

## PATH Intl Region 8

# Winter Newsletter



## From Your Region Representative

As we enter the winter season and the end of a year, that I trust, will go down in history as unforgettable for quite some time, we also face the promises of spring and the hopes of an exciting New Year!

With these natural transitions that are so familiar, we are also facing changes in the structure and comfort of our PATH Intl Region 8 Leadership Team. We share our gratitude and appreciation for those that have served their membership with their time and talents and made our team hugely successful over the last four years!

We are very excited and looking forward to new friends joining our team! We are looking for individuals who share the passion to serve! Our PATH Intl membership needs your unique talents and experiences to help us grow within the PATH Intl Region Leadership Team. Please read our complete Winter Newsletter and see if this is an area that would help you grow personally and professionally. The best part is, those that join us, will have some pretty amazing mentors to support them along the journey!

We are looking for two/three PATH Intl members in good standing to join us from Texas

We are looking for two PATH Intl members in good standing to join us from Louisiana

We are looking for one/two PATH Intl members in good standing to join us from Arkansas

Stewardship-Networking-Service-Representation-Leadership-Communication; if these words ring true in your heart, as they do in mine and in all of our State Chairs, this job is for you!

Please contact me and we can chat!

Joys of the Season to you all and Happy Three E's to the New Year!!! Excitement-Enthusiasm-Exuberance

Jen Donahue- PATH Intl Region 8 Rep

# The Experience of Being a State Chair

I became a PATH Intl Region 8 Texas Co-Chair after learning of the opening at the 2017 Regional Conference in Arkansas. While I had experience being part of officer teams throughout high school and college, I was diving into new territory of my professional life. The Arkansas conference was the second I had attended, and the first since receiving my registered level therapeutic horseback riding instructor certification in 2016. To be blunt, I was new to the industry as a professional and I was nervous that I wasn't going to be helpful as a Texas State Chair. The biggest lesson I learned being part of the RLT, that each of us has something to add to the conversation, a unique perspective and experience that deserves representation.

My first year as a Texas State Chair was one of immense learning thanks to my co-chair, Jen Donahue. Jen along with the rest of the RLT and LSTEN board provided a wide range of professional experience that would have taken years to be exposed to if I hadn't been a part of the team. As the next year approached Clarissa Correa and I took on the responsibilities of Texas State Chair, hosting a state meeting, LSTEN Board membership, assisting with the planning and execution of the regional conference, and communicating with the PATH Intl membership of Texas among other things.



As a professional in EAAT industry my knowledge base expanded, inside and out of the arena. I was given a behind the scenes look into administration. This new territory would later help prepare me for the Assistant Program Director at All Star Equestrian Foundation Inc., where I had been instructing as well. Within the RLT and LSTEN Board I was wholeheartedly absorbing as much as possible, but also providing my perspective, one of a newly professional 20-something fresh out of college. That unsure feeling about being useful began to be replaced with professional confidence, allowing me to accept more responsibilities within the RLT as the Communication Chair.



My experience at a Texas State Chair has been instrumental in my professional growth through networking, education, and leadership. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve Texas and provide my own perspective. While my term is coming to an end, I will remember everything I have learned and the amazing people I've met. If you are interested in growing as a professional in the EAAT industry or gaining experience and confidence I highly recommend taking the plunge and becoming a part of the PATH Intl Region 8 Leadership Team. You have something to add to the conversation, a unique perspective and experience that deserves representation.

Thank you Texas and PATH Intl Region 8!  
Emilie Thomason

# Stewardship, Networking, Service, Representation, Leadership, Communication & What Those Words Mean to Your Region 8 State Chairs

**Stewardship** - the job of supervising or taking care of something, such as an organization or property

When I think of stewardship my mind drifts towards the stewardship of land, managing wildlife species and their environment. That management is similar to stewardship in respect to the PATH International Region 8 Leadership Team. PATH Intl Region 8 is an environment in which each member is unique, and so are their needs, but as a community we all strive towards the same goal. Stewardship of this community is important in order to facilitate success of individuals and centers, allowing for the EAAT industry to thrive and effect change for its participants.

The Region Leadership Team, RLT, consists of state chairs for Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas as well as a Region Representative. Each of us are stewards of the PATH Intl membership in our respective states, and region as a whole. I look at my responsibilities as a Texas State Chair and strive to provide support, whether it is through guidance towards professionals with more experience, directing individuals to reference materials, or lending an empathetic ear for struggles that challenge our centers.

My stewardship as part of the RLT has spilled over into my hometown center, providing me with professional growth that has reflected in my position at All Star Equestrian Foundation, Inc. as both a CTRI and Assistant Program Director.

Strong centers and members create a strong region. Through that strength of our membership the EAAT industry moves forward and provides life changing experiences to participants. Stewardship is about helping each other succeed. As a member of the RLT I am afforded a first-hand opportunity to practice stewardship, and I am grateful for that chance.



Texas State Chair  
Emilie Thomason  
All Star Equestrian Foundation, Inc.

