



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

August 24, 2026

Program

Lion Randy Kraft introduced our speakers tonight, Ms. Kelsey Scott, Executive Director of Hope's Horses, and Josh Wiggins, the organization's capital campaign chair.



Ms. Kelsey Scott, Executive Director of Hope's Horses, and Josh Wiggins receiving token of appreciation cup from Lion Vice-President Craig Gaddow.

Ms. Scott wanted to give us a refresher about her organization and then fill us in on it capital campaign. To quote, "So, so at Hope we offer therapeutic riding lessons to children and adults with physical, cognitive, social, and emotional needs. Our organization actually started in 2014 by a man named David Pointer, and in 2014 we actually started serving at Dr. Short and John Short's farm off of Gold Ridge Road. So we actually started out there while we were building our facility on Convict Road, and we started out serving five to 10 kiddos weekly, and as of today, we have 32 kids in our program, and that's max capacity for us. We have reached the peak, which is incredible. And I'll elaborate a little bit more on with our therapeutic riding program. So we're actually governed by another organization called Path, and Path is the Professional

Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship. We do not receive any funding from PATH. Really, the only thing that they do is they give us rules and regulations that we follow by rules and regulations when it comes to our equines, our staff, our students, and one really important thing that they do, which we're very grateful for, is they actually give us precautions and contraindications on how to serve our students best.... We're not therapists, but the benefit that our students get out of our program is therapeutic.... Our program builds confidence, core strength, fine and gross motor skills. But what's most important about hope is that Hope Horses is a place for our students to have hope, and they have a place where they receive hope. So not only with our therapeutic riding program, but we also have areas kind of like what we call equine assisted learning. We have a student that's been riding with us since 2014, and his dad's a professor at Jacksonville State, so they drive every single Saturday to come to Hope because the benefit for him, he's nonverbal, and his goal every single session is to hold the reins. ... So he comes to Hope Horses, and immediately his behavior has shifted. He's calmer. He's more relaxed, and it truly gives his parents a lot of hope for him to have a place where he can come have hope. We have a student that comes on Fridays, and he has CP, but he's also blind. So you can see the kind of tough disabilities that we've served.

We do charge a fee to our students, so we charge \$45 a lesson, although the actual cost for one lesson in our program is \$420.... One of the areas that we rely so heavily on is our volunteers (on average between 30 to 40



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

weekly volunteers that come in each week). Every single person that conducts a lesson at our facility has to go through that certification, and that in itself takes two years to complete. We rely very heavily on community support, general donations, fundraising events.... Hope Horses have served 135 kids, all in North Alabama..., with 20 kids on a waiting list." One of the testimonies was from a Mom who's daughter had sever autism as follows: "I had come that day expecting to call my husband again, crying with disappointment because she wouldn't be able to do it. I'm pretty sure I wanted to cry that day, but it was not discouraging. It was from hope." Ms. Scott told several other similar stories.

Ms. Scott, continued, "We offer camps and field trips to the community. For example, this past summer, we actually hosted six camps. So two of those were actually just able-bodied camps that we started way back in the beginning, and that was actually just kind of a kickoff for us to get our name out in the community. But the four other camps that we offer for our students now during the summertime we actually take kind of a break from our therapeutic riding program just because of the heat and summer camps is kind of when our students come in the barn and they do a lot of groundwork with our horses and then we also offer art camps but we also have field trip opportunities with local schools."

Hope Horses is currently looking toward the future through its Grow Hope Campaign, a multiphase effort intended to provide greater stability for the organization and dramatically expand the number and types of services it can offer, as well as the number of clients. It

has already purchased the property it needs, which it had previously leased from the Benedictine Sisters. She specifically asked our Club for help with the construction of a large pavilion and showed plans for it. Hope's Horses has demonstrated both its good works and our Club's due consideration.

Other Business

Lion Javon Daniel, who has a heart condition, remains in stable condition, but is currently limited to restricted activities.

Lion Craig also introduced a new member of our Club: Lion Joe Martin. He is a graduate of West Point High School. He has worked in the Cullman Police Department and at the Lewis Bread Company; he now runs a deer-breeding farm on his property. He has 3 children (youngest in the 5th grade) and 4 grandchildren. He also leads an addiction recovery group at Desperation Church on Monday nights, so he may be absent often at club meetings --- a busy man.



New Lion Joe Martin.



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

Lion Brooke Windeknecht shared her experience at Leader Dogs for the Blind. I quote partially from her remarks, "It was such a meaningful experience. Before going, I knew that leader dogs helped guide dogs to people who are blind or visually impaired. But actually being there gave me a much better understanding of everything that goes into making that possible. I was amazed about how much training the dogs receive, but also how much training the people receive when they are matched with their dogs. It's not just about giving someone a dog; it's about giving them more independence, confidence, and freedom in their everyday life. Being there really made me realize that when we support leader dogs, we're helping change someone's life. We're helping people be able to work, travel, go shopping, and simply get around the community with more independence ..."



Lion Brooke Windeknecht talks about her visit to the Leader Dogs organization in Michigan.

Lion Sean Schofield discussed the club's recent purchase of a vision screener and how it would be used with the Mobile Sight Van at The Link on Sep. 1st and the at Good Samaritan Clinic on a monthly schedule. "We can we can assess, we can address, and then we can initiate the process of

getting that that need taken care of, and so this is all made possible by this Club."



Here is a list of specific services that can be provided by the mobile sight van:

- We rotate from place to place doing eye exams on people of all ages who would benefit.
 - We especially care for senior citizens.
- We examine for:
 - The need for glasses (refractive error, e.g., hyperopia, myopia, astigmatism and/or presbyopia);
 - Diseases or anomalies of the eye (e.g., cataracts, glaucoma, dry eye);
 - Diseases or anomalies of the body (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, dry eye); and,
 - Any other condition affecting the eye or vision as well as some hearing impairments.
- We provide glasses, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.
 - Eye Exam - \$20
 - Single Vision - \$40
 - Bifocal & Other - \$60
 - Additional charges for Add-ons



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

- We refer patients for further appropriate eye and vision care as necessary and appropriate.
- In certain cases, we provide transportation for referrals through Kid One upon request and application.

Lion Craig Gadow announced years-of-service for Lions Steve Murphree – 34 years and Brooke Windeknecht – 1, and Brooke Marks – 1. Lion Craig also notes that our Club recently donated the funds for the sight scanner that Lion Schofield talked about and made a significant contribution towards the nature trail marker memorial for the late Lion Tim Scott.

Upcoming Programs and Events.

Aug 31: Dr. David Tyree from Animal Health Services will discuss cattle testing and other services provided by his organization.

Sep 7: No meeting. Labor Day holiday.

Sep 14: No speaker; board meeting.

Sep 21: No speaker; Club business meeting.

Sep 26: Fair Parade. Details to follow.

Sep 28: Show and Tell (T).

Oct 5: Victoria's Hope.

Oct. 15 through 24: Cullman County Fair.

Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C).