

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saddle Up! instructor and co-founder Lynne Evans wins award

FRANKLIN, Tenn. – Saddle Up! Instructor and co-founder Lynne Evans has been chosen as the Region 5 Instructor of the Year by NARHA (North American Riding for the Handicapped Association), the national organization that sets the quality and safety standards for equine assisted programs in the United States and internationally.

Evans will be recognized as one of the regional winners at the NARHA national conference in Lexington, KY, at the November 11 awards ceremony when the national Instructor of the Year will be announced. She was also the 2003 Region 5 Volunteer of the Year.

"I was so honored to be nominated by my Saddle Up! peers for the Instructor of the Year award and to represent Saddle Up! in our 20th anniversary celebration," Evans said. "It was even more humbling to be chosen by Region 5 for this honor. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of Saddle Up! for all these years and to have been inspired by all the amazing children, parents, and devoted volunteers."

The award recognizes "center instructors who are compassionate and creative teachers and leaders (who) are critical to the success of any therapeutic riding center."

"Lynne could have been used as the model for the awards description," said Saddle Up! Executive Director Cheryl Scutt. "She brings competence, compassion and a positive, can-do attitude to each student she teaches and helps all achieve their best. Having her win this award during the Saddle Up! 20th anniversary celebration makes it even more special."

Late in 1989, Evans was one of the individuals who began working on a dream to provide a therapeutic riding program for children and youth with disabilities in Middle Tennessee. The dream began to take flight in May 1990, when using a borrowed barn, horses and tack, the new program called Saddle Up! served 10 special riders with summer lessons. In 1991, Saddle Up! became a legal nonprofit organization with the mission to provide children and youth with disabilities the opportunity to grow and develop through recreational activities with horses. In 20 years of service, Saddle Up! has served more than 1,000 special riders with over 37,000 lessons using the power of nearly 100 noble horses who have served in the program.

Evans has consistently been part of Saddle Up! throughout its history. She has been an Instructor from the first lessons and continues today in that role. Also this year, she is chair of the annual fund campaign to help raise money for the program. It is the single biggest fundraising undertaking of Saddle Up! and supports everything needed to make the program possible.

An accomplished dressage rider, Lynne has equal passions for all things horses and all things children. In addition to more than 20 years of service to Saddle Up!, Lynne served as the coach for the Special Olympics Equestrian Team in 1995, when Saddle Up! rider JoAnn Cotton won a gold medal for English equitation. She also taught Grace Gregory, both as a Saddle Up! rider and

then independent rider, who won the high point award for dressage at a national competition in New York in 2010. All of her students get gold medal coaching and teaching so they can be the best equestrian possible.

NARHA has more than 700 centers as members with more than 2,500 NARHA instructors. The United States is split into 11 regions and programs in each region are eligible to nominate instructors for the award. Saddle Up! is part of Region V, which includes six states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee – that have nearly 300 NARHA certified instructors.

In the past five years, NARHA has honored Saddle Up! with five awards: 2006 Region 5 Therapy Horse of the Year for the late and remarkable equine, King Bee; 2007 Region 5 Instructor of the Year Nancy Swindell; 2009 Region 5 and national Independent Youth Equestrian of the Year Andrew Wash; and Lynne Evans as the Region 5 instructor winner this year.

In addition to celebrating Evans' award at the national conference, Saddle Up! will honor her and all those whose work and support has made it possible for Saddle Up! to become the largest therapeutic riding program in Middle Tennessee at the final two events of its 20th anniversary celebration: the Saturday, Sept. 17 "Rockin' for Riders" concert featuring Joey+Rory at the historic Franklin Theatre and the Saturday, Oct. 1 Homecoming Day at Saddle Up!. For more information please visit the website, www.saddleupnashville.org, or call 615-794-1150.