



from Spalding website:

Equine Therapy at Spalding

Following a serious motorcycle accident in 2002, it was 12 weeks before Kate Dendrinis-Rickel could fully access speech and mobility with the help of Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital in Aurora, where she underwent speech, physical and occupational therapy.

Dendrinis recently expressed her gratitude by organizing the hospital's first Horse Visitation Day. She and her husband, Shawn Rickel, loaded 4 horses from Big View Ranch, their equine therapy ranch in Golden, Colorado, and spent the afternoon at Spaulding, visiting with patients and allowing them to enjoy time with the animals.

Families from a neighboring Ronald McDonald House walked across the street to participate in the fun. Everyone, including patients, families, staff and children enjoyed the experience. Even the horses went home happy after receiving many pets, treats, and carrots. Staffers at the hospital say the event was so successful, it is being considered as a recurring event.

According to a news article in The Denver Post, "Both Kate and Shawn were enchanted with horses from an early age. . . They recognized the gentle, compelling, and healing nature of the horse. Simply put, horses soothed their souls. And as adults, Kate and Shawn sought to deepen their connection with horses and share their understandings with others."

On the day of the August 2002 accident, the couple was riding out to look at properties where they could launch a new business idea: an equine therapy program to encourage confidence and physical activity for disabled and underprivileged children.

Kate and Shawn have co-authored a book with Steve Marsh about their experiences following Kate's brain injury and recovery entitled, "I Am Not Supposed to Be Here" <http://www.iamnotsupposedtobehere.com/>. It is the true story of her incredible journey back to health following the accident.

The project was sidelined for years after the accident, but the ranch is now open and a portion of the proceeds from book sales helps to pay for Big View's equine arena and operations.