

MILITARY CONNECTIONS AT DREAMS ON HORSEBACK

WHERE CONNECTION IS KEY

Why Military Connections?

Dreams on Horseback has long recognized its ability to change peoples' lives by bringing people together to bond and grow through the shared experience of horse-partnered learning. Touched by a beloved volunteer's loss of a grandson to a PTSD precipitated accident, Dreams on Horseback knew it was our responsibility to provide a place of connection for our local military and veterans - a place where the connections between horse, rider, instructor and volunteer could change lives.

Why Horses?

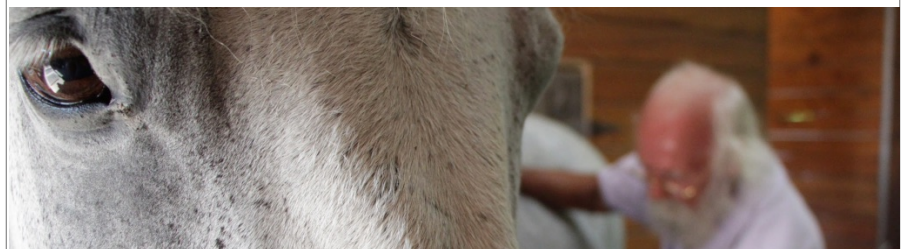
Horses have the unique ability to read and mirror human emotion. With the help of gifted instructors, horses help participants recognize and respond to their reaction to stressors in their everyday lives. Riding also serves as a catalyst for participants to reconnect with others through a shared recreational experiences.



Veteran Cynthia Johnson Stroup finds connection through service at Dreams on Horseback

"I suppose there is a certain amount of pride that comes from serving, but the true nature of service is altruistic. It comes from commitment, humility and a deep desire to help others live better lives. This is what makes it so very honorable."

- Cynthia Johnson Stroup





Bob Fown - Making Connections

Having suffered a spinal cord injury during his Navy scuba diving training over forty years ago, Bob Fown is committed to living life to the fullest.

Bob is one of those guys - a man's man whose ready smile makes all those he meets feel better about themselves. His smile might suggest that he lives a life free from struggle, but his cane and broken gait remind friends that his life has not been easy.

You see, Bob is a guy who made a decision that he would not let his service-related injury stand in his way of living a full life. With the help of adaptive equipment, Bob skis, bicycles, and rides a motorcycle.

Bob's latest passion? Horseback riding at Dreams on Horseback with the help of what he calls his "military brothers and sisters." Bob encourages others to find a passion. In a recent news story about Bob's involvement in Military Connections, he encouraged others to actively seek **connection** by saying, "You have to get back out there

Cynthia, or CJ, having recently moved to Central Ohio as a result of her husband's new job, found herself experiencing some of the same anxieties that come with reintegration. Worried about finding new friends and new purpose, CJ called on her love of horses to help her combat her homesickness. She decided to volunteer at Dreams on Horseback where she was delighted to learn that there was a new program to address the needs of veterans. Being a veteran herself who had once trained fellow Desert Storm airmen in the establishment of mobile combat air traffic control, CJ hoped to meld her equine and military experiences to help other veterans heal.

That's when she met Bob. Serving as a horse leader for vets needing the extra safety support a leader provides, CJ felt an immediate connection with this Vietnam Vet whose friendship helped her find "home" in Central Ohio. CJ says she and Bob share stories about their service, talk about the horses, and plot together how to extend Military Connections' reach to other vets and military. CJ and Bob have developed a trust through Military Connections. "I am honored when other vets share tales of their service, an often sacred part of their lives." She continues, "my new found military friends teach me the true meaning of resilience and determination."

