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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Pony Power Therapies Expands Partnership with The Valley Hospital**

Mahwah, NJ – February 18, 2014 – Through a generous \$50,000 grant from The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, NJ, Pony Power Therapies will expand the programming it currently offers to children and their families who receive services through Valley Home Care’s Butterflies Program and The Valley Hospital’s Kireker Center for Child Development.

The Butterflies Program provides comprehensive and specialized in-home care for children who have been diagnosed with life-limiting or life-threatening illnesses. The Kireker Center for Child Development helps children with special needs reach their maximum potential by evaluating, diagnosing and treating various types of development delays.

As part of the project, children from the Butterflies program and the Kireker Center, as well as their siblings, will attend four-week therapeutic horseback riding sessions at Pony Power’s fully-accessible farm in Mahwah. Each rider is paired with a certified Pony Power instructor, as well as two trained volunteers, who tailor the riding experience to the abilities and needs of the individual rider. Therapeutic horseback riding at Pony Power provides both physical and emotional benefits to children, such as increased strength and muscle development as well as fostering feelings of self-confidence and pride. Importantly, the project also allows siblings to participate in a unique, recreational activity with their brother or sister regardless of physical or mental limitations.

Receipt of the \$50,000 grant from The Valley Hospital will allow Pony Power to expand its programming beyond therapeutic riding to include equine-assisted growth and learning activities for the children’s parents and Valley Hospital staff. These non-riding activities with horses, led by Pony Power’s licensed clinical social worker and horse specialists, will help parents to build upon and develop new skills for handling the emotional difficulties that can come from caring for a child with a serious illness or development delay. The programming for Valley staff will help professionals dealing with emotionally demanding issues and clients improve their wellness, so that they can provide optimum care to Valley’s patients and families.

“The Valley Hospital Board of Trustees is delighted to support Pony Power. We are grateful to the Valley Hospital Foundation’s Allocations Committee for working with Pony Power to expand our continuum of care for our pediatric patients and their families. The effect that the program

has already had on our Butterflies and Kireker Center children and their families has been profound,” said Audrey Meyers, President & CEO of the Valley Health System and The Valley Hospital.

“We are so honored by and proud of our partnership with the Valley Hospital,” said Dana Spett, Pony Power’s Executive Director. “Over the last two years we have been amazed to see the positive impact our programming has on these incredible children – and now, with Valley’s increased support, we can provide the parents and Valley staff with their own life-changing experiences with our horses.”

### **About Pony Power**

Founded in 2000, Pony Power Therapies is a non-profit organization giving special needs and at-risk children and adults a unique opportunity to ride, care for and interact with horses. Our riding and non-riding activities enhance individuals' physical, social and emotional well-being in a safe, nurturing farm environment.

### **About The Valley Hospital**

The Valley Hospital, a 451-bed, acute care, not-for-profit hospital located in Ridgewood, NJ, is part of Valley Health System, which also includes Valley Home Care and Valley Medical Group. Valley is an affiliate of NewYork-Presbyterian Healthcare System and the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions. These include 10 consecutive recognitions for service excellence by J.D. Power and Associates for inpatient care and four awards for patient safety and quality care from the Leapfrog Group, which has ranked Valley among the top hospitals in the nation. Valley has been recognized by Healthgrades as one of America’s 100 Best hospitals for cardiac surgery and orthopedic surgery. Valley has also been honored three times with “Magnet” designation – the nursing profession’s highest honor. Key services include cardiology, oncology, women’s and children’s services, emergency care, orthopedics, and neurosciences.

For more information please visit [www.ValleyHealth.com](http://www.ValleyHealth.com).

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