

Christmas Letter 2018



Nature's Edge Therapy Center
2523 14 ¾ Avenue, Rice Lake, Wisconsin 54868



COMMON GROUND . . . Even in the complexity of providing treatment for diverse disabilities, we work from common ground — common ground that includes a shared desire for progress, the actual 65-acres of nature dedicated to therapy and its inherent benefits for each person, and a relationship that begins through therapy but doesn't end there . . .

Common ground in therapy? The idea of common ground expresses an understanding or interest that is foundational because it is mutually shared. In providing therapy to patients with disabilities at Nature's Edge, there are many common ground applications. Of necessity, the first sense of common ground is a shared desire. Families and patients come to Nature's Edge because they desire therapeutic progress that impacts daily life. Often they have not been able to obtain the progress they desire. Nature's Edge therapists and staff also desire progress. They desire to deliver quality, comprehensive therapy that promotes the greatest possible progress. All therapy at

Nature's Edge is focused on functional skills that result in necessary and valuable life skills employed to increase independence and integration in home, school and community for each patient. A common shared desire is the first step in therapy at Nature's Edge.

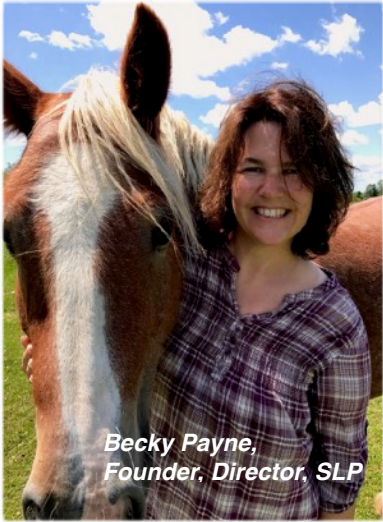
The common desire for therapeutic progress literally converges on common ground — the 65-acre home to Nature's Edge, featuring field, forest and hills. A treatment plan is developed, using the multi-faceted platform of the natural setting and therapy animals who reside at Nature's Edge. Clinical speech and occupational therapy is

provided in a clinic that spans 65 acres of sensory-rich common ground.

Even in the complexity of providing treatment for diverse disabilities, we work from common ground. This aspect of common ground is the age-old benefit of interactions between people, nature and animals. Treatment that includes animals and nature bundles benefits together to deliver a comprehensive therapy that touches people profoundly at all levels.

One more common ground experience is the shared relationships that develop between family, patient, therapists and staff, and even animals. These connections around a unified goal promote a transforming therapy.

From our Director



*Becky Payne,
Founder, Director, SLP*

What do I consider to be the greatest reward in working as a therapist? It is to see, to hear and to know that therapy has resulted in life skills for patients who are now better prepared and equipped to live life to the fullest.

An ever-present therapy tool that we incorporate into treatment at Nature's Edge because of its effectiveness is nature. Researchers point out that nature affects healthy development in every major way — intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and physically. Not only does it affect development, but it also affects rehabilitation. At Nature's Edge, we have opportunity to provide therapy in an open and changing treatment room that is colorful, growing and alive with unlimited hands-on interactions. It's a daily inspiration to be able to significantly impact a life through therapy integrated with nature!

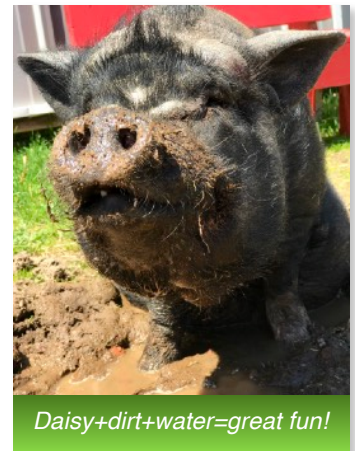
From the ground up — Making the most of our surroundings

Sunlight, air, free space, soil, rocks, minerals, wildlife, vegetation, water — these simple elements of our natural world have a profound impact on therapy. Clinical speech therapy and occupational therapy integrated with nature through outdoor activities becomes active, even when movement is restricted, in contrast to a sedentary form of indoor therapy.

