



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Contact Lillian Shupe (908) 892-3255 or [lrshupe@frontiernet.net](mailto:lrshupe@frontiernet.net)**

RARITAN TWP., N.J. — Team Velvet Inc. has released two videos aimed at helping children learn ways to cope with the stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the program, therapy horses Velvet, Precious and Little Annie partner with Psychologist/Director, Dr. Susan Edwards to provide non-mounted horse therapy and increase resiliency in children who have experienced profound loss (death of a loved one, disfigurement by an accident, witnessing or being victimized by violence). If left unaddressed, child trauma may cause flashbacks and severe psychological damage.

In-person therapy sessions have been put on hold because of stay-at-home orders. By turning to video, Velvet, Precious and Little Annie can reach even more children at home in a unique way.

The plan is to produce a complete series of videos designed around the topic of children's letters to lead mental health therapy horse, Velvet. All therapy horses participate in the answers/providing information to the children through horse participation in the Helping Horse Board Meeting which takes place on the therapy horse farm under the direction of Dr. Edwards. The horses are in the role of psychological models/supportive friends/observers of children's responses and collaborators with Dr. Edwards in helping children through this difficult time.

The first two videos are now posted on the Team Velvet Website [www.teamvelvet.com](http://www.teamvelvet.com). A new section of the website is dedicated to the COVID-19 response.

The first video illustrates how Velvet became a therapy horse after nearly dying as a young foal. It includes the horses' salute to those serving on the front line during the health crisis. In the second video, the horses answer letters from fictional children, Gina and Tony.

Dr. Edwards wrote the script and the videos were produced by Team Velvet, Inc. Board Member, Lillian Shupe, who also did many of the illustrations and the voices of the horses.

In other news, Team Velvet has extended the deadline to enter its online photo contest. Entries will now be accepted until June 15. The entry fee is \$5 per photo and each \$1 donation equals one vote. To enter the contest, go to <https://www.gogophotocontest.com/teamvelvet> and help Team Velvet Inc. without leaving home.

All funds from the contest go to support the free professional services provided by Team Velvet Inc. to traumatized children ages 5-12.

In this non-mounted therapy children do not ride the horses but may participate in interactive games (like kick a soccer ball) while working toward treatment goals like increased self-confidence or emotional healing after traumatic loss. The natural ability of horses to elicit joy and positive feelings will be illustrated in varied ways within the Horses of Happiness photo entries.

“Our horses work in the arena of a child’s heart,” said psychologist/director Dr. Susan Edwards. “Print and video media make that arena larger.” For more information see [www.teamvelvet.com](http://www.teamvelvet.com) or call Dr. Edwards at 609-924-4330 to refer a child. Team Velvet, Inc., an all-volunteer organization totally funded by grants and donations, continues to seek a program benefactor for increased sustainability.