THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION OF GREECE

Therapeutic Riding Association of Greece (TRAG) is a non profit, volunteers' organization established in 1992. A year later TRAG was recognized as a sports organization too.

Our goal is to improve the overall health and quality of life of people with physical, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities.

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With the assistance of the Ministry of Defense, TRAG obtained its own centre. Furthermore, with the help of sponsors and volunteers, has now 10 horses and offers its services to more than 150 beneficiaries weekly.

The personnel of the Association consists of 5 therapists, 1 horse trainer, 1 office administrator and 1 stableman.

TRAG is

- Member of the Hellenic Equestrian Federation (HEF)
- Member of the International Federation of Therapeutic Riding (HETI)
- Member of the German Federation of Therapeutic Riding (DKThR)
- Certified body for coordinating and hosting volunteers in EVS Erasmus+ programs
- Certified body for internships by public and private university students
- Certified body by Ministry of Health to provide social care s services

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BOARD OF COUNCIL

Nowadays the administration of TRAG is performed by a 7-member Board of Council – all volunteers which is elected every 4 years in the General Assembly by the active members of TRAG.

President: Dimitra Karouzaki

Vice-President: Dimitris Xatziliadis

General Secretary: Pinelopi Tasoula

Treasurer: Sotiria Chrysanthaki

Member: Eleni Vavouraki

Member: Thomas Sideris

Member: Ann Stavropoulou

THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION OF GREECE

STAFF

Maria G. Liapi – Psychologist, EAT Instructor

Katerina Theodoulou– Horse Trainer, Riding Instructor

Ariadni Tsigkanou – Occupational Therapist, EAT Instructor

Kleopatra Tsagkari – Physiotherapist

Eleni Konstantinidi – Physical Teacher specialized in Special Education, EAT Instructor

Pelagia Savvidi – Occupational Therapist

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From the ancient years, there are many references in the value of horse. The Greek philosopher Xenophon refers to the horse as a therapeutic medium. The Greek doctor Hippocrates had once said: “Riding in the wind empowers the muscles and keeps them in good condition”. Equine Assisted Therapy is a unique experience for people with disabilities. Not only riding but also the relationship with the horse leads to numerous benefits.

For the period of September 2017 to June 2018, the therapeutic program in TRAG handles the following disorders: Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological dysfunctions, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Rett and other developmental disorders, Blindness, Deafness, Learning Disorders, Various Rare Syndromes (Prader-Willi, Williams, Fragile X), Mental, Behavioral, Emotional and Eating Disorders.

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The organization's major sources of income are private sponsorships and donations. Through our program "Adopt a Horse", we seek for potential sponsors to cover the annual horses cost.

There is no constant financial support, such as a governmental one, so it becomes very difficult to expand our possibilities and offer services to more beneficiaries, although we constantly have a long waiting list.

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Apart from the therapeutic sessions, T.R.A.G. is also training athletes for Paralympics, Special Olympics and other athletic events for the disabled.

At 2011 our athletes participated in Special Olympics that took place in Greece. Also at 2016 was a special year for us, as four athletes took part in Special Olympics and won medals. More specifically they won one gold, two silver and one bronze medal.

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VOLUNTEERING

The role of the volunteer program assistant is of great importance to the success of our mission. Our volunteers get special training that make them capable of participating and getting important roles in the therapy sessions. This year TRAG occupies fifty (50) active volunteers per week, who follow a specific timetable assisting the therapeutic program. Also, TRAG hosts 3 EVS volunteers for the current season.

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Also there are many volunteers who help us in various events that we organize in order to raise awareness of therapeutic riding and disability in general, such as Bazaars, seminars for parents of the beneficiaries, annual demonstrations of the beneficiaries etc.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

TRAG throughout the years had developed and constantly revising an educational program for Equine Assisted Therapy. It has been training a lot of people who have later established their own centers around Greece.

In 2013 TRAG applied to the German Federation of Therapeutic Riding (DKThR-Deutsches Kuratorium fur Therapeutisches Reiten) for a cooperation in training professionals. After being closely monitored for more than 2 years, TRAG got a certification of applying good practices from DKThR.

