Region 6 Conference

March 7-9, 2025

Hosted by:
River Valley Riders
Afton, Minnesota

PATH Intl. Region 6 welcomes you to an educational and fun weekend with your friends and colleagues in Minnesota. Your registration fee includes lunch on Saturday.

CONFERENCE LOCATIONS

Friday, Saturday & Sunday
White Bear Country Inn (Best Western)
4940 North Hwy 61
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Saturday Afternoon
River Valley Riders
2007 Neal Avenue South
Afton, MN 55001

LODGING

White Bear Country Inn (Best Western)
4940 North Hwy 61
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
Rate: $109 for Single or Double Room, includes breakfast.
Call (651) 429-5393 no later than **2/7/2025** by **9:00am**.
Please identify yourself as a member of the **PATH Intl. Region 6 Conference.**
Pricing and availability are not guaranteed after 2/7/25.

PATH INTL. REGION 6 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Online registration will be available December 27, 2024, through February 21, 2025. After February 21, 2025, registration will need to be completed on-site.

IF YOU ARE A PRESENTER OR CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBER, DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER WITH YOUR CODE!

Registration December 27, 2024, through February 21, 2025:

Full Conference	$110 PATH Intl. Higher Ed	$135 members	$195 non-members

Registration on-site after February 21, 2025:

Full Conference	$160 PATH Intl. Higher Ed	$185 members	$245 non-members

Refund Policy:

No refunds due to the weather unless the conference is canceled.
Written cancellation request is required for refund. Email manderson@pathintl.org

Deadline for Full Refund – Request received in PATH Intl. office by **February 21, 2025.**
Deadline for 50% Refund – Request received in PATH Intl. office by **March 9, 2025**.
Individuals who do not submit a written request to PATH Intl. by March 9, 2025, will not receive a refund.

Education:

This conference satisfies up to 9 hours of continuing education requirements, including up to 8 DE!

AGENDA

All times are Central

Friday, March 7, 2025

White Bear Country Inn

5 – 7 p.m. **Registration in Hotel Lobby**

Saturday, March 8, 2025

White Bear Country Inn

7– 8 a.m. **Registration by Ballrooms A/B/C**

8 - 8:45 a.m. **Welcome and Facilitated Networking Session**

Session A

9 – 10 a.m.

A1, Disabilities - Physical Impact on Riding Performance DE

This presentation will familiarize the audience with a variety of disabilities and their common accompanying physical characteristics that impact riding performance. The presenters will provide recommendations on strategies to optimize successful functional outcomes based upon rider strengths and limitations.

Sally Reif DelGiudice, PT, M.Ed., DPT *is a PATH Intl. CTRI®. She has a BS in physiology/biology and a BS in physical therapy from the U of MN. Sally has a masters in education from St. Mary's University and a Doctor of Physical Therapy from the College of St. Scholastica. Sally has completed the American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) Hippotherapy Treatment Principles I and II. Sally has 31 years of experience in pediatric physical therapy working in the school system with students from birth through age twenty-two. She has been involved with EAS since 1993, and her experience includes EAS research and presentations, including presenting at the 1996 Paralympic Congress. Sally has an Arabian with whom she enjoys showing in english and western pleasure.*

Jenny Sargent, PT *has a BS in sport and exercise science and a BS in physical therapy from the U of MN. Jenny completed the NARHA hippotherapy course. Jenny has 33 years of experience in physical therapy in a variety of pediatric settings. Presently, Jenny co-owns Kids Abilities, a pediatric physical, occupational and speech therapy private practice with clinics in Shoreview and Hugo, MN. Jenny's prior work in the field of physical therapy included positions with Courage Center and Courage St. Croix, Children's Hospitals and Clinics and the NE Metro 916 school district. Jenny has been volunteering in EAS since 1993. Jenny is a past NARHA/PATH Intl. MN state chair.*

A2, Riding in the Moment™ CE

Riding in the Moment™ (RM) is an evidence-informed, community-based, standardized adaptive horseback riding program designed for people living with dementia and their family caregivers. Guided by the biophilia hypothesis, which states the innate need to connect with nature, RM was designed to encourage social

interaction, the human-animal bond, and a connection with nature. A tailored advisory board of researchers, therapeutic horseback riding instructors and dementia care specialists provide continuous feedback on the program through quarterly meetings. The program has shown positive improvements in quality of life and has been deemed safe for this population. This presentation will inform attendees on how to implement the program successfully.

