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***Two Olympia Women Attain National  
Therapeutic Riding Instructor Certification***

Olympia, WA –Two HorsePower! Therapeutic Riding Program candidates were awarded North American Riding for the Handicapped (NARHA) Instructor Certification following rigorous testing conducted in Newberry Park, California, June 13-15.

Michelle Anctil, Olympia mother of three and lifelong horsewoman, and Jessica Rector, recent Evergreen graduate and horse lover, spent the past six months preparing for the NARHA exam and tutoring at The Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Program in Woodinville, just east of Seattle.

“We are thrilled to see these instructors’ teaching skills recognized at the national level,” says Jill Daniel, HorsePower! board chair. “They both have tremendous aptitude working with young people with disabilities and using the horse as a therapeutic tool.”

The NARHA instructor workshop is conducted at only six training sites nationwide. The certification process focuses on progressive education culminating in testing on Equine Management, Horsemanship, Teaching Methodology and Disabilities.

NARHA certification provides a nationally recognized foundation in therapeutic horsemanship techniques and entails two phases. The first

includes on-line courses and exams designed to assess an applicant's therapeutic riding knowledge. During the second, applicants demonstrate their teaching abilities and horsemanship skills before a panel of judges.

"Not only is this an impressive achievement for Michelle and Jessica," chairwoman Daniel continues, "having two certified instructors will allow us to continue to grow our therapeutic riding program and serve more young people with disabilities."

Therapeutic riding is a widely-recognized treatment strategy for people with many conditions including: developmental delay, autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, ADHD, learning and speech disabilities, and language and hearing impairments. Equine therapies assist youth who suffer from brain injuries, multiple sclerosis, paralysis and stroke; as well as at-risk youth with multiple behavioral issues that affect their family relationships and classroom learning ability.

HorsePower! was founded in the year 2000 and is a recent Medina Foundation grant recipient and United Way of Thurston County agency. The program serves young riders from Thurston, Mason, Lewis and Pierce counties. More information is available at [www.horsepowerolympia.org](http://www.horsepowerolympia.org). The program is located at "Radio Ranch," 3102 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. NE, Olympia.