Therapy sessions developed in the out-of-doors utilize tools that are readily available to activate and accelerate progress and to enlarge the scope of treatment and the strategies available. The simplicity of a natural setting stimulates yet calms and soothes; skills are practiced and learned without pressure; sensitivities are balanced and motivation increased. These effects promote a sense of wellbeing, which in turn stimulates sensory alertness and communication in patients. Benefits abound from time outdoors — intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. Therapy that incorporates outdoor activities makes for fitter bodies, better reflexes and movement control, increased flexibility and balance, stronger immune systems, lower stress levels, better resistance to adversity, and an increased sense of self-respect. Nature-based activities encourage creativity while developing focus and observation and

problem-solving skills. Being outdoors also helps to regulate sleep and wake cycles and creates a better appetite for better eating. Vitamin D is supplied in its free and natural form through sunlight. All of these sensory and physical benefits channel through the neuro-physiologic systems which promote and regulate functional daily living and communication skills. Nature is an accommodating environment, a judgment-free zone, where abilities can be explored without needing social etiquette or conversation skills. Nature accelerates rehabilitation. The results are utilized in everyday living!

D – Developing
I – Integrative
R – Rehabilitative
T – Treatment



Daisy+dirt+water=great fun!



Snowy sunset at Nature's Edge



Carving out the Edge — Jaime Riebe, 5K Coordinator and barn assistant at Nature's Edge, and Jamie Charron, office manager at Nature's Edge, working on a forest section of the Edge, removing stubble, roots and rocks. Nature's Edge staff prepared the 5K trail in spare moments during the summer months leading up to the September 22 run. This rolling section skirts the south edge of Nature's Edge and has opened a new avenue for hippotherapy and nature-based activities.



“Running the Edge” at Nature’s Edge — our premiere 5K run

What began as a dream while two Nature’s Edge staff members were competing in a summer road race came to fruition as the first-ever 5K run-walk at Nature’s Edge, held on September 22. Nature’s Edge staff worked throughout the summer to carve out the Edge — a rustic, rolling forest and field trail that truly runs on the edge of the 65-acre property that is home to Nature’s Edge. About 50 participants braved the premiere running of the Edge. Medals were awarded to first-place male and female runners in both the 5K run-walk and the 1/2 mile Kids’ Fun Run. Two participants completed the course with strollers, a feat that included crossing several sections holding water from a recent rain. 2nd place women’s finisher, Josy Wood shared her thoughts on

running the Edge: *“This local 5k was one of the highlights of my racing season! I run many road races throughout the summer and fall, but this race was different. It was a unique and challenging trail course through the forest and fields at Nature’s Edge Therapy Center. I felt like a kid running cross-country again! It was well organized, had great finisher medals, and a very unique t-shirt. The best thing about the race was the great cause I knew I was supporting. Money raised from the race directly impacts the great programs and scholarships for patients at Nature’s Edge. This race will be on my calendar again next year!”*

Please join us for “Running the Edge” next year. Watch our website for more information.

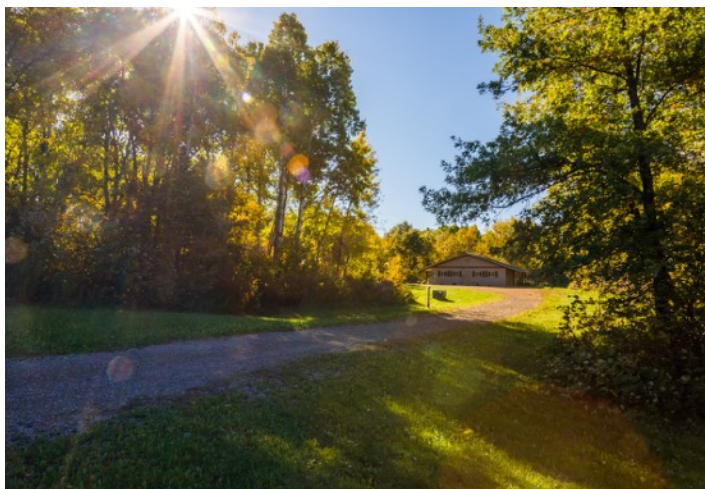
“RUNNING THE EDGE” FOR THERAPY SCHOLARSHIPS THROUGH SPONSORSHIP!