Dr. Beth Fields, PhD, OTR/L, BCG *is an occupational therapist and assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is the principal investigator of the geriatric health services research lab and lead researcher for the RM program. Her research focuses on family-centered geriatric caregiving.*

Melissa Hiatt *is a graduate research assistant in the geriatric health services research lab at the U of WI-Madison. She is working towards a PhD in occupational science with a focus on equine-assisted services (EAS). Her research is focused on the adaptation of RM for adults with down syndrome.*

Benazir Meera *is a postdoctoral associate in the geriatric health services research lab at the U of WI-Madison. Her research focuses on developing and implementing non-pharmacological interventions such as RM, aiming to improve the quality-of-life factors for individuals aging with and into disabilities across the lifespan.*

Abby Hays *is a graduate research assistant in the geriatric health services research lab at the U of WI-Madison. She is working towards a doctorate in OT and in philosophy. Abby is interested in OT's role in EAS.*

Jolie Hope *is the executive director at Three Gaits, Inc. in Stoughton, WI. Jolie spent the first 20 + years of her career in corporate and entrepreneurial sectors focused on environmental services, research and marketing. She joined Three Gaits in November of 2023, and it has given her the opportunity to take her years of experience managing people, strengthening partnerships, and developing strategic initiatives and combine it with her love of horses to make a difference in the lives of people living with a disability.*

Emily Gonzalez *is a PATH Intl. CTRI®, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant, and program and operations director at Three Gaits, Inc. in Stoughton, WI. With nine years of experience, Emily is deeply passionate about working in EAS and is dedicated to expanding the reach of this community to help more individuals.*

10 – 10:15 a.m. **Break**

Session B

10:15 – 11:15am

B1, Understanding Seizures in EAS DE

Seizures are complex neurological events that can affect individuals of all ages and backgrounds. More and more of our participants are presenting with the risk of seizures, including complex genetic diagnoses, epilepsy and more. It is especially important for those in the EAS industry to understand the intricacies of seizures, as we must consider the safety risk when working around 1,200 lb., animals. In this presentation we will explore basic knowledge of the different types of seizures and how they impact the body. More importantly we will apply our knowledge directly to how this impacts us in equine-assisted services.

Dr. Kaiti Otte *is a licensed occupational therapist and a PATH Intl. CTRI® at HETRA (Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Center). She has a background in pediatric clinical therapy focusing primarily on sensory dysfunction and behavior modification. She is also a project coordinator at HETRA, producing numerous educational webinars, mentoring professional students and hosting HETRA's exclusive podcast, "Not Just a Pony Ride."*

B2, Getting the Most Out of Your Surroundings CE

This presentation delves into harnessing the full potential of our diverse surroundings, specifically within ranch settings, to enhance therapeutic outcomes. We will explore the concepts of therapeutic riding and therapy incorporating equines, examining the definitions, similarities and distinctions. Emphasizing a holistic approach, the discussion will cover innovative ways to utilize natural elements across seasons and engage all five senses to achieve comprehensive rehabilitation, psychological, social, speech and language, educational and vocational objectives. Attendees will gain practical insights and examples on integrating environmental resources into their practices, fostering improved health and well-being for participants through immersive, nature-based experiences.

Becky L. Payne*, a licensed speech pathologist and prior associate faculty of the American Hippotherapy Association, has dedicated 23 years as the director of Nature's Edge Therapy Center. She specializes in integrating nature-based environments, including therapeutic riding and therapy incorporating equines, to achieve comprehensive therapeutic goals. Becky's expertise lies in creating immersive, multi-sensory experiences that foster rehabilitation, psychological and educational growth for patients of all ages. Her leadership and innovative approaches in EAS have made her a respected figure in the industry, and she is committed to enhancing patient outcomes through the power of their surroundings.*

11:15 – 11:30 a.m. **Break**

Session C
11:30 – 12:30 p.m.

C1, Genetic Disorders DE
This presentation will give a basic overview of genetic disorders including precautions and contraindications for riding to help instructors work with riders more effectively. Discussion will include what a genetic disorder is, how genetic orders overlap with other diagnosis, and strategies to work with riders based off precautions and contraindications.