## Networking - the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions

My mom raised me with the saying that “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” Throughout my life and career in nonprofit management I have found that to be so true. I once had a boss who for the first three months that I was on the job made it his mission to introduce me to as many people in the community as he possibly could. I will forever be grateful for his wisdom. He must have known my mom’s quote too. Those introductions turned into business contacts and through time grow into friendships, donors and volunteers that became foundational to my success in that job.



When we think about growing our therapeutic riding centers networking is a key ingredient. Networking is not hard or scary; it just takes a willingness to spend a little time with people and a genuine interest in getting to know them. Through networking we will meet people who will impact our thinking, challenge us to reach higher, and who will encourage us along the way. One idea from a new contact may be just what is needed to solve a problem or move a program off of the high center.

Of course, it’s not all who you know. There must be some “what you know” as well. In our work as therapeutic riding instructors and administrators

in our facilities, having the on-going level of education and experience in meeting the standards of safety and practice are essential. Being able to lead by example requires that we know what we are doing and where we are going. Those coming up under us are counting on us to introduce them to not only who we know so they can make the connections that will ensure their success, but to share what we know so the field of therapeutic horsemanship will continue to build on a solid foundation.

Oklahoma Co-Chair  
Andi Holland  
Savannah Station TRP

## Service - the action of helping or doing work for someone

Oh Arkansas! , the state song for my home state, Arkansas, where I have had the privilege to serve as the PATH Intl state Co-Chair for the past four years. To be of service has long been a part of my work at my family business and farm and the PATH Intl center, Arkansas Heart & Sole that I started here in 2016.

Part of my role as a co-chair for PATH Intl Arkansas has been to provide services to assist our members and friends with activities to grow a stronger PATH Intl organization in our state. Examples of service include helping those interested in being part of our organization and helping them navigate PATH Intl online. Organizing meetings, helping members and centers with concerns at their facilities is also a service we provide.

I see my role as Co-Chair of Arkansas PATH Intl as a position of service for my state's members and the growth of Equine Assisted Activities and Services. I'm very proud and honored to serve Arkansas' people and PATH International.



Arkansas State Co-Chair  
Becke Williams

## Representation - the action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented

In our profession, many of us have felt overwhelmed, stressed and challenged with having to wear so many different hats. At times we may have felt alone and unheard. We work long hours, endure extreme weather, and yet we rise above the challenges to provide quality programs to the people we serve. By representing and supporting our Louisiana centers, I have provided an opportunity for each center and member to be heard, validated and assisted when help was needed.

This year, our centers have been affected by not only COVID but also an unprecedented number of hurricanes. Together, we have shared ideas and discussed ways in which we can help one another. By providing a listening ear and sharing resources from PATH International and Region 8, we were able to offer critical assistance to members who were in need.

It has been an honor to serve as Louisiana's State Chair. I wish all of our centers a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year!



Louisiana State Chair  
Vicki Eiland  
New Heights Therapeutic Riding Center

## Leadership - the action of leading a group of people or an organization

Leadership can be defined in many ways. There is the technical definition as stated above. There is the business definition. "Leadership captures the essentials of being able and prepared to inspire others." There is the spirit of the definition. "Effective leadership is based upon ideas—both original and borrowed—that are effectively communicated to others in a way that engages them enough to act as the leader wants them to act."

"History is full of people who, while having no previous leadership experience, have stepped to the fore in crises and persuaded others to follow their suggested course of action." You do not have to be a "Leader" to display leadership skills. In this case it is just being able to talk others into doing what you think needs to be done. So, leadership in part depends on those around you.



"Leadership is also how you, as an individual, choose to lead your life. The true leadership definition is to influence, inspire and help others become their best selves, building their skills, and achieving goals along the way. Leadership is not a position that you are appointed to – it is a skill and a tool you can continually cultivate and use to create lasting change. Leadership is also not something you're born with or without – it's a creative muscle you can strengthen and develop over time." In other words, leaders are not necessarily born; they can be made. The key part of this phrase is to help others become their best selves. You cannot force someone into achieving goals.

Arkansas State Co-Chair, Kimberly A. Haley

## Communication - the act or process of communicating; fact of being communicated.

the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.  
something imparted, interchanged, or transmitted.

The expression on her face. The question in the sound of his voice that doesn't form a word. Head held down, arms folded, engagement shut down. Sitting up nice and tall in the saddle, full of confidence. Arms lifted in the air filled with complete joy. "I did it!!!" These are all forms of communication and how we connect with one another.

Each of our amazing PATH Intl professionals provide the belonging that comes through great communication. They know how to listen, to watch and respond. And whether a novice or an expert, they know each of the languages listed above and can navigate each 'conversation' to bring about the best for their riders.

As the Oklahoma State Co Chair for PATH Intl, it has been my pleasure to get to know our centers and members. Communication with each other during this time of Covid has supported and sustained us so that we can continue the important work that we do and that we are fully there for our clients.

Oklahoma State Co-Chair, Rachel Royston, Turning Point Ranch

