

# ROCK continues healing through horses

In February, the Women Helping Others met with and learned about Ride on Center for Kid, or ROCK, a nonprofit organization serving families in healing through horses.

## WOMEN HELPING OTHERS

Anne Marshall

Twenty-five years ago, Dr. Nancy Krenek had a dream, which began with four children and a horse. ROCK started in 1998.

In 1999, the original 20 acres of land located in Round Rock was donated by George and Barbara Brightwell. Today ROCK is located on 60 acres of land comprising two covered arenas, paddocks and a new veterinary clinic. All improvements enabled ROCK to serve additional families.

With the opening of the new Sport Clips Heroes Arena, they are now serving 14.8 percent more individuals than before. The number will grow as construction continues in 2023, which will include an additional outdoor arena, expansion of staff offices, the Patti Colbert Learning Center and their serving kitchen.

ROCK provides equine-assisted services to children, adults and veterans with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges. ROCK participants range in age from two to 90+ and see improvement in most aspects of their life — from muscle tone, strength, flexibility and balance to cognitive, behavioral, communication and emotional improvements.

The top 10 diagnoses ROCK provides services for are ADHD, Autism Spectrum, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Developmental Delay, PTSD, Seizure Disorder, Speech Delay, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment. The programs offered are Speech & Physical Therapy incorporating Equine Movement, Adaptive Riding, Rock on Veterans, Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL), School Programs, Summer Camp.

In 2005, First Sgt. Scott Sjule asked for ROCK's assistance working with veteran amputees. After traveling to BAMC in San Antonio and filming the results, the model for veteran programs is adopted nationwide. ROCKOnVeterans participants reported improvements in the following areas: 100 percent on decreased anxiety, improved mood and stress management.



Dr. Nancy Krenek, founder of ROCK, accepts a donation from Maria Tolleson, WHO vice president.

It's all about the horse. It is all about movement on the horse which simulates normal walking. The body responds to the movement of the horse. Humans were created to move as does a horse. One minute on a walking horse equals 100 steps. ROCK's therapy horses are carefully screened for health, training and temperament before they are accepted into the program.

Once they have been screened, horses undergo a 90-day trial period to determine if they are a good candidate for the program, after which they are either officially adopted to live and work at ROCK or returned to their original owners.

ROCK cares for their family of horses in the best way possible. Not only do they get their feed, farrier, and medical needs met,

they enjoy a high quality of life on ROCK's 60 acre-ranch.

There are a number of volunteer opportunities, Sidewalkers, Special Events, Welcome Wranglers, Barn Maintenance, Horse Handlers, Work Groups. There is something for everyone.

ROCK's organizational vision is to be the trusted leader in equine-assisted services through research, education and programs. Serving an average of over 350 participants and their families every year ROCK is recognized as a leader in equine-assisted services research.

Go to their website at [www.rockride.org](http://www.rockride.org) to learn more about how you can become involved in this amazing organization.