



2008 HIGHLIGHTS

Take Flight Farms is a dynamic organization. From the very beginning, we've encouraged change. The people who participate in our programs are challenged to change their old, ineffective behaviors and discover a new approach to their lives. That's where the "Take Flight" comes in – to spread one's wings and take off for new horizons.

Following through on the premise that "Change is necessary for growth", the Take Flight Farms' Board of Directors crafted a new five year strategic plan early in 2008. We took immediate action to begin implementing that plan by:

- Sponsoring an EAGALA training for local mental health professionals and horse specialists to get the training required to conduct Equine Assisted Learning and Psychotherapy programs. The Board had identified that relying on only one EAGALA trained psychologist and a handful of horse specialists was a definite barrier to Take Flight's ability to serve more people.
- Making the decision to focus entirely on unmounted activities with horses. While the "riding lesson" portion of Take Flight's programs had merit, the ground-based activities had proven to be more effective in developing the life skills our clients needed.
- Releasing our highly acclaimed promotional DVD. We are quite proud to say that our video is 100% local. Great individuals took part in its development, including Scott von Freiberg of Market Media, Chip Davis, John Beasley, Theresa Cassaday, and many others to whom we are very grateful.
- Developing programs for younger children. Take Flight has concentrated on providing programs for adolescents between the ages of 11 and 19. When Children's Square challenged us to develop a program for 7 and 8 year-olds, we thought, "Why not?" We learned to adjust the activities to accommodate the much shorter attention span of younger children.
- Developing a new program with greater revenue-producing potential. Anticipating that 2009 was going to be a challenging year for fundraising, the Take Flight Board encouraged developing a program based on the Equine Assisted Learning model we use for schools, but to target the needs of organizations looking for a "teambuilding" opportunity for employees. A grant from the Compassion Institute of the Midlands provided the training for Take Flight staff and volunteers to transition to working with adults on a professional level.
- Creating a new partnership to add capacity. Take Flight has been extremely fortunate that several farm and horse owners have offered to share their space and horses with us. As the demand for our services grow, we are sensitive to spread our programs among several facilities. We are thankful to Jim and Brenda Sheets for sharing Miracle Hills Stables and several of their horses with Take Flight Farms.
- Outsourcing the accounting and payroll functions. Certainly not as exciting as the other initiatives, but an important step in preparing for Take Flight Farms' growth. Freeing Take Flight's two-person staff from performing these functions provides more time for building relationships and developing programs.