Katie Havelka *is a PATH Intl. CTRI® and Registered Therapist. Katie has been a COTA/L for 25 years with knowledge of pediatrics and mental health disorders. She currently lives in Fargo with her husband and three children. Katie has been employed at Beyond Boundaries Therapy and Wellness for 10 years and has worked alongside Bison Strides for the past seven years. Her topics of interest are sensory emotional regulation strategies as well as animal-assisted therapies.*

C2, Equine Strategic Planning CE
Strategic planning is an important part of all businesses that is often overlooked, undervalued and misunderstood. Equine strategic planning is no different and is a valuable tool for organizations to plan financially and, in turn, be more sustainable. Learn how to take a critical look at the current equine herd and evaluate it for long term sustainability. Learn how to develop a targeted approach for equine intakes based on specific needs, as well as looking at ethical systems for retiring Steady Eddie in a timely manner.

Shelby Schult *grew up riding and showing American Quarter Horses in a barn where adaptive riding and therapy services were being offered daily. Upon graduating with a bachelor's degree in animal science, she took a full-time position at Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy (HETRA) as the equine operations manager and has most recently moved into the role of program director. She is a PATH Intl. CTRI®, ESMHL and mentor, and was selected as the 2023 PATH Intl. Region 7 Equine Caretaker of the Year. Shelby is driven by building and maintaining a herd that is "healthy, happy, sane and sound" and strives every day to learn from the horses and to share that knowledge with others in the EAS industry.*

12:30 - 2:30 p.m. **Lunch with the PATH Intl. Update 1 CE and 2025 Region 6 Awards**

The afternoon sessions are held at both the hotel and River Valley Riders. For barn sessions F & G, travel to 2007 Neal Avenue South, Afton, MN 55001 right after lunch. River Valley Riders is approximately a 30-minute drive from the hotel.

Session D - Hotel
White Bear Country Inn
2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

D1, Sensory Processing DE
This presentation will familiarize the audience with a variety of disabilities as well as common accompanying sensory processing challenges and their impact on performance. The presenters will provide recommendations on utilization of strategies to optimize a rider's function and successful outcomes based upon their strengths and limitations.

Joan Dorle Berg *is a PATH Intl. CTRI®, ESMHL and mentor. She has 40 years' experience with individuals with special needs. She has a master's degree in special education and is a retired teacher in adapted physical education/health and learning disabilities. She has been involved with horses since 1972 with an emphasis in volunteering her horses in driving or riding programs. Joan presented collaborative research at the paralympic conference in 1996 and the Council of Exceptional Children Conference in 2001. Joan was honored to be one of the Eleven Who Care recipients in 2005. She was awarded the MN Horse Person of the Year award in 1997. Joan is currently the director of Mindfulness With Horses, a new PATH Intl. member center focusing on mental health.*

Elizabeth (Liz) Connor, OTR/L *has a BA in occupational therapy from the College of St. Catherine and a MA in developmental disabilities from St. Mary's University. Liz has spent 30 years as a pediatric occupational therapist in a school setting and has been involved in therapeutic horseback riding with River Valley Riders and Courage Riders.*

D2, Equine Metabolic Syndrome - Causes and Treatments CR ALL
Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) is a well-recognized syndrome of obesity, abnormal fat deposition, insulin resistance and increased incidence of laminitis and has long existed in horses much younger than those typically diagnosed with equine Cushing's disease. This presentation offers information on how to recognize the

early signs of EMS in horses, the process of verification, and the treatment options which can avoid laminitis/founder.

Dr. Ed Millhouse *graduated from the U of WI-Madison with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1990 and is the owner of Millhouse Veterinary Service. His special interests include, but are not limited to, reproduction, dentistry, lameness, acupuncture and chiropractic. Ed and his wife Missy bred and showed world class Appaloosas. Ed's competitive interests include roping and showing his weanlings.*

3:45 – 4 p.m. **Break at hotel**

Session E - Hotel

White Bear Country Inn

4 – 5 p.m.

E1, Supporting Communication for Nonverbal Learners DE

Therapeutic riding centers offer a unique and supportive environment for individuals with diverse communication needs, particularly nonverbal learners. This presentation explores why these centers are ideal for fostering growth and communication, highlighting who can benefit most. How to gather essential information when starting with a nonverbal learner, defining nonverbal communication, and understanding the attributes of these learners will be discussed. Through a deeper exploration of communication, the critical link between language, speech, and therapeutic riding, including strategies for implementing augmentative communication will be examined. Practical activities and games for nonverbal riders will be shared to enhance their riding experience, followed by a session for questions and discussion. Delve into the powerful intersection of communication and therapeutic riding, gaining insights and tools for creating meaningful connections with nonverbal learners.

