



CanTRA CALLER

NEWS FROM THE PROVINCES

MISSION

The Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association- promoting excellence throughout Canada in therapeutic riding and equine assisted therapies through certification, accreditation and education.



**CanTRA
National Canadian
Leader in Equine
Assisted Therapies
since 1980**

Supporting Canadian
Therapeutic Riding
Programs across the
Country

Registered Charity
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On January 27, 2026, Margaret "Muggs" Tibbo, CanTRA's Vice President, was honoured with The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador! She has devoted more than four decades advancing inclusion in sport for persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Her vision and leadership have transformed the province's sporting community, ensuring that individuals of all abilities have opportunities to participate and compete. Muggs began her volunteer work in the 1970s and quickly became a driving force for adaptive sport. For 37 years she served as Newfoundland and Labrador's representative for the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing, holding various positions on its board.



This lady is a "multi-tasker": Manager of the Canadian Para Nordic Ski Team for 15 years, Certified Instructor in both Alpine and Cross Country / Para Nordic Skiing; introduced the first ice sledges, and Boccia, to Newfoundland and Labrador and has supported athletes at Regional and National events, and athletes representing Canada at Paralympics, World Championships and the World Dwarf Games.

Muggs worked tirelessly to grow Para Swimming and collaborated with Provincial sports organizations to make the Newfoundland and Labrador games more inclusive. She can also add to her credits: involvement in Para Sports including, Hockey, Adaptive Sailing, Athletics, Rowing, Wheelchair Basketball, and Canoeing. She is a National level Classifier and Referee for Boccia Canada.



L to R : Margaret Tibbo ,Lt. Governor
Joan Aylward & Hon. Carl Thompson

After a phone call from Andrea Gillies in 1990, Muggs and Andrea became founders of Rainbow Riders Therapeutic Riding Centre in St John's Newfoundland, which has a stellar reputation as a member of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association. Muggs is CanTRA's liaison to Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI). CanTRA was a founding member of this organization, originally known as the Federation of Riding for the Disabled International (FRDI), before the change to HETI. Muggs ensures that CanTRA's liaison remains strong internationally.

CONGRATULATIONS from everyone at CanTRA Muggs! This is a thoroughly deserved honour, and we are proud to have you as one of our most dedicated CanTRA leaders. If Andrea was still with us today, she would be equally proud and so supportive of you receiving this significant honour.

CELEBRATION PARTY FOR MUGGS!

In true Newfoundland style there was a Celebration party for Muggs with many friends in attendance. She is shown here with retired Rainbow Riders rider Robyn Andrews (photo by Robyn's mother Diana). In 1997 Robyn underwent brain surgery in Toronto and after a lengthy rehab program returned home to The Children's Rehabilitation Centre in Newfoundland. Andrea Gillies knew Robyn and her family and suggested that riding might be a good supplement to her therapy. Robyn started riding at Rainbow Riders in 1998.

In 2006 Robyn Competed in the National Competition. She continued riding, strongly supported by her mother, a physiotherapist, and in 2014 Robyn competed in the World Championships in Cannes. In 2016 as a member of Team Canada, she competed at the Paralympic Games in Rio. Following this she retired from competitive riding . Congratulations on all you achieved in Para Equestrian Sport for Canada Robyn !



Jeff Thiessen

Renowned Advocate Brings Disability Education to CanTRA Conference



When Jeff Thiessen shares that he's been working in the diversity, equity and inclusion space since he was 11 years old, it's not a stretch. Tiessen was born with hands, but joined the amputee community after losing both to an electrical injury just before his 12th birthday.

Tiessen, a horse enthusiast, volunteers as an advisor to the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association. An accomplished Paralympian, award-winning author and winner of an American Horse Publications award for his firm's title Blaze – For Horse-Crazy Kids, the highly sought-after public speaker brought his acclaimed Disability Literacy 101 presentation to CanTRA's conference this past May.

"I truly believe that inclusion starts with familiarity and finding commonality," explains Tiessen. "I learned at an early age how powerful conversations could be, particularly for others wanting to get past some of the fears that they experience related to my disability, like saying or doing the wrong thing."

Tiessen's Disability Literacy 101 workshop is an in-person version of an e-learning course of the same name that he produced and designed for disability inclusion education for the workplace. What might be most innovative about the course is that it includes a cast of 20 subject-matter experts with disabilities who share their lived experiences around ableism, unconscious bias, unnecessary praise, awkward language and etiquette and importantly, the impact that those microaggressions can have on disabled persons.

“These everyday, subtle and often well-intentioned microaggressions are in our language, in our words and expressions,” Tiessen shares. “We see it in the media, in our social media memes and in what is thought to be brave and inspirational. And it’s in our biases of who’s normal, and capable and productive.” He emphasizes the importance of recognizing these biases in our everyday lives and confronting them so we can change them. “Sometimes it takes some unlearning to move forward in our perspectives and mindset.



