



CANCER RESOURCE CENTER

OF THE FINGER LAKES

Equine Therapy for Cancer Survivors

What is Equine-assisted Therapy?

Equine-assisted therapy (EAT) encompasses a range of treatments that involve activities with horses to promote human physical and mental health. Many of the therapeutic benefits come from interactions with the horse, such as petting, grooming, and ground exercises.

How can it help cancer patients?

Research has shown that for people with cancer, working with horses can decrease anxiety, stress and depression, while improving levels of pain, fatigue and cancer survival rate.

Psychotherapists Adele and Marlena McCormick use horses in therapy. In their book, *Horse Sense and the Human Heart*, the authors explain how horses help people. "The horse acts as a mirror, reflecting us back to ourselves, and thus is a powerful assistant in the pursuit of self-realization. Many people who experience this firsthand come away thinking something uncanny has happened. It is a concrete way to see universal forces at work within our being. What we uncover is our own inner essence, in bold, living color."



What is available in Ithaca?

The Cancer Resource Center has partnered with the [Ithaca Equestrian Center](#) (IEC) to offer a free program for cancer survivors. The elements include understanding horse psychology, communication, grooming, walking, leading, exercising, feeding, and caring for a horse. Particular attention will be spent on safety, and participants will be introduced to all aspects of an equestrian center; fencing, bedding, water, grazing, horse safety and comfort. They will be encouraged (under supervision) to lead a horse around the center, both indoors and outside.

What can I expect?

Participants will spend three half days at the IEC center. IEC staff will provide guidance through the equine-assisted experience. Long-time CRC volunteer and project liaison, Nancy Whitebird, will also be available as a support. In addition to instruction and guidance with the horses, individual time to enjoy the farm is part of the therapeutic intent. The program will be tailored to meet individual needs.

Similar equine-assisted therapy programs are ongoing throughout the country. The Ithaca Equestrian Center has explored best practices with other programs, and in partnership with pilot participants, this program for cancer survivors will be moved forward.

How can I participate?

IEC, in coordination with CRC, will conduct the program on Sunday Oct. 10, Oct. 17 and Oct. 24 from 10AM-2PM. . The following criteria will be used to select the participants from the pool of individuals who apply.

- Cancer survivor who has completed primary treatment (surgery or chemotherapy) equal to or greater than 2 months from start date. Individuals who are on a maintenance treatment protocol are eligible to participate.
- Willing to commit to 3 four hour days on Oct. 10, Oct. 17 and Oct. 24
- Willing to engage in pre and post therapy interviews/assessment

How do I apply?

Please email a statement of interest to the Cancer Resource Center, info@crcfl.net. A Staff member will follow up with you about availability of open positions and to provide more details.

CRC Volunteer and Ithaca Equestrian Center Owners

Paula J Wedemeyer Nancy Whitebird Russ Wedemeyer

