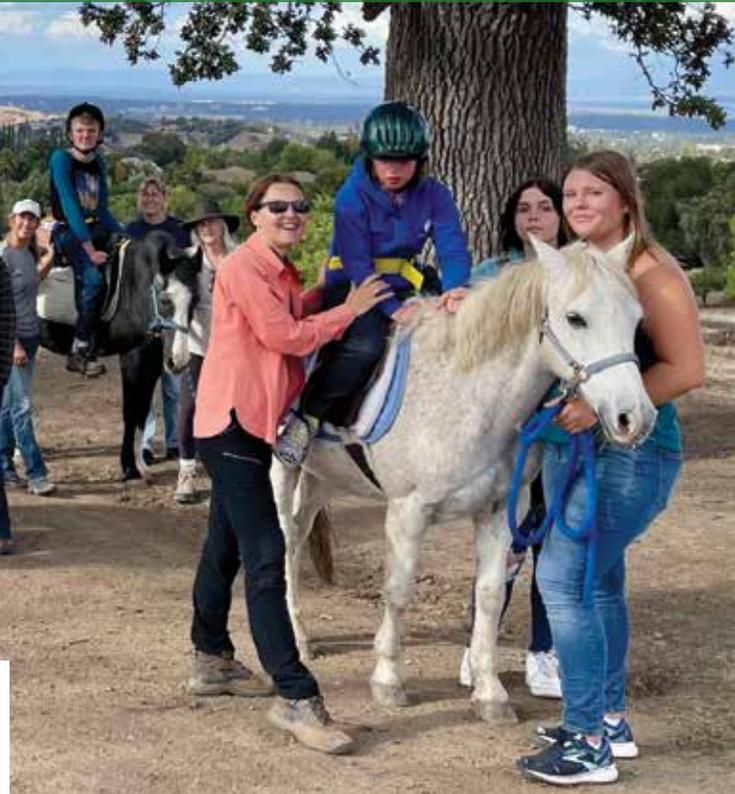




# 2022 Roundup



Westwind Riding Institute offers riding lessons for children with disabilities. This is our 44th year of operation at the beautiful and historic Westwind Community Barn\* in Los Altos Hills. This year our WRI riding program once again offered weekly lessons on Monday and Friday afternoons during the school year, as well as a 6-week summer session.

According to Board President Nancy Couperus, "Despite the impact and resulting challenges brought on by the COVID pandemic over the last two years, our riding program has been able to carry on and continue to thrive. This is a direct result of the adaptability and willing flexibility of our many committed volunteers."

Volunteers are the backbone of the Westwind Riding Institute. More than 50 active volunteers lead horses and support riders at every lesson; they also care for the horses and barn every day of the week. Additional volunteers help with fundraising and social media. In 2021, for example, volunteers provided approximately 4,500 volunteer hours.

With all that activity, considerable coordination is required to keep things running smoothly. To assist with these demanding operations schedules, Instructor and Program Manager Hanna Merk helped our

12 youth volunteers start a Youth Leadership Club (YLC) in 2022, specifically to engage in WRI program planning and execution. According to Hanna, "The YLC builds community for youth volunteers, increasing their sense of belonging to the WRI community. It also provides personal growth and leadership opportunities. And, it provides a platform for them to share ideas about fundraising, training, and program development."

In addition to their many routine contributions to the riding program lessons, in 2022 YLC members acted as assistant instructors, leading riders for 5–10 minutes of warm up, under instructor supervision. In April they also held a fundraiser for WRI during the annual Earth Day community barn celebration. And, to the delight of the riders, the YLC planned and executed fun games and playful competitions on the last day of class for both Monday and Friday programs. Everyone was a winner, receiving a 1st place blue ribbon, courtesy of the YLC.

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\*For more information about the history of the Westwind Community Barn and the founding of our riding program, visit our website at <https://westwind-wri-riding.org>.

