

Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association Celebrating The First Twenty-Five Years 1975-2000

In the beginning ...

The idea of horseback riding for Disabled Persons was first explored way back in 1950's in Copenhagen, Denmark. **Liz Hartel**, a keen horsewoman was stricken with Poliomyelitis; she was devastated at the thought of never being able to ride again. There were long agonizing months of operations and treatments in the clinic. Soon Liz spoke not only of getting well, but also of riding again, better than ever. She gritted her teeth and wheeled herself to the barn each day and began her riding career all over from the beginning. It took four strong Stablehands to lift Liz into the saddle; they placed her stiff ankles into the stirrups and handed her the reins. It took a long time to gain contact and communication between the horse and this courageous rider, for Dressage Riding calls for strong though imperceptible movement of the rider's legs. Encouraged by her progress, Liz worked even harder with her beautiful Dressage Horse Jubilee. The pair qualified for the Olympic tryouts and was accepted to represent **Denmark in the 1952 Olympic Games at Helsinki, Finland**. Although she had to be lifted into the saddle, she did not disappoint the fans; Liz and Jubilee went on to win the **Silver Medal**. In spite of her handicap Liz continued to win and at the **1956 Olympic Games** held in **Stockholm, Sweden**, she won another **Silver Medal** in Dressage.

It was shortly after the 1952 Olympics that interested individuals in England began to set up programs for disabled riders. One such program was Pony Riding for the Disabled, established by **John A. Davies**, who was considered to be an expert in the field. Now almost 50 years later there are numerous Therapeutic Riding Programs operating throughout the world.

The first "Seeds" leading to the emergence and "Growth" of **Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled** in Edmonton were "Sown" as far back as 1966. It was at that time when **Mrs. Willa Lundy** of Edmonton, an avid horse enthusiast, was visiting her daughter in London England. The daughter was working with a horseback riding program for the handicapped. Willa was greatly impressed and began to ponder the benefits of such a program back home in Edmonton.

It was not until 1972 that **Willa Lundy** approached **Mrs. Myrtle Leadlay**, who was working with *Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department* and they, together with a few others ... **Mr. Bert Wort**, *Section Head Equestrian Studies at Grant MacEwan Community College* and **Mrs. Doris Jacobi**, of the *Edmonton Pony Club* met at the Lundy residence to make plans. A letter was sent out to local stable owners and managers soliciting their views and possible assistance in conducting a Therapeutic Riding Program. Due to cold weather, the meeting scheduled for September 21, was re-scheduled and took place October 12, 1972.

The agenda included:

1. "Why should blind people ride?" - **Ann Burrows**
2. "Therapeutic value of riding for the disabled" - **Mary Snell** (Occupational Therapist)
Roy Abey (Owner - Abey Stables)
3. "Medical Aspects of Disabled Riders" - **Dr. Greenhill**

4. "My experiences as a Disabled Rider" - **Debbie Bouma**
5. "Film showing son Randy, who is blind, riding - **Mr. Hogle**
6. "Discussion and plans for the future"

The meeting was well-attended and fantastic enthusiasm generated. Many questions needed to be addressed and answered - where to start? how to get funding?, what resource people do we have to draw on etc.?. The process was started, however, it was not until 1974 that the ball really began to roll and eventually they were able to apply for a Government Grant after learning that Calgary had obtained one. The request was sent to the **Honorable Hugh M. Horner, Minister of Agriculture**, a copy was also sent to the **Honorable Horst A. Schmid, Minister of Recreation, Parks and Wildlife**. This was the first time that a program had been jointly funded by two Provincial Departments.

Off and Running ...

Under the direction of Mrs. Myrtle Leadlay of the *City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department* an initial grant was obtained from the *Provincial Government* to establish and operate a children's riding program, initially for a 3-year period. The funding was to provide for the training and certification of Riding Instructors, the purchase of special equipment to safely accommodate the disabled children on horseback also the rental of horses and the riding facility.

