



Student helps kids ride tall

As soon as the young riders saddled up, Jennifer Malloy, 21, and other volunteers took their positions.

At the Therapeutic Riding Equestrian Center, a horse-assisted therapy facility in Fairview, students with physical, emotional and social disabilities learn to do simple stretches, listen to directions and give commands to the horses.

Meanwhile, volunteers like Malloy walk, trot and run alongside to help keep riders and horses calm and safe.

It's similar to the Medina, Ohio, program she went through as a kid. For Malloy, who has a prosthetic leg, therapeutic riding helped her build up mental and physical strength.

"It's definitely helped me gain a lot of confidence, so I feel like I can help share that with other students as well," she said. Although she's busy studying to be a physician assistant, the Gannon University senior tries to volunteer at TREC at least once a week during the school year.

The kids look up to Malloy, and so do the volunteers, said Mary Zurn, TREC's volunteer coordinator.

"She's always fantastic with the riders, she's fantastic with the horses, she's fantastic with the kids," she said. "This is someone who's bridged the gap between our riders and our volunteers."

-- Lindsey Poisson

"It's great to be able to give back because I know how much it helped me and how much it can help these students." – Jennifer Malloy, 21