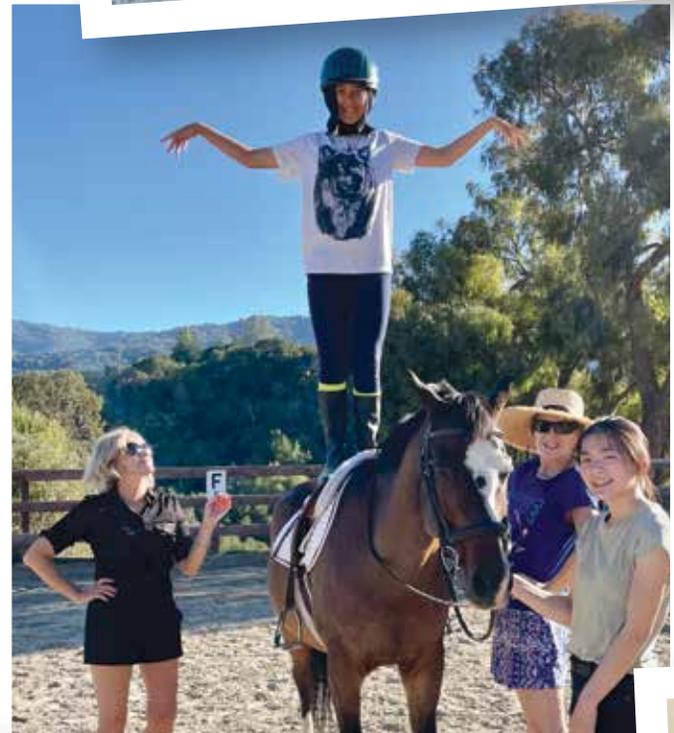
**Making the world a better place — one ride at a time.**

# A Day in the Life of a WRI Class

Grooming and "tacking up" are as much a part of every WRI lesson as time spent with the instructor. Students are invited to participate in these activities depending on their interest and abilities, and the instructor's approval.



*Riders ranging in age from 5 to 19 receive riding instruction and play games on horseback.*



*Riders also enjoy special events, such as our summer trail rides and Halloween trick-or-treat ride.*



*YLC surprised WRI founder Nancy Couperus with the "Founder's Cup" and named YLC member Emma Watson "Volunteer of the Year."*



*This June classes finished the year with our own special "horse shows." Everyone was a winner!*

Hanna Merk has been a major contributor to our program over the last 3 1/2 years. Not only acting as program director, but also teaching both classes, developing our youth volunteers, plus stepping in to make sure our program continued during the pandemic. She concluded her participation with the Fall 2022 session. We would like to express our deep gratitude for her contributions.



# After 17 years Judy Lookabill Retires from WRI Board



From 2005 until 2022 Judy Lookabill served as Secretary of WRI's Board of Directors. During that time, in addition to her duties as Secretary, Judy assumed responsibility for writing the grants that serve as a major source of WRI program funding. For more than 8 years she has been the author of multiple successful grant applications.

Judy has a special place in her heart for Cinders, our blue roan Tennessee Walker, who is still used by riders in WRI classes. Judy rode him herself for 14 years as a program sponsor responsible for his care and regular exercise. According to Judy, "Cinders was willing to adapt to any child on his back, and he truly loves everyone. Once a volunteer brought several seniors to visit the horses and learn about the program. After listening to the presentation and petting Cinders, they prepared to leave. Cinders tried to follow them into their van! They were delighted." Please join us in extending a special "heartfelt thank-you" to Judy for sharing nearly two decades of her professional expertise and participating generously in nearly every aspect of the WRI program.

When asked what she enjoyed most about being part of the WRI team, Judy said that was easy to answer: "Meeting the amazing riders and their parents. It was so moving to see how they enjoyed being with the horses and how much gratitude the parents had for this opportunity."

## Make a Donation

Westwind Riding Institute is self-funding, so your assistance, no matter how large or small, is welcomed to sustain our program. **There are several ways to contribute:** check, stock, employer matching, eScript, and PayPal. Consider making your next purchase through AmazonSmile and Amazon will make a donation to the **Westwind Riding Institute** — at no cost to you.

Please make checks payable to:

### Westwind Riding Institute

Mail To: WRI—C/O Westwind Barn  
27210 Altamont Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

Westwind Riding Institute (WRI) is a non-profit charitable organization, exempt under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3), which is solely supported by tax-deductible gifts and donations from interested individuals, clubs, and organizations.



To scan the QR code, simply open your phone camera, point it to the QR code, then tap the notification at the top.



**Board President Nancy Couperus has the final word on volunteer participation:**

*"A simple heartfelt thank-you to all of you who make the riding program possible—program volunteers, service clubs, individual donors, residents of Los Altos Hills, and the entire vibrant and professional community of Westwind Barn. We couldn't do it without you!"*

If you are interested in volunteering or enrolling your child as a rider please submit your request via our website contact form.



The WRI Newsletter is published by Westwind Riding Institute and designed and produced by our volunteers. Its purpose is to inform friends and supporters about WRI activities and events.



**Westwind Riding Institute**  
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