

## VSACT 19 September 2017 Meeting Notes

Guest Speaker: Heidi Dering, ROCK On Healing Thru Horses Program, PATH Instructor

- Update of Steering Committee Notes:
  - Need secretary and additional members! Email Katie at Katherine.martin@bellcounty.texas.gov if interested
  - We will not be implementing the bike drive at this point in time; wasn't enough need.  
**However, Maureen Sapp at Bring Everyone in the Zone has a Veteran in need of a bike. Please reach out if you have resources available!**
- Attendee Introductions around the Room
- Presentation of Services by Heidi Dering
  - ROCK stands for Ride on Center for Kids—however, the Veteran program was implemented a few years after initial foundation
    - Ultimately believes the movement of change propels us forward; coordinates that with the movement of the horse in conjunction with equine therapy
    - Longest Veteran within the program has been there for 8 years; as long as they're moving forward in the program, they can absolutely continue
      - A few Veterans have even learned so much, obtained certifications, and are now interns/instructors themselves
  - Couple donated land to the ROCK program in Georgetown, TX. 67 acres. Started working with children w/ disabilities
    - In 2005 developed a small Veteran pilot program, utilizing Fort Hood's 1<sup>st</sup> Calvary horses
      - At that time called Horses for Heroes; a video was developed and sent all over the country. Was a start for many programs across the country
    - In 2006 did a capital campaign and built a covered arena to better serve the community
    - Started as a small group that would chat and then meet/work with the horses
    - As they grew, decided to change the name as Horses for Heroes as it was already copyrighted. Changed to ROCK On Veterans (ROV). About 29% of their clientele are Veterans
  - **A premier-accredited center through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH International). Subsequently have quite a few rules, standards, and maintain evidence-based practices**
    - Have Monday-night, women's only programs
      - Works on Military Sexual Trauma, and other women-centered trauma situations
      - Has a mental health professional on staff
    - Tuesday nights are beginner classes/Intro to Horsemanship
    - Thursday nights will then be tour nights to be introduced to the program/horses
  - Do not complete very much counseling with the horses, however. More so focus on developing a trusting, healthy relationship with the horses→help the Veterans learn to simply trust again after experienced trauma, etc.

- Veterans ride at NO CHARGE.
  - Has a volunteer that partners with every single Veteran that rides; most of the time they are Veterans as well.
- Recommends the book *Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown. Utilizes that while working with Veterans that have endured trauma
- Is willing to set up times for organizations to see the facility, learn more extensively about programs, etc.
- **Best way to refer group of Veterans or individuals:**
  - Call Heidi at: 512-930-7625 x311
  - Have an online registration system at [www.rockride.org](http://www.rockride.org). Takes about 10 mins to fill out
    - Have to fill out additional forms at ROCK; also need to fill out a physician statement. Riders might also be less than 250 lbs.
  - Unfortunately, no room in evening classes at this moment. However, every Tuesday night there is a fellowship meeting/dinner. Anyone can come
    - Will then introduce them to other Veterans and be able to groom and have introductions with a horse