



# TEC Connections

*The Therapeutic Equestrian Center engages the power of horses to challenge people with special needs to build stronger bodies, minds, and spirits.*

## A Veteran Continues to Serve

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Fifty years ago in Hue City, Vietnam, 19-year-old Dan Cholewa, a Marine Corps machine gunner, was on top of a building holding off enemy soldiers when he received an order to go for help. As he jumped down an explosion sent him flying into the air.

After hitting the ground, he looked down and saw that his left hand was mangled and his right arm was bleeding profusely. With searing pain in his right side, he believed his legs were gone. He immediately thought about his parents and how hard his death would impact them.

After four months in Vietnam and 11.5 months in the hospital, Dan was discharged. He recalls dreaming every night in vivid colors of "jungle green and blood red; they were always nightmares of hell". Thousands of Dan's fellow soldiers were killed in the Tet Offensive, one of the largest and bloodiest battles of the entire war. Many who survived were badly injured and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder

(PTSD). Every day Dan still thinks about his time in combat. **"It changes the rest of your life, but it helps you appreciate life, people, and being alive."**

Dan decided nine years ago to volunteer at TEC because he feels a calling to serve, just as he did when he enlisted in the Marine Corps. He explains, **"God gave me a mandate to reach out to others, just like others reached out to me."**

This past winter Dan joined our **TEC WITH VETS** program as a participant rather than a volunteer. When asked what he would like other veterans to know about TEC, Dan thinks a moment then says, **"Serving people with special needs is good for your healing, and besides, you get to ride a horse! It helps fulfill your life."**



*19-year-old, Dan Cholewa, aims his machine gun from a bunker in Vietnam.*



*Dan and Garth execute a right turn at TEC WITH VETS.*

Contact TEC at  
(269) 429-0671 or  
[info@tecfarm.org](mailto:info@tecfarm.org).

TEC is a member  
center of PATH and all  
TEC instructors are  
certified by PATH.



**PATH**  
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Professional Association of Therapeutic  
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**Did you know? Your donations make it possible for Dan and other veterans to participate in our TEC WITH VETS program at NO COST to them!**

# A Gentle Giant Turns Therapist

The first time TEC horse, Nellie, rested her forehead against military veteran Melanie's forehead, Melanie broke down in tears. After having suffered injuries and trauma during her military service, Melanie had been going to counseling at the Veterans' Administration; **the help she sought, however, ended up coming from TEC WITH VETS and "horse therapy"**.

TEC instructor, Helen Patterson, met Nellie in February of this year and spent some time in her pasture getting to know her. What she discovered was that she was dealing with an extremely sensitive soul in a large, part-draft-horse body. Nellie "acts like a big puppy dog", and Helen feels comfortable putting her most challenged riders on her. She calls her "the lie detector" because "she will call you



*Nellie asks Helen for a scratch between the ears*

out every time on any feelings you may be trying to hide. **She will recognize what you are feeling before you recognize it yourself."**



TEC was able to purchase Nellie thanks to generous donations earmarked for that specific purpose. One thing that makes this 1,400 pound, 18-year-old mare so valuable to the program is her size. Since care is taken to be sure the horses only carry 20% of their body weight, some riders would have no one to ride if it weren't for Nellie. Her most valuable assets, however, are her sweetness, willingness, and giving nature.

*Jordan enjoys his "handiwork" on his living canvas.*

## Our HEARTFELT THANKS to our 2018 first-quarter donors; you make all of this possible!



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# Celebrating Marilyn and TEC

For Marilyn Bubula Harvey, the most rewarding part of being involved with TEC is seeing the joy and happiness on the riders' faces when they come to ride their horses. She has seen children who normally have a hard time walking, run toward the barn as soon as they get out of the car. "I wish others realized how important TEC is to the community and that without volunteers, TEC would not exist. Many riders in every lesson need 2 to 3 volunteers. They are the backbone of what we do."



Marilyn's guests climb aboard for a carriage ride, with proceeds going to TEC.

When Marilyn completed the rigorous PATH International instructor program and earned her certification in last fall, her husband Richard threw a party to celebrate. Marilyn suggested that, in lieu of gifts, people make donations to TEC. A good time was had by all and, to her astonishment, over \$4,500 was raised in one afternoon, which is nearly the cost of caring for one TEC horse for a year!

In Marilyn's own words, "Thank you to all who helped make this dream of mine a reality. Thank you to all who so generously donated to TEC; we see your money work every day in the lives of our riders and horses. If you have a special occasion coming up, a birthday or other celebration, consider hosting a fundraiser for TEC. It is easier than you think; you and your family and/or friends have fun and TEC reaps the benefits. Your donation goes so far to help those with special needs grow stronger in mind and body."



Do you want to volunteer, support a horse, be a rider, or participate in other ways at TEC? Visit [www.tecfarm.org](http://www.tecfarm.org) to learn how you can support TEC or call (269) 429-0671. E-mails are also welcomed at [info@tecfarm.org](mailto:info@tecfarm.org).



**Yes!** I want to support more "I DID IT!" moments at TEC with this *tax-deductible* donation.

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# Horses Change Lives Through TEC



**Meet Alex.**  
**Thanks to donors like you, he is**  
**learning to walk alongside**  
**his TEC pony, Tori.**

**Interested? Need more information? Want to sign up for a program or become a volunteer? Call (269) 429-0671 or e-mail [info@tecfarm.org](mailto:info@tecfarm.org).**