It was during 1975 that the *City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department* took a new approach to providing a unique enhanced recreational program for disabled children and youth. The program objective was to provide therapeutic horseback riding activities for special needs children conducted by specially trained instructors. The benefits were anticipated to go beyond merely recreational and to be truly therapeutic to mind, body and spirit.

After many strategy meetings and prevailing upon the advice and talents of the local "Equestrians"... Bert, Willa, Doris et al, suitable volunteers were recruited. Bert was appointed Head Riding Instructor and as such decided that rather than "Re-invent the Wheel" it would be prudent to enlist the help of existing experts in the field of Therapeutic Horseback Riding. With the help of **Mr. Dave Arsenault**, a Consultant with the *Provincial Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation*, an "Expert" was found. That expert was **Mrs. Lida McCowan**, North America's foremost authority in this field and *Director of the Cheff Center for the Handicapped* in Augusta, Michigan. The **Cheff Center**, a training facility for Therapeutic Riding Instructors, also operated a nationally recognized Therapeutic Riding Program. Lida was invited to come to Edmonton to give a Training and Certification Workshop for those who were to become the first Therapeutic Riding Instructors in Alberta.

The **Whitemud Equine Centre**, located in the beautiful North Saskatchewan River Valley was selected as the facility for the new program; with two 10-week sessions per year, one scheduled for spring, the other in the fall. The facility at that time was operated by **Mr. Rod Edwards** who was a great help in getting the right horses for such a special task. The program has remained at the *Whitemud Equine Centre* throughout the 25 years.

Initially the program accommodated 36 Riders. Each lesson included a blend of theory and stable management and horseback riding. The riding program was based on the principles of

Therapeutic Riding as recognized by **CANTRA** (*Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association*) and **NARHA** (*North American Riding for the Handicapped Association*)

To operate the program effectively and efficiently required the coordination and cooperation of not only the Administration Personnel, Riding Instructors but also many of the Riders Parents and other Volunteers. For many riders it required a 3 - 1 ratio, two Side-walkers and a Leader, the safety of the rider was always of paramount importance. Two such early volunteers were **Dr. Greenhill** and **Mrs. Doreen Drews**, a Physiotherapist, who handled the delicate mounting procedures from the ramp. Over the 25 year period the club has had an excellent safety record resulting in very few incidents to either riders or riding support staff, (or horses for that matter). OK, so a few did fall off and yes the horses did step on a few toes!

Why This Program? ...

The question often raised is “Why is horseback riding so important when there are other forms of therapy such as swimming?” How can horseback riding possibly contribute to the better overall health of the disabled, especially since riding has always been considered a more strenuous sport?

Riding becomes more than just exercise. Riding helps the disabled person adjust to their disability by not only improving balance, coordination and posture, but also by restoring self-confidence. To the disabled, horseback riding presents a challenge. The student is not only faced with competing against himself / herself in endurance, quality and performance, but must also compete against others with similar disabilities.

Instead of dull exercises performed in hospitals or with special equipment, the student looks forward to riding lessons because these lessons are associated with a living animal. The very fact that this animal responds to the wishes of the rider, provides needed emotional stimulus. The riders' spirits soar as he reacts to the new sensation of being on a height above others. He becomes aware for the first time that he can be mobile and independent of other people or mechanical aids. She is performing as a normal person.

For some this is their first look at a horse or pony other than in pictures or on TV. As the young new rider is introduced to the horses, eager hands reach out to pet them, some reaching from wheelchairs and others balanced precariously on crutches. Small voices ask, “What’s his name?” while others that can’t speak just point with their fingers excitedly. “This one is called Pax, that’s Snowball, say Hi to Tuffy” reply the Instructors as they encourage even the most apprehensive student in the initial contact between horse and child.

