Allegan County Exceptional Equestrians
4-H Therapeutic Riding Program

Fact Sheet

1. ACEE was founded in 1975 as one of the first Therapeutic Riding Programs in the Nation. It operated until the early 1980's when the Programs first Instructor Nancy Mapes, left the area.

2. ACEE was re-established in 1995 with the determination of a 4-H Leader that became HRH certified through the Cheff Center in Therapeutic Instruction. Jan Brinn was a volunteer as a 4-H'er with the Program in the 1970’s and now guides the programs Instructors and is an Employee of MSU Extension as a 4-H Extension Educator. Presently ACEE has five certified Instructors: (six if you count Jan Brinn) Tasha Federinko, Tara Wilkes, Bonnie Luft, Abby Bigford and Eva DeGlopper; which all started as ACEE Volunteers.

3. ACEE has served many individual riders from Allegan, Kalamazoo, and VanBuren Counties. Riders age from 3-58 years. Challenged individuals include, but are not limited to, the following: Emotionally Disabled, Mentally Disabled, Visually Disabled, Hearing Disabled, ADD, ADHD, Autistic, Cerebral palsy, Learning Disabilities, Muscular Dystrophy, and various Syndromes.

4. ACEE relies on Volunteers for Side walkers, Horse Leaders, and Horse care providers.

5. ACEE operates during the summer at 4-H Camp Kidwell in Bloomingdale. Riders practice walking, trotting, games, exercises, and will often go on a trail ride. Advanced Riders have progressed to joining 4-H Horse Project Clubs and competing in Horse Shows and even at the 4-H State Horse Show in the offered PEP (Proud Equestrians Program) Classes. Educational themes are also utilized with 2007-2008 Global Education and 2009 Healthy Lifestyles.

6. Each of the ACEE horses have gone through and completed a rigorous evaluation by the Instructors to ensure suitability and safety for the Program.

7. ACEE is governed by an Advisory Council and operates under the direction of the Allegan County MSU Extension Office and its 4-H Programs. ACEE Board Directors and the Instructors are 4-H Resource Leaders.

8. Special equipment is utilized for the various disabilities like a wheelchair-mounting ramp, Aussi saddles with bars attached, Devonshire boots, peacock stirrups, and bareback pads.

9. ACEE charges no tuition fees to the students. ACEE is supported solely through foundation grants, fundraisers, and private or organization donations.

10. For more information or to volunteer, contact Jan Brinn at the Allegan County MSU Extension Office 269-673-0370.