

Why do we need to raise funds?

SpEqTRA holds three major fundraising events every year, the A-1 dinner in April, the Hoedown in June, and the Bowlathon in November. In addition, we run three to four bingos every month. We need to do this in order to keep our programme running.

Where does the money go? There are fixed costs associated with operating a programme such as ours. One large expense is for insurance and membership fees. We have liability insurance in case someone gets hurt. Our horse, Enzo, is insured against loss through injury or illness. All of our equipment and supplies are covered by contents insurance. We have a membership in The Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association, a group to which we must belong in order or to take advantage of reasonably rated liability insurance.

Because we offer an individualized programme for each student, we are often required to purchase specialized equipment to meet student's individualized needs. Three examples of such specialty items are the lift so that we can accommodate clients in wheelchairs, special therapeutic riding saddles, and support vests.

We need to pay board for our horse and our pony. Lesson fees cover some of these costs when we are in session, but when we are not in session, we have to find the funds to pay for their board.

With the exception of four people, our Association relies entirely on volunteers. However, we have four people under contract to provide services to us, three instructors and a part-time programme co-ordinator. Lesson fees cover most but not all of the instructors' salary. They have not had a raise in eight years, nor are they likely to get one in the near future. The programme co-ordinator is the person who registers students, schedules everything, writes the reports for every student and is available at all times when we are in session to answer any questions from parents or caregivers. Her salary, if it were to be divided by the number of hours that she works, would not be minimum wage. She has not had a raise in five years and is not likely to get one any time soon.

We have been fortunate to have received grants and donations from the Trillium Foundation and local organizations, but money is always a concern. Our next projects, which have been on the books for two years, is to install an automatic door opener so that people in wheelchairs have an easier time getting in and out and to pave at least a portion of the parking area so that wheelchairs are not offloaded on to muddy ground in wet weather. So far, funding has kept us from doing either of these projects.

Our full budget is presented at our annual meeting which is held every year in March and to which you are invited.

We try to be very frugal with our funds, but as you can see, expenses are ongoing and we really need your best efforts to support us every time a fundraiser is announced.

YOUR HELP REALLY MATTERS!