

Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring, 2008



Driving Magic, Inc.

The Hitching Post

And They're Off...

We could almost hear the familiar ring of the starting gate at Churchill Downs as we opened for Spring Session in March. Driving Magic, Inc. is not even letting this Spring's deluge get us down; we're doubling up lessons on dry days and we're thankful that Steadfast Farms has hopes of the some of the best crops in years. Our wait list continues to grow, so we have added dates when enough volunteers are available, and our dedicated team of certified able-bodied drivers continues to give extra days each week for us to have 2-3 turnouts per lesson. We offer bi-weekly individual lessons on Mondays and Saturdays, weekly lessons on Sundays, and Magic Workshops on Wednesdays and open Mondays and Saturdays. Each lesson day or Workshop requires instructors and volunteers to be on-site from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,



Certified driver, Ronnie Wiley, working with students from Annandale Village on a timed obstacle course.

depending on the day; and three trained volunteers are needed per student per lesson.

We thank all returning students and welcome to our program Collins Hill High School, who attended their first workshop in March, and Creative Enterprises, who will be joining us for workshops in June. And we send HUGE KUDOS to the volunteers who give so much of themselves and their time to support our program.

In conclusion, if you see a Driving Magic instructor or volunteer whizzing by you on I-85 North, just let 'em through — they are on their mission to help us with ours!

Mark Your Calendars...

- **Panhandle Farm Gathering, Reynolds, GA April 25 & 26.** Try your hand at plowing behind a team of mules or drafts; ride on carriages of all types, and enjoy a tractor display and demonstrations by Driving Magic.
- **Spring/Summer Session Begins Sunday May 4.**
- **Family Picnic and "Volunteer Follies"**—a new twist on our traditional end-of-session picnic, **Saturday June 21st.**
- **"May Magic" at Hold Your Horses, Sunday May 4th** (www.holdyourhorsesllc.net). Fun for the whole family with carriage rides by Yellow Rose Carriage Service, Driving Magic student demonstrations, "photo ops" with Monkey & Schatzi, raffles and much, much more.
- **5th Annual Driving Magic, Inc. BBQ & Auction at Magnolia Hall, Saturday September 13;** food, fun & entertainment!
- **Hoschton Stampede September 26 & 27.** Everything a Fall Festival has to offer — great music, delicious food, arts & crafts and family activities; tractors and wagons will be the modes of transportation to shuttle you throughout the venue. Join Driving Magic in the parade on Saturday morning and in the children's activities and arts & crafts. See www.hoschtonfallfestival.com to learn more.

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Around the Water Trough...

- NEVER leave a grooming caddy within 3 feet either side of Schatzi; unless you *really* enjoy picking up the contents piece by piece.
- NEVER leave a Coca-Cola (especially Diet Caffeine Free) within 5 feet in ANY direction of Monkey; apparently he's a big supporter of Atlanta's favorite beverage and is very flexible when trying to reach one.
- The number of minutes late to a lesson is directly proportional to the size of dust cloud trailing a family or volunteer car.

If You Think They Can't...THINK AGAIN!

There's NO WAY she'll put on a helmet. There's nothing much you can do for him. He'll never learn to drive, so what's the benefit? He's scared of horses. She can't see, how can she steer a carriage? I'm just not sure she'll do it; she's tried sports in school and just doesn't have the confidence for it.



With near-perfect form, Nicole steers Monkey through an obstacle course

These are just some of the comments we hear when going through the interview process prior to a new student or group coming to our program. What continues to astound, amaze, motivate, and create this heart-felt love for what we do is witnessing just the opposite when our students come to Driving Magic, Inc.

Yes, there are therapeutic benefits like enhanced eye/hand coordination, motor planning or spatial and environmental awareness. But I believe it's the

freedom, empowerment, and confidence that is experienced by our students that makes the difference. Traversing Steadfast Farms to feel the wind, listen to the trees and frogs, stop to pick up an ear of harvested corn, click to the clip-clop of hooves on the driveway and feel the cadence of each horse

as it moves in walk and trot touches students and volunteers alike. And yes, speed, the natural speed of a horse-drawn carriage, is appealing to many of our students; especially for those whose disability so severely impacts their ability to experience the world around them. When a student



Nicholas holds his head high to make his horse "come up"

steps up into the carriage (or rides up the lift), grasps reins (or a noodle or communicator) and commands into action a draft horse who is so powerful yet so docile and loving, something changes...you may catch it subtly or it

blows you away. And you know that their life and yours will, thankfully, never again be the same.



