**Free Spirit Riders, Inc. announces transfer of assets and property to Rawhide**

Fond du Lac, WI., — December 18, 2018 — Free Spirit Riders, Inc. (FSR) announced that its therapeutic riding programs serving individuals with disabilities was discontinued in November due to financial challenges. FSR announced an agreement to transfer ownership of its assets and property in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin to Rawhide, Inc.(Rawhide) a leading residential care and outpatient counseling services provider for at-risk youth and their families.

Free Spirit Riders was founded in 1987 by Amelia Butzen and Mary Narges. The FSR mission has been committed to enriching the lives of children and adults with disabilities from Fond du Lac and the surrounding area through safe, therapeutic interaction with horses.  Over the last 31 years, Free SPIRIT Riders Inc. has touched the lives of countless individuals and families.

“Free Spirit Riders has a long history of using equine therapy to serve people of all abilities in the Fond du Lac area,” said board president Steve Hansen. “The Board of Directors has been engaged in evaluating the business model for a number of years, and ultimately made the difficult decision to discontinue the current services. It was critical to the Board to make sound decisions that would allow for services to be offered at this location that would continue to benefit the Fond du Lac community,” stated Hansen.

Approximately fifty riders will be referred to nearby equine programs serving clients with disabilities in order to continue achieving their goals. Former program participants are invited to an open house at the facility to learn about available equine therapy programs on January 12, 2019 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Rawhide entered negotiations with the FSR board of directors and came to an agreement for the transfer of ownership, which has been formally approved by both boards. The FSR location will allow Rawhide to expand its reach of existing CHAPS equine-assisted services currently offered at its Shiocton and New London locations. “This transfer of ownership will allow Rawhide to accelerate its community expansion plans into the Fond du Lac market, providing mental health services for at-risk youth and their families” said Alan Loux, President and CEO of Rawhide.

No date has been determined at this time for the re-opening of the FSR facility.  “Rawhide is actively exploring opportunities in the Fond du Lac mental health community to serve at-risk youth using specialized treatments like equine therapy. Because Rawhide has a long history of using horses in treatment programs with at-risk youth, there will be a lot of parallels in the services that Rawhide intends to operate at the FSR facility, keeping the rich tradition of equine therapy alive and well in the Fond du Lac area” concluded Loux.

The FSR facility will complement Rawhide’s outpatient counseling program and its other locations in communities around the state: Appleton, Green Bay, Milwaukee, New London and Shiocton. Rawhide has provided community-based mental health counseling since 2008.

For more information about Free Spirit Riders, please contact: Laura Schwartzburg, Executive Director at 920-924-9920.

For more information about Rawhide, Inc., please contact:

**About Rawhide:** Rawhide offers residential care and outpatient services dedicated to helping at-risk youth and their families lead healthy, responsible lives.  Located outside of New London, Wisconsin, Rawhide emphasizes a faith-based residential environment as an alternative to juvenile corrections for court-referred boys.  In addition, Rawhide provides services to youth and their families through community-based programs such as foster care, outpatient counseling and equine therapy. Learn more about Rawhide by visiting its website at www.rawhide.org