA

The Sisters of St. Ann played an important role in the history of the Cowichan Valley and BC. The congregation was founded in 1850 by Blessed Marie Anne Blondin in Vaudreuil, Quebec, and has served the Pacific Northwest since 1858. In 1864, the Sisters purchased 400 acres near Duncan BC, now known as "Providence Farm." The property was settled in 1867 and used primarily as a boarding and day school until 1964. The farm owes its name to one of these "pioneer" nuns, Sister Mary Providence.

In 1979, the Sisters played an integral role in the formation of the Vancouver Island Providence Community Association (VIPCA), an organization serving adults with developmental and age-related special needs. Under the stewardship of this new initiative, Providence Farm became a secular therapeutic hub in the Cowichan Valley - home to several organizations including the Cowichan Folk Guild, School District 79's Alternate School, and the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA). In 2009, ownership of Providence Farm was officially transferred to the Vancouver Island Providence Community Association (VIPCA), to mark the organization's 30th anniversary.

The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) was one of the first external organizations invited to become a tenant and community partner on Providence Farm. CTRA moved to the property in the late 1980s, and together with VIPCA (and thanks to the support of many contributors) built the Providence Farm Therapeutic Riding Centre. CTRA still operates out of this facility, working in symbiosis with the farm's programs and other tenant organizations.

From humble beginnings, the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) grew to become a nationally-renowned equine assisted therapy organization recognized as an "Examination and Training Centre" by the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association. CTRA is the *only* centre in Western Canada to hold this level of accreditation. These days, CTRA welcomes over 100 participants with a wide range of special needs every week, running some 3500 hours of therapeutic service every year.

Ever since CTRA first arrived on Providence Farm, the Sisters have contributed to the organization in one way or another. In recent years, the Sisters have continued their support through financial contributions to projects and programs. In 2015, the Sisters helped CTRA complete their new outdoor riding arena – significantly enhancing the organization's ability to keep pace with a growing user population. Since 2017, the Sisters have made annual grants to CTRA through the Esther's Dream Fund (held by the Victoria Foundation). In 2018, the Sisters donated \$12,000 to CTRA. These yearly

Phone: (250)746-1028 Fax: (250)746-1033

info@ctra.ca www.ctra.ca

Charity Number: 891723843RR0001



Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association

at Providence Farm 1843 Tzouhalem Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 5L6

contributions support CTRA's equine-assisted therapeutic services and are essential to keeping CTRA's services accessible for individuals and families with special needs.

"We are honoured to continue our partnership with the Sisters of St. Ann," says Anne Muir, Executive Director for CTRA. "The Sisters have played a huge role in helping CTRA become the organization we are today."

Sister Pat Donovan, Vice President with the Sisters of St. Ann, says, "The Sisters believe that each person has the dignity of a child of God and deserves to have the opportunity to develop to her/his full potential. These same motivations impel the Sisters of Saint Ann today to provide resources to help individuals to attain the fullness of life and foster communities that support the dignity of all persons. The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association enhances the lives of children and adults who are especially vulnerable."

The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association is open to the community daily. The public is encouraged to visit the facility, meet the horses, and check out the association – along with all the other programs and organizations that call Providence Farm home. Walking tour signs are placed throughout the farm's grounds to help visitors make the connections between past and present, and better understand the Sisters of St. Ann's legacy in our community.

About the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association:

The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) is a registered charity serving the Cowichan Valley. CTRA provides equine-assisted therapeutic services and has been operating in the region since 1986. CTRA uses "horsepower to empower" – providing participants with diverse special needs with a range of highly individualized therapeutic interventions including therapeutic riding, therapeutic horsemanship, and stable management vocational training as well as adapted equestrian vaulting, adapted equine agility, and para-equestrian sport opportunities.

The majority (over 80%) of CTRA's participants are children (4-18). Clients are referred to the program with physical, developmental, or cognitive/intellectual disabilities (e.g. cerebral palsy, fetal alcohol syndrome, autism), and/or mental health/psycho-social challenges (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, bullying).

CTRA provides a vital place of inclusion, supporting key social determinants of health in our community. At CTRA, a shared love of horses brings people together - bridging perceptions of difference, catalyzing human potential, and fostering a sense of belonging among participants, families, volunteers, and visitors alike.

Website: www.ctra.ca

Email: info@ctra.ca

Phone: 250-746-1028

On Facebook: @CowichanTherapeuticRidingAssociation

On Instagram: @CowichanTherapeuticRiding

About the Sisters of St. Ann, Pacific Northwest:

Website: www.ssabc.ca



**SISTERS
OF ST. ANN**
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Continuing the Legacy

Phone: (250)746-1028 Fax: (250)746-1033

info@ctra.ca www.ctra.ca

Charity Number: 891723843RR0001