



“911, what’s your emergency?” “It’s my child - please, hurry!” An accident. No one’s fault. Lives changed forever. A parent’s worst nightmare. What would *you* do? How do you fix *the unthinkable*? Then a therapist suggests you consider hippotherapy. What the heck is hippotherapy? Therapy with a horse? A horse can’t help us with this.....can it? YES! Because of your compassionate commitment to Partners For Progress, people are learning that it CAN.

Meet Owen. A typical three-year-old, Owen loved playing with trains, puzzles, books, and running around outside or in. With three siblings a good deal older than him, Owen was quite precocious and very talkative. His big brown eyes and infectious laugh wrapped everyone around his finger. Wherever he went, everyone seemed to know who he was; and he relished the attention.

Then, *the unthinkable* - June, 2011. Life changed in an instant. Owen slipped away from the older kids playing in the yard, went through the side entrance of a pool gate, and nearly drowned. His sister found him. While his father began CPR, 911 was called. It would be 18 minutes before Owen’s heart began beating again on its own. He would suffer an anoxic brain injury due to lack of oxygen flow during those 18 minutes. Owen spent 5 months fighting to come home.

Owen could no longer lift his head, sit up, walk, talk or eat by mouth – abilities most folks take for granted. He received a Tracheostomy to help him breathe, and a Gastrostomy tube (G-tube) in his stomach to eat. He made great strides during those first 5 months in the hospital and rehabilitation center, and came home minus the tracheotomy.

Shortly before Owen was discharged, one of his therapists mentioned hippotherapy and how beneficial she thought it would be for Owen. Owens family was unaware of hippotherapy, and just couldn’t imagine how it would be beneficial. Before Owens accident his family says they were “blissfully” unaware of so much – like how the power of therapy with a horse - and the kind compassion and support of complete strangers like **YOU** - would give them hope for Owens journey of recovery with the horses at Partners For Progress.

Owens’ family was skeptical that “horseback riding” could be of any help. He couldn’t even sit up, how was he going to ride a horse? The idea was dismissed, until they came home and his outpatient physical therapist asked if they had ever considered hippotherapy.

There was that word again! A horse can’t help us with this.....can it? Owens family expressed their misgivings and concerns that it wouldn’t really do anything to help Owen. But, just like you and your dedication to giving those with special needs the lives they dream of, their therapist was steadfast and she had the case worker look for programs near their home. The next day she gave the number of Partners For Progress to Owens family and made them promise to call.

Thankfully, Owens family made that call - a call placed on a promise, reaching for hope. **You** made it possible for Partners For Progress to be there offering hope to Owens family. Hope that comes from the power of a well trained, sound horse therapist combined with strong, clinical therapy supported through *incredible*, compassionate donors like **you**.

Why is the horse, when used as the main tool for therapy, so powerful? Because the horse and the human body move at the same pace per minute - not a pony, a horse. When the rider is on the horse, the riders’ muscles move in the same manner that they would if the rider was walking by themselves. So, the riders brain *thinks* the rider is walking. It is your *amazing*, steadfast support for Partners For Progress that allows the riders that come to PFP to find hope through these horses.

Owens’ family was immediately impressed with Amanda, the Program Director at Partners For Progress. She told them that PFP had worked with kids with Owen’s type of injury before and they benefitted greatly from riding. So, Owens family decided to try horse therapy. For the first month or so of riding, Owen couldn’t even sit on the horse by himself. The therapist sat behind him as they rode around the arena. How is this going to help they thought?

You know how - through core strengthening. Everything that the body does is supported by the strength of the core - **everything**. When you are riding a horse, the only way you can stay upright on that horse is by using the strength of your core. Everything else that the rider does while on the horse challenges every part of the riders brain and body to process and perform. The healthier and stronger the horse, the stronger the input for the rider.

Owens core was slowly growing stronger. Then one day he started sitting on the horse by himself. Then he could sit straight as a pin on the floor without any assistance! Wow! Then Owens **outpatient therapists started mentioning** how they could tell **his core muscles were getting stronger from riding**. This horse thing was working! *{over please}*



Then - to mom & dads utter amazement - the staff was getting Owen up on his hands and knees ON TOP of a huge horse *and* the horse was moving! The same kid who could barely move just a few months prior was riding a horse on his hands and knees! He didn't like it, but he was doing it! Progress was being made due to a healthy, sound horse supported by *you*!

It has been 18 months since Owen started at Partners For Progress. He is now able to pull himself up to a sitting position and he can walk independently with a walker. He is also eating again with his mouth – no more G-tube! His speech therapist believes riding played a huge role in this accomplishment. PFP *knows* it did. Why? Because functions of the body come from the strength of its' core - including eating. Where is Owen getting that strength? From a sound, trained horse that assists in providing goal oriented, clinical therapy that *you* so compassionately endorse.