“Disability is complicated,” Tiessen acknowledges, “and the directory of disability categories continues to grow. Episodic disability, like arthritis and diabetes, and relative newcomers in chronic health disabilities such as asthma, and persistent pain and fatigue. And of course, neurodiversity, finally recognized as part of the disability community. The disability community is as diverse as society itself. But even with all our differences we too often get painted with a very broad brush... ‘disabled’... or ‘the disabled’.”

Tiessen prefers to think of the community more like a canvas of fine strokes. “Even those of us with the same disability, whether it’s an amputation, or a spinal cord injury, or vision or hearing loss, each of us is very different in how we identify with it and how we manage it.” But Tiessen maintains that inclusion of the disability community doesn’t have to be difficult. “Disability gets a lot simpler by getting to know people from the disability community and learning from our experiences and perspectives,” he maintains. “Familiarity is a good starting point for finding your level of comfort and confidence and competence. With the expanded directory of disability categories we now make up almost 25% of the population. We’re not hard to find.” To learn more about Tiessen and the Disability Literacy 101 course visit <https://disabilitytodaynetwork.com>.

A recording of Jeff's CanTRA presentation is available for purchase with two additional conference videos - please see back page for order details.

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

Members often ask about sharing successful fundraising events ,and also how to engage the community in a fun event that would bring the general public to your centre ,to learn more about a therapeutic riding program.

GIFT CARD GAME: This idea comes from Ontario — those of you who attended the CanTRA Conference will have seen this in action at the Banquet . It requires involving your volunteers / families/ supporters by asking them to donate gift cards of various values , from popular chain stores ,and selling these in a mystery game ,for \$20 each . If you can gather 100 gift cards, it has the potential for the program to raise \$2,000 !

FUN EASTER EGG HUNT: Shared by Shining Horizons TRA , New Brunswick . This fun game can be organized as a small fundraiser, or as a family event to bring local community members to your therapeutic riding program - providing the opportunity to engage in a fun event, while meeting some of your horses and learning more about your program.

For full information on how to organize either of these events, email CanTRA General Inquiries - office@cantra.ca

News, Events & Links

EXAM/ ACCREDITATION/ CERTIFICATION UPDATING CLINIC DATES:

- **Friday, May 8th Sunrise , ON**-Exam - Full
- **Saturday, May 9th Sunrise , ON**- Clinic for instructors unable to attend 2025 Conference .Information through certification@cantra.ca
- **May ,16th & 17th Cowichan BC** - Accreditation ,Exam Centre & Exam - Full
- **Friday ,June 26th ,TROtt ON** -Accreditation,Exam Centre
- **Saturday ,June 27th TROtt,ON** -Exam
- **Sunday,June 28th TROtt ,ON** Clinic for instructors unable to attend 2025 Conference . Information through certification@cantra.ca
- **Sunday ,August 30th ,Joyriders ,PEI** - Accreditation Exam Centre
- **Monday , August 31st ,Joyriders ,PEI** - Exam- Full
- **Tuesday,September 1st , Rainbow Riders ,NL** -Accreditation / Exam - Full
- **Wednesday , September 2nd ,RR NL** - Exam - Full
- **Thursday ,September 3rd ,RR NL** - Instructor Updating Clinic - information from certification@cantra.ca
- **Saturday , September 5th Elixir ,QC** - Exam
- **Fall** --Exam Centre Accreditation **BC** -pending

QUESTIONS?

CanTRA Finance office - finance@cantra.ca (Kendra Flynn Stronach, CanTRA Coach / Examiner) Membership & Insurance payments; Exam ,Webinar & Merchandise payments

CanTRA Certification office - certification@cantra.ca 450-556-1062 (Quebec) (Eliane Trempe ,CanTRA Coach / Examiner) Exam prerequisites , Exam schedule & registration, maintains all instructor files & updating hours .Distribution of Education & Training materials

CanTRA Accreditation office - accreditation@cantra.ca (Suzy Bender , CanTRA Coach / Examiner) Circulation of CanTRA Accreditation forms; Distribution of Annual CanTRA Program Profile forms (Spring); Receives all related Program accreditation information.

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LINK TO PURCHASE CANTRA CONFERENCE VIDEOS

CanTRA 45th Anniversary Conference Video Order Form Bundle of 3 Presentations

Bundle Price: \$75.00

- "Saddle Fitting" with Christian Lowe
- Practical Nutrition for the mature Horse with Madeline Boast
- "Disability Literacy 101" with Jeff Tiessen



NOTE: These videos count for 3 updating hours when completion of viewing them is signed by the Instructors mentor.

The QR code above will direct you to an order form

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