

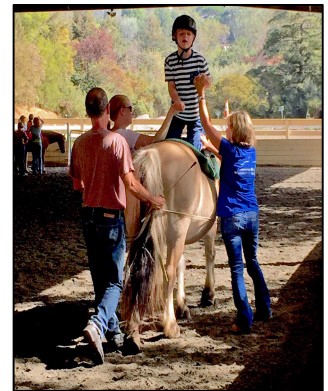
Reaching Beyond Boundaries: Trent



Trent, pictured with his parents, Jenna and Martin, and younger brother, Woody, is a physical therapy patient at NCEFT.

Trent, who is an adorable and engaging eight-year-old boy, first came to NCEFT in 2014 when he was just about to turn six years old. Trent was born with a brain malformation and seizure disorder. Eventually, Trent underwent a right side hemispherectomy (a very rare neurosurgical procedure in which a cerebral hemisphere is removed, disconnected, or disabled). Trent's medical history left him with global developmental delays, left-side vision loss, and physical weakness and asymmetry that make it difficult and potentially dangerous for Trent to get around independently.

Altogether, Trent has undergone 18 separate surgeries. Although Trent receives physical, occupational, and speech therapy at school and other therapy centers, his parents sought additional treatment that would be more engaging for Trent and might lead to better outcomes for his core strength, postural symmetry, and independent walking. In fact, former NCEFT physical therapist Kristin Hatten, who was working with Trent in a clinical setting and is pictured with Trent in the photos associated with this profile, recommended equine-assisted therapy for him.



Trent positioned backwards in a high-kneel position to work on core strength and balance.



The therapy team: patient, therapist, horse, horse handler, and side walkers. All work in concert to keep the patient safe, comfortable, and challenged while on the horse.

In equine-assisted physical, occupational, and speech therapy, licensed and specially trained therapists use equine movement as part of an intervention program that typically integrates several types of therapy. In each equine-assisted therapy session, the therapist positions the client on the horse, analyzes the client's responses, and directs the horse's movement. The horse's walk transfers variable, repetitive, and rhythmic movement to the client, providing sensory input to the brain and nervous system.

The therapist, working in conjunction with a specially trained horse handler, can adapt the horse's movement and the patient's position to

provide just the right level of challenge for each patient. Enjoyable and challenging activities are selected to help establish a foundation to improve neurological function and sensory processing, all in an effort to make activities off the horse easier or less dangerous.



Trent working in a side-sit position.

Additionally, most patients enjoy the opportunity to engage with the horse and therapy team in an environment that is vastly different from a typical clinic setting.



As Trent's mom, Jenna, recounts, "Before starting at NCEFT, Trent was barely able to stand by himself. With all the work he has done with the therapists and horses focusing on core strengthening, balance control, and body awareness, today Trent can walk almost independently. "

Equine movement also stimulates speech, and Trent has also benefitted from that. At NCEFT, Trent answers simple questions and spontaneously initiates greetings to familiar people. He's also able to let his therapist know when he's all done with therapy!



Trent walking with stand-by assistance from his therapist.



Equine movement can be used to address the physiological systems supporting speech and language, promoting functional communication and correcting communication disorders.

Trent's parents say of NCEFT that it has been a true blessing for their family. "The combination of their expert physical therapists and their wonderful stable of highly trained horses has helped Trent make leaps and bounds forward in his development. It has been an absolutely amazing transformation to witness. The healing power of horses and horseback riding have been known for ages. Having seen it and lived it with Trent, we can testify to just how much of a miracle it is."



Trent saying thank you to his therapy horse, Sebastian, a Norwegian Fjord.