



WHEATLAND FARM RESPONDS TO THE CORONAVIRUS

Dear Friends,

As we continue to deal with the current Coronavirus crisis, I wanted to take a moment to brief you on our position here at Wheatland Farm once, especially in light of the ever-changing guidelines at the state and local level.

As the mom of three special needs children myself, I am acutely sensitive to the challenges currently visiting families of these very unique children. While our non-disabled kids have experienced significant upheaval and change, our special needs students have been uniquely disadvantaged. Very few of them can truly benefit from online or distance learning. Many of them are now without the therapies that ensured their physical, emotional and cognitive development. Many children are without the necessary adaptive devices that they require for mobility and learning, typically available to them in a school setting and now not available at home. Most of these students do not have adaptive sport or recreation opportunities at home.

Therefore we have worked very hard here at Wheatland Farm to continue to provide much needed adaptive programming for them all: We are providing: Hippotherapy, Para equestrian and respite services for siblings. We are available 24/7 for ANY family needing adaptive equipment such as wheelchairs, gait trainers, adaptive seating devices and communication devices for home use.

Our behavior specialist is available daily for a phone consult to help families deal with the social and emotional fallout that their special needs children are experiencing with the loss of services at school. We are now in the process of setting up weekly online meetups for parents of our special needs students, with guest specialists each week, to share information, experiences and provide fellowship and support.

We are also concerned to make sure that we stay within the guidelines set forth by the Governor of Virginia to mitigate against the spread of the Coronavirus and to keep our students and staff safe. We are implementing strict social distancing and sanitation guidelines:

1. We have closed all gathering spaces such as the Coffee Shop, the Viewing Lounge, and the Indoor Arena foyer, and instituted a strict by appointment only visitor policy.
2. We have instructed staff to sanitize all equipment before and after each student thoroughly.
3. We have asked parents to provide the one-on-one assistance that the student might need in equestrian therapy sessions, including assisting with mounting and side walking, to avoid the instructor or therapist coming within 6ft of any student at any time.
4. We have consulted with our county sheriff to ensure that we are within the guidelines of the ordinance.
5. We are working to build up inventory in our adaptive equipment lending closet, so that any child in need of adaptive equipment during this time, can borrow it for free. Currently, available items for free loans include gait trainers, wheelchairs, adaptive seating items, and adaptive bicycles. We are sourcing communications devices and other items to bolster the inventory.
6. We are monitoring changes daily so that we can be as nimble and responsive as possible. Should the need arise, we can change our level of operation and expand or reduce services.

We are still planning on a summer full of fun, including adaptive aquatics, camps, and more, confident that this great nation, having overcome so much in her proud history, will arise from the crisis better than ever.

As your Executive Director and your friend, please know my heart is with each one of you. I am here to serve you and to help you in any capacity possible. I am praying for your families every day and ask the Lord to protect us all - families, staff, and especially our students. Please do not hesitate to call us at any time, at (703) 574-0511. Our staff is monitoring all messages every day, throughout the day. At this time we are asking ALL visitors to the farm to call and make an appointment before coming, so we can be sure to serve you safely and well.

Yours faithfully,

A. Muriel Forrest

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.
WHEATLAND FARM