

# ON PATROL



4TH QUARTER 2018

# Horses Healing Veterans

## Pal-O-Mine Equestrian Center works with Veterans

Right in the center of Long Island, where corporate buildings and shopping malls are the most common sights, is one of the most serene environments you can imagine - and it's also a place of healing. Pal-O-Mine Equestrian in Islandia sits on a beautiful, spacious 13 acre site with horses, ponies, mules, chickens, rabbits, children and adults from 2 - 92 years of age participating in a multitude of programs. It is a place that, as one Pal-O-Mine supporter puts it, "*nourishes the soul.*"



Pal-O-Mine is a non-profit organization begun in 1995 that provides therapeutic equine programs that facilitate growth, healing and learning for children and adults with disabilities; people who have been abused or neglected; the impoverished; and also members of the military through Pal O-Mine's **Horses Healing Veterans program.**

Lisa Gatti, the founder and CEO of Pal-O-Mine, developed Pal-O-Mine's "Horses Healing Veterans" program when she realized the tremendous need for



both physical and emotional therapy for veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Horses can heal in so many ways," says Gatti. "Horses are never, ever judgmental. We believe this program will have a significant impact for our veterans and their families." Through working with horses, Gatti says veterans and others who have faced trauma learn to express their emotions and feel trust, confidence and hope again.

"For more than four thousand years, horses have been an integral part of warfare," Gatti explains. "Today, horses are still playing an important role in war; this time in the recovery of military veterans who have suffered emotional and/or physical injuries." She adds that "Clinical evidence and generations of human experience show that horses have a special ability to help people work through emotional barriers without shame or stigma."

With its Horses Healing Veterans program, Pal-O-Mine helps treat veterans and their families who suffer from the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), such as anger, depression, anxiety, nightmares, irritability, addiction, and other debilitating conditions. In addition, the program helps veterans and their families dealing with traumatic brain injury.

"Our approach gives our clients the opportunity to gain knowledge about their behaviors while providing them with an emotionally safe environment for them to develop positive alternatives," says Gatti. "The

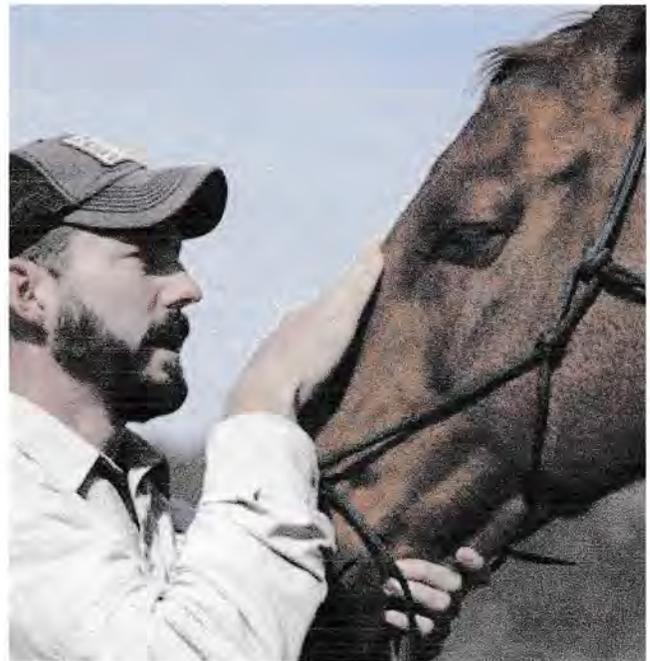
*benefits include increased self-esteem, improved communication skills, creative thinking, problem solving, and development of coping skills."*

One veteran who has taken part in the program says, *"For someone in the military like me, it's hard to swallow my pride and ask for help. This was a safe environment to open up in. Sometimes the horses talked for me and helped show me the path to save my marriage."*

Pal-O-Mine is always looking for dedicated volunteers, and has put out a call to veterans and other first responders to take on a role to help this very special organization. Volunteer opportunities include being trained to work with horses and students during lessons; to work in and around the barn to make sure the structure is safe and to graze the horses; and to participate in special events, such as directing traffic or selling food and raffle tickets.

*"Our volunteer program is very team-oriented,"* says Gatti. *"It's all about connectedness and*

*providing a sense of family in a peaceful atmosphere."*



**To find out more about Pal-O-Mine, visit [www.pal-o-mine.org](http://www.pal-o-mine.org) or call (631) 348-1389. For volunteer opportunities, ask for Lisa Gatti.**