THERAPEUTIC
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"SPECIALIST FOR PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL THERAPY WITH HORSES"

2015

COLLABORATION BETWEEN THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION OF GREECE (TRAG) – DEUTSCHES KURATORIUM FÜR THERAPEUTISCHES REITEN E.V. (DKTHR)

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Based on the professional qualification

"Reit- und Voltigierpädagoge"

by the German Federation of Therapeutic Riding (DKThR)

in addition to

the Educational Program "Therapy with Horses"

of Therapeutic Riding Association of Greece (TRAG)

The program aims in training professionals to the working principles and tools of the Psycho-Educational therapy with horses according to the standards of the DKThR, Germany.

By submitting the knowledge of the Psycho-Educational approach, the program tends to urge people work with horses adequately, based also, in their professional qualifications.

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Prerequisites of attending:

- ✓ Degree in Science or Sports *(Medical school, Psychology, Pedagogic, Occupational Therapy, Speech therapy, Special Education school, Sport-education School, Trainers of horseback-riding, etc.)*
- ✓ Certificate of basic Horsemanship *(Grooming, handling, leading etc.)*
- ✓ License of Riding *(Dressage or jumping or vaulting)*

  by National Federation of the country of origin or elsewhere
- ✓ Certificate of Lunging horses

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Content of teaching:

- Understanding the role of the therapist: The relationship triangle: therapist-client-horse
- How to build the relationship client/ horse
- How to build & establish good relationships between clients-therapist
- Psycho-educational intervention within the relationship triangle
- Reflection on therapist behavior
- Aspects of psychomotor approach in relation to therapeutic vaulting and riding
- Early intervention in children (Typical-atypical development)
- Knowledge of different client groups
- Lectures on different disabilities
- Working in single settings and group settings

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Content of teaching:

- Vaulting and riding in the psycho-educational context: how to build a lesson
- Using games and adventurous outdoor settings for ThR goals
- Group coaching
- Observation and practice in different settings of psycho-educational client sessions with horses
- Setting short and long term goals for the client based on professional assessment of the clients requirements
- Planning and carrying out of psycho-educational sessions
- Documentation of the treatment
- Working in interdisciplinary teams
- Working with parents
- Self-reflection

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Method of Teachings:

- Lectures
- Demonstrations of real sessions (single and group treatment)
- Observational work upon those sessions
- Practical lessons of vaulting & psychomotor exercises
- Practical lessons in proper handling of the horse in therapy
- Self-reflection

The program is completed within 12-18 months and it includes:

- Three 5-days seminars of a total of 120 hours of teachings
- At least 20 hours - practicing in the lunging line
- At least 20 hours – observing a group treatment
- A reflection of the observation as a homework assignment
- 200 hours of observing/participating in Psycho-E sessions
- A thesis assignment upon a research statement

Educational Program:
"Specialist for Psycho-Educational Therapy with Horses"

Accomplishment and Certification procedure:

- ✓ Diplomatic paper based on personal observation /research in Psycho-educational approach
- ✓ Examination discussion by the Chief lecturer: Pedagogist, Mrs. Marietta Schulz
- ✓ Test examination of lunging the therapy horse

Chief lecturer & Coordinator of the program:

Pedagogist, Mrs. Marietta Schulz

TRAG in EUROPEAN UNION

TRAG is trying to disseminate its knowledge and expertise to European organizations throughout Erasmus+ programs.

- 2012-2014: “Taught me how to walk”, coordinating organization amongst similar associations from Croatia, Italy and Turkey

  https://www.taughtmehowtowalk.org/el/

- 2016-2019: “Horses teach me how to find my way”, coordinating organization amongst similar associations from Spain, Ireland, Croatia, Italy, Turkey

  https://www.taughtmehowtowalk.org/horses-teach-me-how-to-find-my-way

  https://www.facebook.com/groups/1867653553490870/?ref=bookmarks

TAUGHT ME HOW TO WALK

Erasmus+

THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION OF GREECE

Erasmus+ program:
-Horses teach me how to find "my way"-

Exchanging and disseminating
the Psycho-educational possibilities
in various Therapeutic Settings in working with Horses

Application of the Psycho-educational approach in:

- Single & group treatment in the lunging line
- Single & group treatment in ground work
- Adaptive Horseback Riding (single & group)
- The effect of different leading methods in therapy
- Therapeutic Vaulting

THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION OF GREECE

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!