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Therapeutic riding facility changes lives

By Jade Bulecza



QUITMAN, GA (WALB) —A South Georgia therapeutic horse riding facility is changing lives for soldiers with post traumatic stress disorder and their families.

Last year, they helped more than 40 people and this year they're expected to reach 300.

It's because of horses that Jeremy Randall is moving on with his life.

"I'm not worried about, okay, what's the next dream I'm going have or what's the next thing that's going to set me off to have a flashback," said Randall.

He was deployed to Kuwait and Iraq. When Randall and his brother got out of the military they turned to drugs and alcohol.

"They slept all the time at first and that wasn't working so there's only one solution and it's that horse," said Mike Randall, father and founder of Hopes and Dreams Riding Facility.

Since June, the hopes and dreams riding facility has been changing lives for wounded soldiers and veterans.

Therapeutic horseback riding give people with post traumatic stress disorder a sense of calmness, decreases stress and gives them the ability to cope.

They've gone from four horses to 20 horses, most of them donations. They've had wives of troops who've been deployed come out and ride and also their autistic children.

"They have focused more," said Mike Randall. "They're doing better at home and at school."

A group of amputees will also visit the facility.

"We need a lot of funds right now because we're looking for about 200 to 300 people this year," said Mike Randall. "We definitely need our handicap ramp out there lights in the arena so we can do things at night when it's hot."

Last year, 23 soldiers came from Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

"I got a letter from Sgt. Guillion and he expressed that the troops that were out here we done more in four days than where they were at so they've had therapy in six months one marriage was saved."

One of their board members helped organize a Kentucky Derby party over the weekend that raised \$5,000.

"As sir winston churchill said there's something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man," said Chuck Ramsey, Hopes and Dreams Riding Facility Board Member.

Jeremy Randall agrees and says a bond with a horse is like a bond with no other animal.

If you want more information on the facility or how you can donate call Mike Randall at (229) 263-4773.