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### **\$500,000 Match Towards New Equestrian Center**

*An anonymous donor matches 2020 donations to kick off during Amplify Austin in support of the new equine facility at Marbridge, serving adults with special needs*

**March 1, 2020 - AUSTIN, TEXAS:** With just over \$1.1 million raised of the total \$3.7 million needed to complete the Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch at Marbridge, an anonymous donor has stepped forward with a match of \$500,000 for donations raised in 2020. The Creed Ford III Therapeutic Riding Ranch is a planned equestrian facility within the Marbridge grounds that will benefit the current Marbridge equestrian program and also provide a significant impact to the greater special needs community.

For 67 years, The [Marbridge Foundation](#) has nationally led the way for adults with special needs to learn, experience, and achieve in an environment specialized to age in place from independent living to assisted living to skilled nursing care. Located on a 200-acre well-manicured campus in South Austin, Marbridge is known for the beautiful horses lining the white fence, but now it's time to build a state-of-the-art equestrian center where both the horses and residents can thrive.

Each semester adults with cognitive and intellectual disabilities, through individualized program plans, choose from 150 training opportunities to thrive through an innovative and established Abilities Centered Training program. Many residents work hard to obtain the skills needed to participate in one of these opportunities in particular, equine therapy. For over twelve years, Equine Coordinator Shonda Corn has helped lead the program through equine therapy and coaching championship Special Olympics Equestrian teams.

“Though the current facilities have posed a special challenge, our residents continue having success in their personal achievement plans and winning show after show,” commented Corn.

After years of managing horses in stables originally designed for miniature horses, fields unable to accommodate residents with mobility issues, and with mounting maintenance needs, Marbridge embarked on a capital campaign to raise funds to open a new indoor equestrian center. This Therapeutic Riding Ranch on the Marbridge campus will offer

opportunities to have an official hippotherapy program, accommodate almost all levels of special needs riders, open the opportunity to partner with other programs, and host special needs equine events.

The original lead in this equine vision for Marbridge was the late iconic restaurateur, Creed Ford III, who the new facility will be named after. Ford's legacy is well known in the restaurant industry as a manager at the original Chili's Grill & Bar to an executive of the billion-dollar restaurant company to founding Fired Up, Inc. which had over 175 Johnny Carino's at one time. He didn't want his impact to stop with business but continued through philanthropy by establishing Fired Up Foundation in 1997, now the C3 Legacy Foundation, which has raised over \$3,000,000 for local charities.

"From day one, Creed seemed to embrace the relationship and benefit that our special needs residents have with the horses," reflected Jana Kay Green, Director of Marbridge's Training & Education Program. "We hope this challenge gift will help further the needed funding in making this a reality for hundreds of adults with special needs."

"Our daughter, Audrey, has been at Marbridge since 2005 and we couldn't have chosen a better place for her," remarked Janet Andrew's, Audrey's mother. "One of Audrey's favorite things about Marbridge is the equestrian program, which she has been a part of for years. Audrey loves caring for and riding the horses, and we've seen big changes in her since she first arrived at Marbridge. She's made friends, she's attended classes that have helped her grow, and most of all, she's happy. The level of care and support she receives from Marbridge is unparalleled and we couldn't be more satisfied with our daughter's home."

Marbridge will need to raise \$500,000 during 2020 in order to receive the full \$500,000 match and plans to kick-off the campaign during Amplify Austin on March 5-6. Donations towards this campaign can be made at [Marbridge.org/donate](https://Marbridge.org/donate) or supported through Amplify Austin by visiting [amplifyatx.org/organizations/marbridge](https://amplifyatx.org/organizations/marbridge).

Donations can also be mailed to: Marbridge Foundation / c/o 50/50 Equine Campaign / 2310 Bliss Spillar Road / Manchaca, TX 78652.

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## ABOUT MARBRIDGE



Founded in 1953, Marbridge is a non-profit residential community for adults with intellectual disabilities ([Marbridge Press Information](#)). Located on 200 acres in south Austin, Texas, the campus consists of three interconnected communities providing varying levels of care - from semi-independent care to assisted living to skilled nursing and physical rehabilitation services. With over 250 residents representing 31 states, the population includes diverse diagnoses including Autism, Down Syndrome, Williams Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, seizure disorder, and traumatic brain injury. With the unique Life Options Program, Marbridge provides a distinctly different lifestyle that ensures that each individual has the opportunity to learn, experience, and achieve a whole new life at Marbridge.

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