

Alumna loves What She Does

You know, when I graduated I wanted to find a way to come back to Bethany and do something with horses. I didn't know what I was going to do or how, but I wanted to find a way," says Ellen MacFarlane Fischer '73.

"Maybe it was my love of horses and riding since I was 9 years old. Perhaps it was Bethany, this place I never visited before enrolling in the fall of 1969. I really don't know why, but I knew I was going to come back," Fischer continued.

Fischer says with a smile, the kind of smile you see from someone who truly loves what they do, "Whatever brought me back, it doesn't really matter, and I am so pleased to share something I love with the place I love."



Ellen Macfarlane Fischer '73

For more than 30 years, Fischer has been raising and training horses, as well as teaching on her farm, Clairlea, in Claysville, Pa., with her husband, Robert, and her stepson, Brandon. For years, she has involved herself with different organizations and groups, including The United States Pony Club, Inc.

In 2003, Fischer was one of 200 people selected from 5,000 nominations nationwide to be honored for her work with The Pony Club. This Club is one of the leading junior equestrian organizations in the world. The United States has more than 600 individual Clubs spread throughout 48 states and the Virgin Islands and has more than 12,000 members. Its goal is to promote and advocate horsemanship and sportsmanship throughout the country.

Fischer also has taught many children of College professors and staff, including fellow alumna, Nancy Wertz Sandercox '59. "She wanted to introduce me to an alumnus who saw how horses could be a draw to both the College and the Village through an active equine center," said Fischer. Little did Fischer know this alumnus would be Gene Valentine '72. His vision to build an equine center to aid the College in recruitment of students and to bring horses to others who normally would not have the opportunity was a way Fischer could bring her love of horses and alma mater together.

Mr. Valentine saw how this would be a great fit, as he appointed her as Executive Director of the Peace Point Equestrian Center.

Students are enthused with the Peace Point Equestrian Center where four students are boarding their horses. "In order for the Bethany College Intercollegiate Riding Club to be officially sanctioned by the Student Government Association of the College, I needed to have 200 signatures. Within an hour, I was able to obtain 225," she said.

It doesn't stop there. "For the first meeting of the Bethany College Equestrian Club, we were expecting a few students to show, perhaps four or five. We all underestimated that number, with 23 students attending and 13 participating this semester," says Fischer. With these 13 members, the Club has placed in the top six of the three events it has entered thus far this semester. "I am so pleased with how well the Club is doing. However, when you see the students use the main building as a study center or just to hangout, it is even more gratifying."

Again, you see that smile of someone who loves what they are doing.

If you would like to find out more about the Peace Point Equestrian Center, go to www.bethanywv.edu or www.bppef.org. After reading about the program, you will understand why not only Fischer, but other alumni and current students, are enjoying the Center.