Melissa confidently drives with Heidi, a horse more than 25 times her size!

So, YES he CAN hold his head up for 15 minutes on a cross-country trail drive, and YES she has become an advanced independent driver, and YES she puts her own helmet on now and YES he can drive, lead, and groom his horse, and YES she does drive on active lines with her feet, and YES she turned that 1800 pound horse in the direction of the handbells to perfectly stay on the obstacle

course and YES there wasn't a dry eye at the farm today!

Ready for a Relaxing Getaway?

Thanks to the generosity of David & Cindy Jones, **Driving Magic is raffling a getaway to Euchee Marina Resort in Ten Mile, TN** (just north of Chattanooga). The raffle winner will receive a two-night stay (in either a lodge room,



a genuine teepee or floating cabin), pontoon boat for a day, dinner for two at the Lighthouse Restaurant, horseback riding at

Rusty Shoe Ranch and a complimentary bottle of champagne.

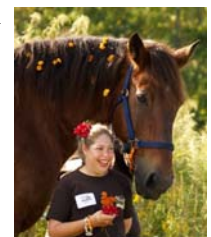
Raffle tickets are \$10.00 each or THREE TICKETS for \$25.00. Send your check payable to Driving Magic, Inc. at P.O. Box 279, Duluth, GA 30096. PLEASE make sure that

your phone number and email address are noted on your check. All proceeds will go directly to horse care and student expenses for our program.

The winning ticket will be selected on June 15, 2008, just in time to make your summer/fall travel plans! For more info about the resort see www.eucheeamarinareort.com. Good luck and thank you for supporting our program.

DMI Students "Go Broadway"

The next time you see Casey Brennan or Claire Tracey, you will be in the company of STARS. Casey recently played a leading role in *Footloose* at Habima Theater, which earned her TWO photos in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Claire Tracey spent her Easter holidays as a Munchkin in Holcomb Bridge Middle School's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Driving Magic applauds Casey and Claire — STARS of stage and arena!



Casey & Ben

For the Love of Driving (and Heidi)

By Linda McCoy

I am writing this article to confirm that Heidi does indeed trot into second gear for extended periods of time and loves to traverse an obstacle course. She learns the course quickly and turns correctly even when I give her the wrong command (gee for haw)!

For those of you who don't know me, I formerly lived in Massachusetts where I owned and drove each of my two Morgan horses. For 5 years, my horse, trainer and I competed in the Morgan horse show circuit throughout New England. Although I was the only disabled person competing, all of the 16 judges and drivers treated me equally. We won many blue ribbons in all classes. Yes, we lost some, just like everyone else, but we won some too. It was a wonderful experience and I missed it sorely when my husband John and I moved to Florida, where, in our particular area, there was no carriage driving. In 2005, John and I moved to Carrollton, Georgia where, once again, there is no carriage driving.

One night while preparing dinner, I saw Wes Sarginson's segment on Driving Magic. When I stopped screaming in excitement, I contacted Jennifer and soon after returned to driving.

Take it from me, driving draft horses is far different from driving Morgans. Even the terminology is different!

The volunteers, AB [able-bodied] drivers and trainers at Driving Magic have all been so kind and patient with me as I am learning how to drive all over again.

As much as I enjoy driving again, something was missing. I didn't own my own horse. Then I learned about the sponsorship program at Driving Magic. I immediately signed up as Heidi's sponsor. Once again, in a limited way, I had adopted a horse. And best of all, now I could give back to this wonderful program that has brought back to me so much.

I encourage everyone who loves horses to become a sponsor to one of the Driving Magic team. You will be contributing to a program that brings so much to so many. When you look into the eyes of the horse you have sponsored and see immeasurable love, you will know you have done the right thing.

Linda McCoy is a student in Driving Magic, Inc.'s Sunday individual lesson program. While she is tiny in stature, her power to transfer out of her scooter to drive a 1900 lb draft horse on active lines is great. She and her husband John travel 1 1/2 hours to get to the program and they support many of our fundraising and community awareness events. John was also responsible for building and installing our four-position rein board.



Linda and Heidi —
What a Team!

Simple Ways to Help Driving Magic...

When looking for an alternative to sending flowers in memory or honor of someone, or for a birthday, anniversary or

new baby, think of Driving

In lieu of flowers...