Becky L. Payne *see bio in session B2.*

Session F - River Valley Riders Barn

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

F1, Therapeutic Carriage Driving CR Driving

Learn how a therapeutic carriage driving program could benefit participants and centers. The equine, equipment, facility and volunteer requirements will be covered, as well as the instructor certification process. An opportunity to participate in a hands-on portion of driving will be offered but is limited and will be provided on a first-come first-serve basis determined by order of registration so early sign-up is recommended. Attendees in the driving demonstration are required to wear a helmet and riding/driving gloves are recommended. Attendees may bring their own helmet or RVR will have an assortment available.

Kathy Jo Hanson *is a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Driving Level I Instructor with River Valley Riders in Afton, MN.*

Katie Connolly *is a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Driving Level I Instructor with River Valley Riders in Afton, MN. Together with Kathy Jo Hanson, they share their love of driving with ten participants, a team of volunteers and assistance from two driving horses, Arvid and Booker.*

F2, Everyday Tips to Support Your Equine Partners CR ALL

In recent years, EAS programs have become much more aware of the need to offer our hard-working equine partners support beyond the basics of good veterinary and farrier care. More programs make sure their equines receive at least periodic services such as massage or bodywork. This is wonderful, but it tends to be very hit or miss. Just as with our own self-care, these supports can fall by the wayside with time and financial pressures. However, it's possible to integrate more of this kind of support daily. In this session, simple approaches and techniques will be demonstrated that can be used regularly with your equine partners. They are also easy to teach volunteers, which can enhance volunteer experience. Participants will reflect on their current approaches, identify challenges, and practice techniques to integrate into their routines.

Therese Naber *has an MA in education and is a PATH Intl. CTRI®. She is an advanced practitioner of multiple energy modalities and is a student of Equine Bowen and the Masterson Method. She does energy/bodywork with both humans and animals in her business, All Being Energy LLC. She lives near Minneapolis and works as an adaptive ski instructor.*

4:15 – 4:30 p.m. **Break at barn**

Session G - River Valley Riders Barn

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

G1, Physical Therapy for the EAS Horse CR ALL

Just as we understand the importance of proper movement in our own bodies, it's time to extend that knowledge to our horses. Many horse owners and trainers have been taught that horses only need to be ridden and lunged, but what happens when these methods alone are no longer effective? This presentation will explore beginner-friendly groundwork techniques to address common physical issues faced by horses in EAS, such as muscle asymmetry, weakness due to age or injury, and more. Attendees will learn to identify common physical issues in horses, implement beginner-friendly techniques to improve muscle development and overall movement, as well as gain insight on how to enhance the well-being and performance of EAS horses through effective conditioning practices. Join this session to learn how to promote healthier movement patterns and optimize the physical health of our equine partners.

Liz Firehammer *has over twenty years of experience in the horse industry, with more than five years as an instructor. A PATH Intl. CTRI® since 2021, she has a diverse background that includes a BA in zoology, with a special focus on animal training and behavior. With a deep passion for equine physiology, Liz has dedicated countless hours to studying and developing science-backed techniques that help horses optimize their movement and overall well-being. Her unique approach integrates her extensive knowledge and experience, ensuring that both horse and rider can achieve their full potential together.*

G2, Saddle Fit and EAS Equine Partners CR ALL

This presentation will focus on the 80-point saddle fit evaluation including: personal assessment, dynamic and static measurements, and analyses of equine, rider and saddle. There will also be a discussion of saddles and how saddle fit impacts the longevity of equines in riding programs. There will be plenty of time for questions.

Tina Fox *is a certified equine ergonomist, independent Schleese western fitter and a certified equine massage therapist. She has created a life that fulfills her purpose and passion for bringing harmony and happiness to horses and their humans. Inspired by her journey with lameness in her beautiful mare, Hazel, Tina set out to find answers to questions not being solved by the veterinarian or farrier. She found the Certified Equine Ergonomist program and the 80-point saddle fit evaluation. Tina, along with her family, owns and operates a boarding stable in Vesper, WI. Tina is continually updating her education to help further her knowledge about good saddle fit and healthy, happy horses!*

Kathleen Harris *is a licensed educator and a PATH Intl. CTRI® and ESMHL. She and her husband, Roger, founded PATH Intl. member center Jeremiah's Crossing where she is the lead instructor, barn manager, and co-executive director. Kathleen was struggling with her mare, Allee, continually refusing to stand at the mounting block or go down the trail. Kathleen called Tina for help. Over the next nine years, Tina helped Kathleen learn to fit saddles, not only for Allee, but also to the equine partners at Jeremiah's Crossing. Her passion for life-long learning and honoring her equine partners has led her to enroll in the Certified Equine Ergonomist course as well as Equine Massage Therapy.*

