

Horse therapy center aims to heal

Grand opening celebration to be held Saturday.

By Sarah Millard
Freeman Staff

TOWN OF EAGLE – Brindley Martin, 10, of Palmyra, was bouncing and wobbling on Cha-heeta's back – laughing and smiling – clearly enjoying his horseback riding lesson and the activities that went with the lesson Thursday.

But Brindley, who has severe autism, wasn't always able to express his joyful feelings of being on Cha-heeta, a Morab horse. Liz Partridge, a therapeutic riding instructor, said she has seen many improvements in Brindley's communication since he began riding lessons.

Brindley, through his lessons, has been able to let others know what he needs, Partridge said.

"He is a lot more spontaneous," Partridge said.

Partridge will be an instructor at Jericho Creek Farms for its Horse Power Healing Center.

The center is holding an open house and grand opening celebration from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the farm, S101-W34628 Highway L.O. The center was established as a nonprofit April 16.

The center's mission statement is "to provide children and adults, who are physically, mentally or emotionally challenged, with healing empowerment through horses. Equine-oriented activities will facilitate the ability of individuals to reach their full potential, thus enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence," according to the center's website, www.horsepower-healingcenter.com.

Linda Konichek, co-owner of the farm, said she is looking for volunteers to help with their first summer program. People age 14 and above can be trained to side-walk during the therapeutic lessons.

"These children, once you get to



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Brindley Martin, 10, of Palmyra, rides on Cha-heeta, a Morab horse, during his therapeutic riding lessons at Jericho Creek Farms in the town of Eagle. Assisting him from left to right is farm carpenter Jamie Grund, Martin's stepfather, Robert Kokan, and farm owner Cindy Konichek.

know them, they are a blessing," said Linda Konichek, who is helping to run the center with her daughter, Wendy.

The plans for the center came together when Wendy Konichek moved back to the farm last summer from northern Wisconsin. Wendy Konichek previously worked with a social services group to provide assistance to people who are mentally and physically challenged.

While Linda Konichek said the work they have been doing is rewarding, she also feels the teenage volunteers and others are going to learn valuable lessons.

"It is pretty hard to feel sorry for yourself or think you have got it all bad when you see what others go through," she said.

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