Diane's House at Nature's Edge — Uncommon therapeutic interventions for lifelong benefits

Through the Diane's House intensive therapy program, Nature's Edge is equipped to offer integrative therapy to families who are not able to utilize our Monday-Friday outpatient services because of distance or other difficulties. At Diane's House, a family and their loved one with disabilities is able to stay for visits of up to one week to receive intensive therapy. Therapy at Diane's House addresses concerns and barriers identified by the family in communication with our therapists. Goals addressing every-day life skills in dressing, toileting, mealtime, emotional regulation, communication and bedtime routines (among others) are

programmed into an individual treatment plan developed for each patient. A cross-disciplinary approach, resourcing speech, occupational and physical therapists, is employed during treatment. Emphasis is placed on establishing essential communication as the foundation to progress goals. Treatment strategies utilized include hippotherapy (treatment with the help of a horse), animal-assisted therapy, horticulture therapy and opportunities for activities in nature. Community outings are planned to provide everyday practice of skills achieved during the week. Diane's House targets communication and daily living skills necessary for greater independence.

DIANE'S HOUSE — A WEEK OF THERAPY, A LIFETIME OF BENEFITS



Butterfly garden planted at Nature's Edge



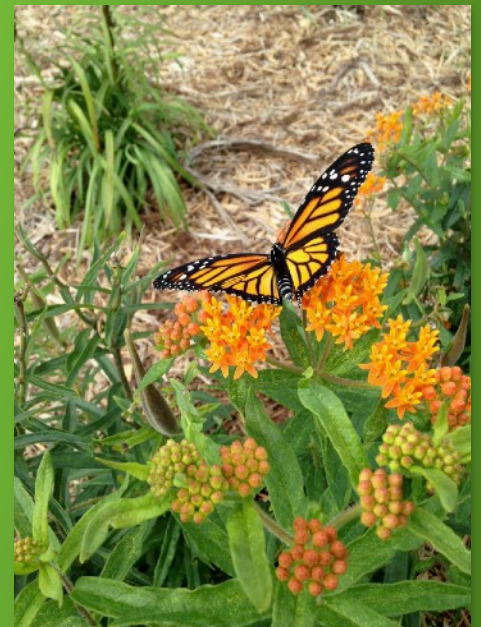
In June 2018, Nature's Edge Therapy Center received as a donation the establishment of a butterfly garden. The butterfly garden was designed by speech-language pathologist Marla Damman, a long-time friend of Becky Payne, SLP and director of Nature's Edge. Damman, her husband, Nathan Heldenbrand, a sister-in-law and her husband, Shirley and Bob Carr, worked at Nature's Edge during a five-day visit to create the butterfly garden. A variety of native, host and nectar plants were

introduced in the Nature's Edge garden, including dill, parsley, chives, oregano, milkweed, mullein, purple cone flower, bee balm, butterfly weed, witch hazel, pussy willow, winterberry and service berry. Damman developed the garden to serve not only as habitat for butterflies but also as a therapy tool and educational site. Therapy benefits of butterfly gardening include the full spectrum of gardening and plant activities that improve human well-being and also promote investigation of the insect-plant connection and of the life cycle and metamorphosis of the butterfly. Butterfly gardening allows for either hands-on interactions with soil, plants and insects or passive observation of a garden alive with the activity of butterflies and other pollinators. Butterfly gardens are also excellent therapy tools because the sight of a butterfly flitting among foliage evokes imagination, happy emotions and creativity. As the Nature's Edge butterfly garden emerges next spring, we hope that its selection of natural habitat and colorful flowers will be a popular haven for local butterfly species and a source of enjoyment, well-being and development for patients at Nature's Edge.



Butterfly haven for therapy benefits

Butterfly gardening seeks to create an environment that attracts, encourages and supports butterflies, some moths and other pollinators. A butterfly garden includes plants for butterflies to nectar on, as well as host plants on which the caterpillars may develop. Other means of attracting butterflies are incorporated into the garden, such as providing water, sand for puddling, and a salt source. This growing haven for butterflies is also a source of therapy benefits. Touching the soil, pruning the plants, pulling weeds, seeing movement and brilliance of color and appreciating fragrance affect sensory and emotional regulation. Tending plants nourishes both mind and body.