Magic. DMI will send a card to the recipient customized to your request and you will receive a donation/thank you letter. Best of all, your contribution will go directly toward lesson support and to the care of our special equines. You can also set up a horse sponsorship or a scholarship fund (to support an individual or group needing financial assistance to attend our program) in honor or memory of someone special.

If you shop online, we can't say enough about the value of www.goodshop.com. This website connects you to many popular stores such as Babies R Us, Home Depot, Lowes, Gap, Amazon, Staples and Office Depot, online services such as Shutterfly, Wolf Camera, Blockbuster Total Access, Priceline, Budget Car Rental, and Fandango and TicketsNow for event tickets. **By using www.goodshop.com, 1.5% to 25% of your total purchase goes to Driving Magic.** (Recently, DMI received \$12 from a single Jos. A. Bank transaction.) Especially if you're already a "shopaholic," you can feel better about it knowing that you're shopping for a good cause.

One of the greatest ways to financially support any non-profit is through a continuous donation — whether it's \$10.00 or \$200.00 per month, non-profits are able to do their best at budgeting and forecasting with this type of commitment. **Banking technology makes it secure and simple to set up recurring contributions by amount and date designated (no trip to the mailbox or stamp required).** You can also use this approach to sponsor a horse. We thank all DMI supporters who contributed to us in this way for 2008 — your confidence in and support of our mission means so much to our students and the volunteers who give so selflessly to them.

Driving Magic, Inc.

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*Therapeutic Carriage Driving and
Horsemanship for People with
Disabilities*

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Driving Magic, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing therapeutic and recreational equine-assisted activities for children and adults with disabilities. We focus on carriage driving and horsemanship programs and outreach to the community we serve.

Our vision is to be a role model center for equine-assisted activities and a benchmark in carriage driving centric programs and the use of old time farming techniques for therapeutic benefit.

Driving Magic, Inc. operates at
Steadfast Farms in Hoschton, GA,
a 680-acre working farm and
boarding facility.



Driving Bits ...

Volunteer Coordinator to the Rescue! Shannon Cyr has joined the DMI team as a dedicated volunteer coordinator. Coordinating volunteers for over 985 lesson hours delivered each year is a challenging role and requires someone with great organizational skills and personality, both of which are two of Shannon's finest qualities. If you are a current or potential volunteer, the best ways to reach Shannon are at drivingmagicvolunteers@comcast.net or 770.317.3968.



Shannon Cyr pictured with her husband Steve and daughters Hannah & Ella

Denise Turner joins Driving Magic Board of Directors

Each year, Driving Magic selects a parent/caretaker representative to its voting Board of Directors. Nominations come from Board Members, volunteers and program families. We are pleased to announce that Denise Turner will be joining us effective April 24, 2008.

Denise and Frank Turner's daughter Jenna attends Magic Workshops with Peachtree Ridge High School and bi-

weekly individual lessons on Sundays. Denise has been employed in the telecommunications industry since graduating college in 1980. Her present employer is Motorola where she has professional responsibilities as senior account manager for Comcast.



Frank, Jenna & Denise

Denise has always had commitments to charities including Autism Speaks, Atlanta Spectrum Group, Easter Seals, Autism Society of America (ASA), American Red Cross, and March of Dimes. Recently, she was walk chairman for Atlanta Spectrum Group to support Autism Speaks walk. She is working on housing needs for adults with autism that is appropriate to address individual / group needs. And she has recently been involved in grant reviews through Autism Speaks to address all special needs. Welcome Denise!

We're Published!

Driving Magic was featured in the winter edition of *The Draft Horse Journal*. The four-page article and photos were created by author Betty



Beamguard (*How Many Angels Does It Take, The Remarkable Life of Heather Brooks*). To order your copy, please go to www.drafthorsejournal.com and select Online Journal / Index of Past Issues.

It's Springtime at Steadfast Farms

As you join us this Spring for lessons, volunteering or observation, take a few moments for a deep breath and a panoramic view of the beauty that Steadfast Farms has to offer.

We are now in our third year of operation at this place that is like no

other in the area. Our students have thrived and our horses are feeling healthy and happy (and a tad overweight). We thank Steadfast borders for volunteering with us and for contributions that enabled us to fund signage to start our sensory trail in 2007. And we especially honor the Spruill family for their continuous support of and love for our program. If you see Ada, Jack, Carol, or Shannon, please show them your appreciation, for they are truly making a difference in this world!



Claire Tracey driving Monkey on a beautiful "blue sky" spring day