

# Security Health Plan: Supports local volunteer equine group to help first responders in times of crisis

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MARSHFIELD – Time is everything when locating a lost child, elderly person, disabled person, or even a hunter who may have been turned around in the woods. Founded in 2018, the Clark County Mounted Search and Rescue Team helps first responders in remote search and rescue missions. Comprised of 13 local horse owners, this volunteer group serves the community to help locate missing individuals in Clark County and throughout Wisconsin.

Marshfield Clinic Health System employees Jill Gregorich and Cindy Wildish Rasmussen nominated Clark County Mounted Search and Rescue Team for Security Health Plan's Employee-Driven Corporate Giving grant. Each month Security Health Plan awards a \$1,000 grant to a different charity or organization that is nominated by a Marshfield Clinic Health System employee. Employees are encouraged to nominate organizations making a positive difference in the community.

Both Gregorich and Wildish Rasmussen are members of the Clark County Mounted Search and Rescue Team. They volunteer their time and horses to help the Clark County Sheriff's Department with search and rescue efforts in remote areas where the terrain doesn't always allow for motorized vehicles.

"Horses can go where four-wheelers cannot, and they travel faster and cover more

ground than people on foot. In addition, their keen senses help alert riders to things they would have otherwise missed in the darkness or the thicket,” said Wildish Rasmussen.

The group has assisted with five search and rescue missions to date, working alongside K9 and drone units from local and county law enforcement units. Funding received from Security Health Plan’s grant will provide the group additional GPS equipment, which is critical to rescue efforts.

“Our group has 13 members but we are currently sharing GPS equipment. We need more equipment so everyone can mark the areas searched, which means potentially locating lost individuals faster,” Wildish Rasmussen explained.

Gregorich, a registered nurse at Marshfield Clinic Health System, gathers and donates medical supplies to the group, ensuring each volunteer’s saddlebag has the same potentially lifesaving gear. She’s also instrumental in organizing training, education and practice drills.

“We are prepared to assist law enforcement when we’re needed and are willing to travel outside the area to assist other communities if requested,” said Gregorich.

This volunteer group works year-round to keep their skills sharp. To ensure they’re prepared when called upon, the volunteers go through CPR training, Stop the Bleed classes, mock search and rescue missions and work with the horses.

“We have attended special training events as well, including a workshop on cadaver searching on horseback, coordination of air and ground search with a helicopter, and several area ambulance and fire departments,” said Wildish Rasmussen.

The training, equipment and expenses from horses can add up quickly. Clark County Mounted Search and Rescue Team's primary source of funding is through fundraising events. They are planning several events for 2022, but in the past year have held an equine obstacle course, barrel race and speed show, bingo night, raffles and auction.

For more information on Clark County Mounted Search and Rescue Team and their upcoming events, please visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CCSOMSAR/](http://www.facebook.com/CCSOMSAR/).