

anxiety, and depression. The Animal Therapy program allows participants to read to, groom, and pet the farm animals as a way to reduce stress and anxiety. Therapeutic horseback riding and carriage driving programs assist participants in relaxation while developing confidence, coordination, and muscle tone. Participants are taught by a certified P.A.T.H. (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) riding and driving instructor how to control a horse while riding, which can improve sensory and motor skills. Working with the horses also promotes communication and attention skills as well as a positive increase in self-esteem.

Horseback Riding Lessons.

Allaire Community Farm offers on-site horseback riding lessons for ages six through adult, where students develop horsemanship skills including grooming, tacking, riding, and care. The farm offers both English and Western style lessons.

Looking Toward the Future

Joanne and Sean Burney are not done yet. Their full vision for Allaire Community Farm will become a reality while they serve the community in even more ways by broadening their outreach. Over the winter, the farm welcomed the addition of both an indoor riding barn and a temperature-regulated Learning Resource Center. Burney said, “The Learning Resource Center, sponsored by Peter and Mary Grandich, has a community room, a kitchen, and bathrooms, and both facilities will enable us to remain open year-round.” The Indoor Equestrian Center was sponsored by Mary Ellen Harris, President of the Golden Dome Foundation, in honor of her late husband Peter.

The last part of the farm’s future site plan is the completion of the “Path to Independence,” which will add accessibility to the grounds for a new demographic. “The Path to

Independence’ will travel through the entire property and enable people in wheelchairs or scooters to access every one of our buildings, including the petting zoo and the greenhouses,” she described. “I can picture it, and [it] will be simply wonderful.”

Burney’s eyes lit up as she discussed her goal to begin an intergenerational program where teenagers and senior citizens meet together at the farm. “It’s a big heartbeat of mine that this will happen. I visualize teenagers who are struggling with anxiety and depression pushing surrogate grandparents from lonely and isolated living situations through the grounds and sharing their stories with each other. Intergenerational healing through telling stories,” Burney said. “They can learn from each other and lift each other’s spirits, as each population has something valuable to offer the other. It’s healing on both ends.”

Burney’s positivity and optimism are contagious and two of the many reasons behind Allaire Community Farm’s success. “To have happiness and joy, you have to have a purpose in life. And you cannot experience pure joy without helping someone in some way, shape, or form,” she said. “The farm brings goodness to people, especially to the forgotten populations of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, special-needs, at-risk, and seniors. We do what we can to help, and the joy, it just flows.” ♦



Nigerian Dwarf goats.

Jill Ocone

Allaire Community Farm is located at 1923 Baileys Corner Road in Wall Township. The farm, petting zoo, and farm market are open Tues. - Sat. 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM and Sun. 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM. For more information, call (732) 796-3298 or visit www.allairecommunityfarm.org. Visit the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AllaireCommunityFarm for daily postings and operating updates, including weather-related closures and information.

Allaire Community Farm welcomes donations and volunteers to support its initiatives and mission of nurturing through nature. To learn more, to volunteer, or to make a donation, visit their website.