

Megan Bayer

12th Grade

William J. Palmer High School

Colorado

What Drives Me?

What drives me is the knowledge that people are getting the compassionate care that they need to live their lives to the fullest. I work at Stablestrides, a non-profit organization that offers Equine Assisted Services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy in partnership with Memorial Hospital and the Colorado Children's Hospital. Stablestrides also offers Mental Health Therapy for all ages in the Colorado Springs area. As an Equine Caretaker who cares for the herd of eleven horses, I get to witness the magic that happens from the sidelines. I see the young kids get out of their cars and sprint to the barn because they are so excited to see their horse. These kids get to have fun and play games without even knowing that the horse's movement is offering them physical therapy. With being on staff, I often get asked to fill in for volunteers during client sessions. I had the privilege to work with an older gentleman who had had a stroke and was using the Adaptive Riding Program to help him gain strength. Not only did this gentleman gain some strength back in his legs, but he also became more verbal. During my first session with him he could not ask his horse to "walk on." Near the end of his time at Stablestrides, he was able to talk to his horse as well as hum some classic country songs, such as "Home on the Range" while walking around the arena. Seeing the impact Stablestrides has on these people, strives me to do my job better. I get up before the sun in the morning to go feed the herd without complaining because I know how much these horses impact people. I know that the better care I offer to the horses, the better care they will be able to offer to our clients. In working at Stablestrides I also learned what I want to study in college. Colorado State University has an amazing Therapeutic Riding Center called the Temple Grandin Equine Center. My goal is to be and Equine Science Major where I can get to still use horses to help those in my communities. I want to become a Certified Therapeutic Riding instructor through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Int.). I want my talents and gifts to 'drive' me forward to help the people who are in need of compassionate care within my community.