



"Ensuring excellence and changing lives through equine-assisted activities and therapies"

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Unforgettable Experience at Record-Breaking 2011 PATH Intl. Conference

Denver—Record attendance in scenic and horse-centric Lexington, KY, made for an unforgettable experience at the 2011 PATH Intl. Conference and Annual Meeting, November 9-12, 2011. One thousand attendees took advantage of days packed full with education sessions, diverse speakers and panelists who delivered a vast array of presentations. The Center Accreditation Training course, mentor training and associate visitor training were also offered to better enable the association to accommodate growth in the equine-assisted activities and therapies (EAAT) industry.

Two highly acclaimed (based on evaluations) pre-conference workshops were full and eagerly attended: one for centers providing services for veterans and the other for equine-facilitated psychotherapy/equine facilitated learning. This year's attendees took home substantial resources and innovative ideas to benefit their centers, participants and equine partners.

The "Big Lex Exhibitor Bash" kicked off the networking opportunities. The exhibit hall was filled with handshakes, laughter and the sounds of prizes being won. Friends and colleagues were united and new bonds were formed. This night also saw the launch of the new, well-received, much-requested PATH Intl. Community Connections, the new networking and resource gathering tool for PATH Intl. members.

Thursday started two full days of sessions that PATH Intl. had selected from a stellar group of abstract submission, presenting an ever-expanding roster of subject matter experts. Sessions ranged from full-day administration workshops in two tracks to two full program tracks with offerings such as "Clinical Exercise Physiology Concepts Applied to Therapeutic Riding." Attendees could also select sessions from the research track, which included sessions such as "Research: Quantitative, Qualitative and Critical Appraisal Basics." The equine-facilitated psychotherapy/equine-facilitated learning track was also chock-full of offerings, including the well-reviewed "Effect of EFP on PTSD in Youth With a History of Maltreatment and Abuse." Click here if you would like to see a [full listing of sessions and download session handouts](#).

Phil Tedeschi, an animal-assisted therapy and experiential therapy specialist and co-founder of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection Programs at the University of Denver, delivered a unique brand of humor and thought-provoking message to a packed house of knowledge-hungry attendees at Thursday's keynote luncheon. "After hearing [Phil Tedeschi] talk about the bond humans have with animals, I want to learn more about

that,” one attendee said. “We see it every day when we’re working with our students, but it would be nice to have hard research and science to back it up.”

Friday’s General Session was an open-forum with experts on the panel representing their fields of practice in autism spectrum disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, speech impairment, visual impairment, traumatic brain injury, at-risk youth and Down syndrome.

Friday also featured the inspirational and entertaining annual awards banquet. Prior to dinner an auction was held for two very unique items. The first item was an authentic halter worn by the famous race-horse Cigar, which included a special tour of the Kentucky Horse Park and a photo to be taken with Cigar himself. The second item was a one-of-a-kind beautiful quilt that had been assembled by the Region 10 host committee at the 2010 conference in Denver. Both items fetched high dollars, but the crowning moment was when PATH Intl. Board of Trustees member Carlene Taylor and her husband, Ron, won the quilt and then graciously donated the quilt to the association for display in the national office. Click here for a [full list of the award winners and their stories](#).

Saturday morning, the final day of the conference, featured a day at the Kentucky Horse Park for the 2011 PATH Intl. Horse Expo. Attendees had the opportunity to examine concepts of herd selection, learn about the “Thomas Herding Technique,” enjoy a vaulting demonstration and learn about using carriage driving to support motor vehicle operation skills.

Don’t miss out on next’s year’s conference. Mark your calendars now for the 2012 PATH Intl. Conference to take place in beautiful Bellevue, WA, October 31-November 3, 2012. This center of American ingenuity and innovation will lend itself well to a progressive line-up of experts and presenters.

Check the [PATH Intl. website](#) in the upcoming weeks for more information on the 2012 conference.

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About PATH Intl.:

Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.), formerly NARHA, was formed in 1969 to promote equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. At more than 800 member centers, a total of 42,000 children and adults find a sense of independence through involvement with horses. These member centers range from small, one-person programs to large operations with several certified instructors and licensed therapists. In addition to therapeutic equitation, a center may offer any number of equine-assisted activities including hippotherapy, equine-facilitated mental health, driving, interactive vaulting, trail riding, competition, ground work or stable management. Through a wide variety of educational resources, the association helps individuals start and maintain successful equine-assisted activities and therapies for individuals with special needs. There are more than 24,000 volunteers, 2,000 instructors, 5,700 therapy horses and thousands of contributors from all over the world helping people at PATH Intl. centers.