Sunday, March 9, 2025

White Bear Country Inn

8 - 8:30 a.m.	**PATH Intl. Region 6 Meeting and Field Test Standards Hearing/Update**
8:30 – 8:45 a.m.	**Break**

Session H

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

H1, Mental Health and Therapy Incorporating Equines - Part 1 DE

Join this interactive presentation on therapy incorporating equines. Bring questions, musings and thoughts to share. Learning objectives include a basic understanding of the field of animal-assisted interventions and what centers and professionals should know to do the work of therapy incorporating equines. Case examples of work in the field of trauma, somatic practice and bringing these to the barn setting will be shared. An example of a cotreatment model with OT and mental health will be presented.

Molly DePrekel *is a psychologist in private practice both at Cairns Psychological Services and Hold Your Horses. She provides therapy and offers consultation for other professionals in sensorimotor psychotherapy and animal-assisted interventions (AAI). She holds a certification in sensorimotor psychotherapy, EMDR and yoga. Molly received a master's degree in counseling/psychological services from St. Mary's University and a BS degree in animal science from Michigan State University. She is a contributing author to three books, "Harnessing the Power of Equine Assisted Counseling: Adding Animal Assisted Therapy to Your Practice," "Equine Assisted*

Mental Health Interventions" and "Clinicians Guide to Treating Companion Animal Issues" and she has co-authored six manuals on AAI.

H2, Employment Law Updates Affecting Your Staff CE
This session will focus on recent employment law updates and changes affecting paid staff at centers. Discussion items will include federal updates such as FLSA salary thresholds, employee classifications, and job posting pay ranges; as well as MN law updates including earned safe and sick time, MN paid leave, and more. Attendees will learn about the importance of human resources guidance for centers and be provided with resources to stay updated on changes to employment laws in the states within Region 6.

Heather Thoele *is a human resources professional with over twenty years of experience working within the areas of nonprofit, manufacturing, logistics and staffing. She is currently the organizational development manager for Supply Chain Solutions. She holds the PHR (Professional in Human Resources) and SPHR (Senior Professional in Human Resources) certifications from HRCI (HR Certification Institute), as well as the SHRM-SCP (Senior Certified Professional) certification from SHRM (Society for Human Resources Management). In addition, Heather is a PATH Intl. CTRI® with River Valley Riders, where she has been involved with the program since its inception in 1999.*

9:45 – 10 a.m. **Break**

Session I
10 - 11 a.m.

I1, Mental Health and Therapy Incorporating Equines - Part 2 DE
Continuation of session H1.

I2, Feeding the Senior Horse CR ALL
Horses are the foundation for EAS, which means it is critical to successfully manage their health and well-being. Since many horses used in these programs are over 16 years old, they are classified as seniors. As a result, these horses may necessitate different health management practices to allow them to thrive. One main component to be considered is nutrition. As a horse ages, nutrient requirements and nutritional management change due to alterations in physiology, digestive efficiency, muscle development, and dentition. This talk will discuss these changes and how to effectively manage them through nutrition to optimize the health of horses in these programs.

Dr. Michelle DeBoer *has her M.S. and Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Dr. DeBoer was an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls, teaching animal physiology and equine production, before joining the team at Spike and Houles as the animal nutrition specialist. Over the past 11 years, Dr. Michelle completed research focusing on pasture and soil management, nutrition, deworming, winter blanketing and other horse husbandry topics. In her new role, Dr. DeBoer works to educate the community on horse nutrition and management and provides nutrition, farm, and pasture consults to optimize horse health and operations.*

11 – 11:15 a.m. **Break**

Session J
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

J1, Suicide Awareness DE
Suicide is a significant public health concern and contributes to around 49,000 deaths a year. Suicide is confusing, complicated, and tragic; but is often preventable. This training will build awareness, identify warning signs and symptoms, teach how to ask "the" question, provide support and resources, promote self-care, and challenge mental health stigma.

Shania Rentschler, MS, NCC, LPCC *is a mental health therapist on White Earth Reservation and CTRI for NDSU Bison Strides. She is an alumnus of the NDSU Equine Science program with a minor in equine assisted activities and therapies. She received her master's at Minnesota State University, Moorhead in clinical mental health counseling and pursued a post-master's certificate program through the University of Denver in equine assisted mental health. Shania works specifically with children and adolescents in the school and community setting and specializes in trauma, conduct behaviors, anxiety, ADHD, complex family systems and grief.*

We look forward to seeing you soon in Minnesota!