



# The Tale Twister

## Cullman Lions Club

July 14, 2025.

### Program

Lion Randy Kraft introduced our speaker, Ms. Kelsey Scott of Hope Horses, Inc., a standout therapeutic horsemanship nonprofit facility, located at 1301 Convent Road NE, in Cullman. Lion Randy noted that she married into the family of Lion Tim Scott. She also graduated from Fairview High School and Auburn University.



Ms. Kelsey Scott speaking, passionately, about Hope Horses, as Lion President Delane Ray listens, intently. Ms. Scott shared insights into their riding program. She explained that experiencing the motion of a horse can be very therapeutic. Because horseback riding rhythmically moves the rider's body in a manner similar to a human gait, riders with physical disabilities often show improvement in flexibility, balance, and muscle strength. In addition to the therapeutic benefits, horseback riding also provides recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors. Therapeutic/adaptive horsemanship contributes to the well-being of individuals with a physical, cognitive, social, or

emotional disability. They may qualify for the adaptive riding programs if they are between the ages of 5 - 25 and weigh no more than 150 pounds. This foundational program pairs certified instructors who have at least a year of training, along with well-trained therapy horses to collaborate with participants. Horses are limited to no more than 3 sessions with participants per day. Kelsey gave an example of one of its current participants who has CP that has to use a walker or a wheel-chair -- so not all the muscles that are usually mimicked as they would be in normal walking. But, riding a horse improves overall core strength and tends to help mobility off the horse, too. The facility includes a special ramp that allows wheelchair kids to mount their horse directly from their wheelchair. Hope Horses has served over 113 students over 10 years, and it currently serves 28 weekly, with a waiting list. Hope Horses serves is the only such facility in North Alabama. It has one client that has been driving 150 miles for the past 10 years just to participate and hold the horse's reins for a session.

Hope Horses includes interactive camps for children aged 5 – 10 where kids learn

- Basic horse care (grooming, feeding).
- Horse handling and barn safety.
- Riding skills and equine showmanship.
- Fun, skill-building activities centered around creativity and teamwork.

In addition, school classes, church youth groups, or community organizations can schedule free barn visits or field trips with guided tours and introductions to the horses. As a note, the Margret Jean Jones organization has visited. Although there is no fee, donations are appreciated.



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Kelsey stated that Hope Horses is governed by National organization called the "Professional Association of Therapeutic Workmanship (PATH)" which governs and gives them rules and regulations that they abide by. All of its instructors are tested and certified through PATH in a program called Rock. Most of the horses are leased or donated and come from working backgrounds. Its oldest horse is 31 years old; youngest is 14.

Kelsey explained that they intend to offer hippotherapy (therapy for autistic kids) in the near future. Its property is leased from the Catholic Convent, but they are planning to buy and expand on that with a larger facility through a capital program, gaining corporate, grant, and individual donations. They only have 5 full-time staff but rely hugely on volunteers. Individuals do not have to have horse experience to be a volunteer. All volunteers must complete the proper paperwork, a background check and orientation before starting to volunteer who will then, in some cases, require training to learn how to properly assist in lessons. Volunteers are encouraged to commit to three hours once a week for six weeks. They've also partnered with Wallace's occupational therapy program and get 20-25 students/year.

Hope for Horses provides a great service to our community and is a well-organized and managed asset, deserving to continue and grow. We had a great presentation, tonight.

### Other Business

Lion Ron Seybold has shown some improvement in the past week with his cancer battle, as he began his movement from a house into his assisted living quarters. Lion Javon Daniel remains at home dealing his heart condition. Lion Mike Ponder is still very weak

and resting at home with his medical issues. Continue prayers for these Lions.

New Lion Noah Carpenter was introduced tonight by Lion Doug Doggett who said Lion Noah was his "grandson-in-law." Lion Noah is a young man and claimed that one asset for our Club is that he will be helping to bring down the median age of our Club's membership.



Lion President Delane Ray announced years of service anniversaries for the following Lions: Jason Tielking – 3 years, Jeff Williams – 25, Doug Williams – 28, Riley Smith – 39, and Bo Waldrep – 42.

### Upcoming Programs and Events

July 21: Our speaker will be Judge Lion Chad Floyd who will speak on an opportunity for a new program in the court system.





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August 25: Our speaker will be Mr. Mike Mullaney from Goat Island.

### **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 256-739-0580 (H) or 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 (C)