



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

Constituent Spotlight: Suzy Marquard

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April 5, 2011



A long time resident of Prospect Heights, Suzy is deeply involved in long time Brooklyn institutions such as the BBG and the Montauk Club. Her work with

GallopNYC helps sustain one of the last stables in New York, Kensington Stables located just outside Prospect Park. GallopNYC's mission is to improve the lives of children and adults in NY who are facing developmental, emotional, social, and physical challenges through the benefits of therapeutic horseback riding.

Suzy is retired from a career as a corporate finance attorney at Prudential Insurance. Both a horse owner and rider, she started with GallopNYC as a volunteer, and then trained to become a NARHA Certified Instructor, a role she fills as a volunteer. She currently teaches a group of children with autism spectrum disorder as well as a group of veterans. She recently showcased the talents of other students of hers at a "Horse Show" held in Prospect Park. Taking on the role of Board President in 2010, Suzy has been instrumental in building GallopNYC.

"On my first day volunteering with GallopNYC," said Suzy, "I was immediately taken with the healing power of the horses. There is nothing like seeing the smile on the face of a child who faces huge challenges in his life when he realizes there is something he can do – ride a horse!! It took me about a nano-second to decide that GallopNYC was something I needed to get involved in."

GallopNYC has been offering therapeutic riding lessons at Kensington Stables in Brooklyn since 2007-08, starting with one instructor, two participants, and fifteen volunteers. This year, lessons are offered six days a week to 150 riders at three locations, supported by eight instructors and more than 200 regular volunteers. GallopNYC has rapidly become the largest and most financially accessible therapeutic riding program in the New York metropolitan area and is unique in its ability to bring this invaluable therapy to an urban population.

GallopNYC's riders have a wide range of disabilities and special needs, including autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, emotional problems, and developmental, speech and language delays. They also serve at-risk teens, troubled youth, and children exposed to domestic violence, as well as veterans through the Horses for Heroes program. The program helps enhance function level, improve quality of life, and nurture skill development, leading individuals with disabilities to become more active participants in the world around them. GallopNYC is committed to making its services accessible to everyone, regardless of financial situation, and provides 65% of riders with tuition scholarships.

One parent's comment about GallopNYC: "My child LOVED his lesson today. The

instructor communicated so well with my child, who had the BIGGEST smile on his face, and I had tears in my eyes repeatedly through the lesson. I felt so proud, as did he! The GallopNYC days are the highlight of our week.”

GallopNYC’s long-term goals are to expand to a full-time program, serving 200-250 riders per week, and to secure their own dedicated facility in New York City.