Thanks to his stronger core, Owen is also becoming more vocal. While he doesn't say words consistently, his laughing, crying and other sounds have become much louder. Holding on to the handles of the therapeutic saddle has also helped Owen's hand strength. Six months after the accident Owen could barely move his hands, and his left hand was bent at the wrist most of the time. He has now redeveloped his pincer grasp and is using *both* hands to pick up toys and food.

Owens family states, "From the beginning, the staff and volunteers at Partners For Progress have treated Owen with dignity and respect. Even though he can't communicate, they know he understands and they speak to him just as they would any other five-year-old. They even get a kick out of his age-appropriate tantrums! The barn is an atmosphere filled with possibility. Every week the people at Partners For Progress provide our family with the hope needed to continue on the long road ahead, and everyone remains optimistic for his continued recovery. Owens success at Partners for Progress has given us real hope that he will walk and talk again."

This is what *your* partnership does. It changes lives in ways that would otherwise not be possible. It helps to fix *the unthinkable*. It provides hope. How? By making therapy with a horse obtainable for families like Owens. *Your* incredible support helps create the healthy, sound horse therapists at PFP. It helps provide them with the proper feed, veterinarian care, and training that is needed. *Your* support allows them to perform as a top level therapist. They can then lovingly give complex, integrated therapy to riders like Owen. A therapy which no man made machine can give.

This clinical therapy with the horse integrates *every* part of the brain and body. It helps those bodies to work the way they were meant to. It is a therapy that gives a child self-confidence and trust in their abilities. It creates an unexplainable, magical bond between the horse and its rider. It is a therapy that *changes lives forever*.

Lives like Owen's, and *yours*. Your support shows your community that *there is hope* for individuals like Owen. Hope to reach their fullest potential. Hope through therapy with a horse.

A child's future deserves to be full of hope. For children like Owen, that future is in *your* hands. *Your support* of PFP *makes it possible* for them to have this hope. Your support makes it possible for them to afford this life changing therapy. Caring, compassionate donors like you help them to achieve the lives they dream of - productive, integrated lives that no one thought would be possible. It is hard to put into words the gratitude that is felt for your gift of partnership and hope.

At this incredible time of year when all children are filled with hope and dreams, won't you please help give hope to a child like Owen? There are many different ways in which your kindness gives hope. *Every* donation, even the smallest of donations, MAKES A DIFFERENCE. Thank you so much!

Sincerely,

Diane Helgeland, Executive Director

Owen after a recent session - walking using his core strength made possible by you and the PFP horses.



P.S. Your donation today means everything to the future of our participants. *Please help* them achieve their dreams by *giving them hope. Thank you!*

How YOUR Donation Brings HOPE To The Participants At Partners For Progress

Full veterinarian care, feed, tack, and training for a therapy horse for one year is \$10,000.
A full year of therapy sessions filled with hope for a child like Owen with special needs is \$3,000.

Basic veterinarian care and shoeing for a therapy horse for one year is \$1,500.

A half year of hope and therapy sessions for a child with special needs is \$1,500.

10 weeks of hope and therapy sessions for a child at Partners For Progress is \$500.

10 weeks of therapy sessions for a veteran filled with hope at Partners For Progress is \$500.

One week of grain for the therapy horses at Partners For Progress is \$500.

One week of shavings for the therapy horses at Partners For Progress is \$500.

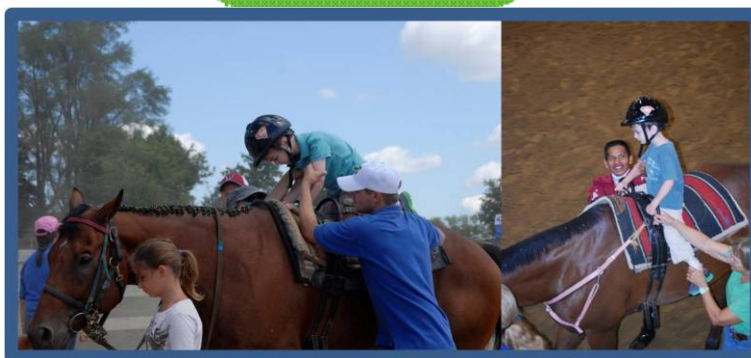
Spring and fall shots for a therapy horse for one year at Partners For Progress is \$300.

A winter blanket for a therapy horse for one year is \$100.

Remember – **EVERY** donation, even the smallest of donations, **MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

Thank you!

**I am pleased to donate \$ _____,
giving hope to those like Owen at Partners For Progress.**



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Cell Telephone: _____

Check #: _____ Amount _____

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Expiration Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

Amount: _____

Signature: _____

Donate online at www.partnersforprogressnfp.org and click on the **DONATE** button. Thank you!