



## Palm Beach Equine Clinic Helps Keep The Horses Of Vinceremos In Top Form

By Lindsay Brock

*The horses at the Vinceremos Therapeutic Riding Center perform miracles every day. Whether by carrying a person coping with a physical disability to a sense of independence, providing comfort to a soul suffering from emotional trauma or teaching a child beyond the confines of a classroom, the Vinceremos horses are heroes. But they aren't the only ones wearing capes. A local group of dedicated and passionate equine veterinarians share in the magic.*

The veterinarians of the Palm Beach Equine Clinic (PBEC), based in the heart of Wellington, have been caring for horses in South Florida for decades. Founded by Dr. Paul Wollenman in 1981, PBEC has grown to include a staff of 40 veterinarians, five boarded specialists and the most state-of-the-art facility in the country. Situated in the winter equestrian capital of the world, PBEC treats the top-performing show jumping, dressage, polo and racing athletes throughout the year.

In addition, the clinic is a saving grace for the horses of Vinceremos. The 23 specially selected horses stay true to the nonprofit's mission of conquering disability and hardship in people of all ages. Founded in 1982, Vinceremos, based in Loxahatchee Groves, serves people from all stations in life with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities through the power of equine therapy. The treatments they offer include therapeutic riding and carriage driving, hippotherapy, equine-assisted learning and equine-assisted psychotherapy.

PBEC does its part by keeping the horses healthy and happy with pro-bono veterinary care.



Palm Beach Equine Clinic President Dr. Scott Swerdlin is proud of his association with the Vinceremos Therapeutic Riding Center.

PHOTO BY JUMP MEDIA

"We have the people and, most importantly, the horses, of South Florida to thank for the success that PBEC has enjoyed over the years," said Palm Beach Equine Clinic President Dr. Scott Swerdlin, who spearheaded the clinic's involvement with Vinceremos in 2011. "It is our honor to give back to that community through our work with Vinceremos. The whole team is dedicated to each and every horse we treat, as well as to the riders who love them."

While their commitment to the nonprofit is extensive, it's not about the hours spent or the cost of time and supplies. Swerdlin and his team focus on a bigger goal; healing horses so they can heal people. "There's no greater reward than seeing how the horses of Vinceremos benefit their riders," he said. "You see the riders light up and how excited they are to be on those horses."

Swerdlin is proud of the clinic's work with Vinceremos. "I continually remind my team that it is a privilege to treat the caliber of horses we have in Wellington and that should

(Left) Clark Kent is welcomed back to Vinceremos after his surgery.





Experts at the Palm Beach Equine Clinic work to keep the Vinceremos horses in top form.

***“It is our honor to give back to that community through our work with Vinceremos,” PBECE’s Dr. Scott Swerdlin said.***

compel us to give back to the community,” he said. “The response from Palm Beach Equine Clinic veterinarians has been overwhelming. The entire team has volunteered to be involved.”

From routine treatments and services such as vaccinations and health exams to emergency care, PBECE veterinarians are available to Vinceremos night and day. Last summer, such emergency care was called on, and one Vinceremos horse got a second chance at life thanks to a group of devoted veterinarians.

Vinceremos favorite Clark Kent — a sturdy black mount with an eye as kind as they come — suffered an injury to his right front leg. The laceration extended into his tendon sheath, which is a layer of membrane around a tendon on the back of the lower leg. What could have been a simple cut on the surface was much more serious.

Initially treated on-site at Vinceremos by Dr. Marilyn Connor, Clark Kent was then transported to PBECE for surgery to

repair the injury. The case turned into a team effort and involved the work of surgeons Dr. Weston Davis and Dr. Michael Myhre, as well as Dr. Janet Greenfield.

After surgery and a recovery period at PBECE’s onsite equine hospital, Clark Kent returned to Vinceremos to recover and was back to his therapy work by fall, giving riders a sense of independence and confidence with his skill on the lunge line and his forward way of going.

“This treatment was no easy feat, but the veterinarians and staff of the Palm Beach Equine Clinic took a tragedy and turned it into a miracle. Clark Kent was surrounded by extraordinary veterinarians and technicians throughout his care,” Vinceremos Director of Development Susan Guinan said. “The diligence of this team makes miracles happen every day. We are so appreciative of Palm Beach Equine Clinic and their team of veterinarians. They give so much sup-



PBECE’s Dr. Marilyn Connor at Vinceremos.



Clark Kent back in action with a Vinceremos client.



port to Vinceremos and the horses here. They keep them in top shape so we can impact our community in such a special way through equine therapy.”



Founded in 1982, the Vinceremos Therapeutic Riding Center serves people with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities through the power of equine therapy.

For Connor, it's cases like Clark Kent's that convinced her to pursue veterinary medicine. Growing up around horses, she spent time volunteering with a therapeutic riding program before attending veterinary school at Texas A&M.

“It was a very rewarding experience to be able to give back to a cause that is important to me, and even more so now that I can do that in a different capacity as a veterinarian,” said Connor, who has worked at PBEC since 2017.

She can often be found checking on the horses of Vinceremos while on the job. “Being able to help horses as special as the ones at Vinceremos and the people who love them is what ultimately made me realize I wanted to be an equine veterinarian,” Connor said.

To find out more about the Palm Beach Equine Clinic, visit [www.equineclinic.com](http://www.equineclinic.com) or call (561) 793-1599. ■

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