

Spirit of adventure



Brad Zweerink/Daily Republic

Michael Muir pets Apollo, a Friesian stallion being kept at Rush Ranch. Muir, the great-grandson of John Muir, has multiple sclerosis and started Access Adventure, which helps disabled people enjoy the outdoors.

Michael Muir treks through life on path set by famous great-grandfather

By SUSAN WINLOW
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — When Michael Muir was 8, he used a golden trowel to lay the cornerstone of the new John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek.

When the Dixon native, who is the great-grandson of famous naturalist John Muir, was 15, he lay in a hospital bed paralyzed from the neck down -- facing a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis.

He pretty much stared it down with aplomb. His parents, however, were concerned.

"We didn't know what to think," said Ross Hanna, Muir's father and the grandson of John Muir.

Hanna said a call came from the school that something was wrong. A year later, after the quick onset of MS and a lot of missed studies at Dixon High School and intense drug therapy, the avid horseman went to Europe with a friend and had few tell-tale signs of his MS.

He's cruised through life with a "can do" attitude that has parlayed itself into a successful volunteer organization -- Access Adventure -- dedicated to helping the disabled enjoy the outdoors. The organization com-

bines Muir's love of horses and nature.

Access Adventure, which began in 2004, is a program of Solano Land Trust based at Rush Ranch on Grizzly Island Road, outside Suisun City.

Muir, who now lives in a little cabin in Fairfield, has traveled the world, driven a horse-drawn carriage 3,000 miles from one side of the U.S. to the other (garnering the attention of many dignitaries), won carriage-driving medals throughout the world and created his own breed of horses, Stonewall Sporthorses.

"I got through that initial bout, and MS was not a part of my life," Muir said of his youth. "When you're a teen you've got that immortal thing, but I never doubted I'd get better."

See Muir, Page A10

