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**UNBRIDLED CHANGE PARTNERS WITH RIVERMONT SCHOOLS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE**

*21st Global Youth Service Day Mobilizes Youth Around the World  
to Effect Community Change*

**Unbridled Change, Boones Mill, VA – 4/16/10** – Unbridled Change, an equine assisted activities and therapies organization, has partnered with Rivermont School in Roanoke VA to mobilize more than 50 young people and community members to participate in the 21st Global Youth Service Day. Volunteers are needed for Friday and Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

Unbridled Change is excited to be participating in this global event by partnering with Rivermont Schools and Foundation for Roanoke Valley's Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) to affect change in the community.

The mission of Unbridled Change is to partner people with horses through hands-on activities to create lasting change and true healing. Many of the clients they work with are striving to overcome obstacles in their lives due to physical impairment or a history of domestic violence or trauma in their lives. Unbridled Change provides a safe and supportive environment for clients to address a variety of different needs.

The Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) project is "Building a Safer Environment". Activities include constructing a "pony wall" inside the indoor arena to provide a safe arena for both our riders and our horses. In addition, general improvements will be made to the landscape and facilities.

Rivermont School students will serve as the "leaders" of the service-learning project. This project helps teach youth the importance of community service and combines educational learning and life skill development. The students have been responsible for the project from the beginning with oversight and facilitation from Unbridled Change and Rivermont school staff. The students have measured the arena, developed a budget and project supply list, solicited donors and supporters for the project from local businesses and arranged for volunteers to help them execute the project completely.



Foundation for Roanoke Valley's Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) has committed to help execute the project with volunteers on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> as well. The YLC members are comprised of local high school students from the Roanoke area. Foundation for Roanoke Valley started the YLC in 2006 to help introduce students to the world of philanthropy through both community service and The Philanthropy Project. The YLC is responsible for determining important community needs, addressing

those needs through a competitive grants process, reviewing grant applications, and making funding recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Governors using a \$25,000 budget.

"The rising momentum of the youth service movement is a shining example of the positive change that stems from young people contributing to their communities," said Steve Culbertson, president and CEO of Youth Service America. "Global Youth Service Day" is a powerful glimpse into the year round participation of young volunteers. It is also an opportune time to connect children and youth who have never served with local projects that will inspire them to lead a life of service."

"The project combines everything that Unbridled Change is about – learning and developing new skills that help participants live a more productive life plus bringing members of the community together to help change lives for the better" said Michelle Holling-Brooks, founder and executive director of Unbridled Change.

Unbridled Change needs the help of community volunteers to make this event a success! Volunteers will be installing the plywood panels around the arena, painting the boards, landscaping, and sprucing up facilities for Spring. They have projects for all ages so bring out the whole family and have a chance to show community youth what can happen when a community pulls together!

For more information about the event or to get involved, please contact: Michelle Holling-Brooks at 540-719-2171 or visit [www.UnbridledChange.org](http://www.UnbridledChange.org).

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**Unbridled Change** was founded by Michelle Holling-Brooks, an EAGALA Advanced Certified equine specialist and NARHA certified instructor. She holds the highest certification in the State of Virginia and serves as the State Coordinator for EAGALA, and is an official EAGALA Mentor for other equine assisted therapy professionals throughout the state and the nation. Unbridled Change was the first EAGALA accredited facility in the nation. (To learn more about the leading certification and accreditation organization in this field visit [www.eagala.org](http://www.eagala.org))

Our services are interactive in nature – meaning that our therapy and learning sessions are not office-based therapy or "talk" therapy but instead are hands-on interactive therapy sessions. Equine (horse) Assisted Activities and Therapies provide an empowering environment for clients to discover what works best for them. We believe that lasting change and true healing occurs when clients are able to not only talk about their issues, but have the opportunity to "feel, touch, and see" how their behaviors or thought patterns affect their lives. Clients are "in the moment" with the different activities and interactions with the horses allowing them to try out new behaviors and skills with instant feedback and support. For more information, visit [www.UnbridledChange.org](http://www.UnbridledChange.org)

**Youth Service America** improves communities by increasing the number and the diversity of children and youth, ages 5-25, serving in substantive roles. Founded in 1986, YSA is an international nonprofit resource center that partners with thousands of organizations in more than 100 countries to expand the impact of the youth service movement with families, communities, schools, corporations, and governments. For more information, visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org).

**Global Youth Service Day** is the largest youth service event in the world and is a year-round effort to expand the impact of the youth service movement. The initiative launches new service organizations, policy changes, and sustainable service programs to create a culture of engaged youth. State Farm Companies Foundation is the presenting sponsor in the United States. Planning Tool Kits, Service-

Learning Curriculum Guides, Classroom Posters, Micro-Finance Grants, and more are available for youth, parents, teachers, and organizations. To view a map of all GYSD projects, visit [www.GYSD.org/map](http://www.GYSD.org/map).

**Rivermont Schools** with locations throughout the state are designed for students who cannot participate in “traditional” school programs due to psychological problems, emotional difficulties or learning disabilities. Rivermont Schools provide the opportunity for students to progress academically, emotionally, behaviorally and to build self-esteem. Students also learn to rely on their personal strengths to resolve problems. They are taught the same subjects as one would find in public schools, but with greater emphasis on managing behavior, interpersonal skills, and family involvement. For more information, contact Cami Murnane, Therapist or Niven Stanley, Special Education Teacher at 540-342-4048.

**Foundation for Roanoke Valley** is the community foundation serving the cities of Roanoke, Salem, Lexington and Martinsville, the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Henry, Alleghany, and Rockbridge, and other surrounding areas. It was established in 1988 and began day-to-day activity in 1990. Foundation funds range in size from a minimum of \$10,000 to several million dollars. For more information, visit <http://www.foundationforroanokevalley.org> or contact Carly Oliver, Associate Director at 540-985-0204

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