Left to right: Gymer with Cass (and Ty); Svali with Barb, Skip with Caitlyn, and Bacardi with Courtney.

Legacy line-up — Hippotherapy champions

Sometimes a premonition calls for action, which was certainly the case when the photo above was taken. Our staff decided that this was the day to take a photo of four hippotherapy champions who were aging. All four had gained the status of therapy giants in our minds because of their contributions as relationship-builders, physical trainers, motivators, and wisdom-on-four-hooves through hours of therapy, of interactions, and of patience. Skip, at nearly 31 years old, Bacardi at 22, Svali at 28, and Gymer at 27 together totaled over 60 years invested in therapy. If 5 hours in therapy per week is estimated (a very low estimate), these four equines represented over 15,000 hours dedicated to the rehabilitation and well-being of countless patients with disabilities. Skip was a founding therapy horse,

beginning his work in hippotherapy in 2001 at age 14 when Nature's Edge was founded. He served for nearly 17 years. In 2009 Skip was recognized as NARHA Equine of the Year for Region 6 (now PATH, Int'l.). Skip never grew weary of therapy. He was known to always be ready for yet another session. Less than a week after this photo was taken, Skip began a downward spiral that resulted in his death. R.I.P. Skip.

There are countless ways that the horse contributes to and fortifies therapy. The patient as rider benefits from the rhythmic movement and sensory input from the horse. The movement of the horse stimulates the patient's brain and muscles to work together, but there is still more. A most amazing part of hippotherapy is that patient is motivated and the horse seems to know.

SKIP LOVED THERAPY — SO MANY LOVED HIM



Families first

Progress in therapy is achieved as skills are learned and carried over into everyday living situations, a transfer that often relies on parents and caregivers. At Nature's Edge, we support families and assist them in carry-over of skills. When news comes back of a meltdown that was resolved, less frustration because of better communication, two or three words spoken together for the first time, better balance, or even hearing

"I love you" for the first time, we are delighted because we know our work in common is bringing results!

Therapy scholarships open doors – Your donation opens doors!

During 2018 Nature's Edge awarded over 375 therapy sessions to patients with disabilities through scholarship funding. Scholarship funds were received through grants from the Rice Lake Community

Health Foundation, with matches to the Foundation's grant, as well as from the Wisconsin Horse Council. Your donations are instrumental for ongoing scholarship funding.

2019 Gala – Please join us!

This year's "Evening in Elegance" Gala fund-raising event will be held Friday, Jan. 18, 2019 at the Rice Lake (Wis.) Elks Club. Check out our website for more information.

YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING PROVIDES NEEDED THERAPY

Yes, I would like to give a donation of \$_____ to Nature's Edge. Please use my donation as indicated:

Scholarships for Therapy Sessions **Animal Care** **Where Most Needed**

Name _____ Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____ Email _____

Mail to: Nature's Edge Therapy Center, 2523 14 ¾ Ave., Rice Lake, WI 54868

Nature's Edge is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Check us out on the web or Facebook

www.naturesedgetherapycenter.org

Comprehensive therapy – A bundled approach for functional life skills

A walk in the woods with a favorite animal, harvesting squash and pumpkins, taking notes while seated in the Butterfly Garden, observing herd interactions in the pasture, a therapy session on horseback utilizing the benefits of hippotherapy – all of these treatment options and hundreds more are incorporated into therapy at Nature's Edge.

Each treatment technique is a tool for focusing on functional life applications. Each one is a sensory stimulator, aiding both sensory seekers and sensory avoiders to achieve ideal regulation for optimal functioning. Each one uniquely addresses frustrations that can escalate into out-of-control situations. Each one targets physical, social, psychological, emotional and educational outcomes. Each is an innovative resource to encourage appropriate development, to solve difficult behaviors, to promote growth in independence.

All common ground life experiences. We want to meet you there.