Original Member Riders of The Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled:

**Arlene Aitkenhead
Cheryl Austin
Robert Bellringer
Mary Lou Cardinal
Danny Drever
Karen Downing
Brian Finlayson
Barb Garnett
Maureen Hill**

**Kim Alexander
Dianne Beckner
Ricky Bertram
Stephanie Dick
Szea Dorran
George Earl
Ulricha Frank
John Gwillian
Kim Lazurak**

**Ricky Matsen
Wanda Moser
John Nederveen
David Parks
Lynn Renaud
Leonard Saunders
Allison Stanley
Jeff Vanderwell
Barb White
Brian Zimmer**

**June Mitchell
Allan Nagel
Dean Olesky
Martin Patrick
Jason Ropert
Greg Shorter
Audrey Stechynsky
Curtis Wentworth
Andrew Zapach**

Our Therapeutic Riding Program...

Over the years the ***Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled*** has evolved, both in the *Organization* and the *Program Activities*.

To begin with the Program Activities; the number of children and youth accommodated in the program has progressively increased from the original 36, to today's total of 117 (32 Adult Riders). This increase has attempted to keep up with the ever-increasing demand for our services within the community. However, due to a number of constraints there have for many of the years, been a waiting list of children eager to join the program. The major constraints have been, limited financial resources to aggressively expand the Program and lack of available physical resources, i.e., scheduled arena time and instructors.

In the fall of 1995 a Task Group of Board Directors and Member Parents was formed to address the increasing dilemma of riders over the age of 18, versus the waiting list of young children waiting up to two years to join the program. As a result of this initiative a grant was obtained from the ***Wild Rose Foundation*** to expand our mandate to include an "**Adult Riding Program**" (**Big Bits**) in our organization. The first year, 1997, the program accommodated 16 Adult Riders and an additional 16 the following year.

The new expanded program has been extremely successful in better accommodating the Adult Rider and also has alleviated the waiting list quite considerably for the younger members.

Whilst the Program is about horsemanship, it is also "Holistic" in terms of providing skills and therapeutic benefit to the individual riders. The lessons include the specific components necessary to become proficient on horseback to the best of the riders ability. The theory portion includes lectures, demonstrations and practice in the various aspects of horse care. The most important part of the whole exercise, in addition to the therapeutic benefits, is that they have FUN! Much of the learning and exercising is built into a "games format" that helps overcome barriers, build confidence and enhance the Rider's self-esteem.

In a recent discussion with **Bert Wort**, a founding member and the very first **Head Riding Instructor**, now owner of The Tudor Tack Shoppe in Edmonton, he fondly recalled those early formative years and some of the stories that came to mind. One such story involved **Wanda**, a quadriplegic rider; she was mounted and ready to go, complete with a Backrider and two Sidewalkers when a loud noise spooked the horse. The horse took off, bucking and causing both riders to bang their heads against the wall (thank heaven for those hockey helmets). On the third turn both riders dismounted (involuntarily) and landed on top of each other in the corner, Bert joked, "You two pick the strangest places to make out!" No major damage resulted, just a slightly bruised ego's!

Another similar incident involved **Curtis Wentworth**, whose horse took off like a "Rocket," resulting in Curtis making a sudden return to Earth. Unperturbed Curtis got up ran over to his Dad and asked excitedly "How did I do Dad, did I have good landing?"

The "Near-miss" incidents are usually the stories that come to mind, however, they were few and far between, with safe, skillful accomplishments being more the norm. The skills and accomplishments of the riders were soon evident as they proudly gave riding demonstrations on special occasions such as the "Paddock Parties".

One of the "Original Riders" was **Brian Finlayson**, who remembers quite vividly those Therapeutic Riding Lessons as a "Cute 12 year old" back in 1975. Brian recalls actually being used as a "Guinea Pig" by Myrtle Leadlay, Bert Wort and Lida McCowan prior to the official roll-out of the Program. It was to be the beginning of a lifelong passion for horses and riding for Brian. He fondly remembers original horses such as **Pax** and **Tuffy** that are still in active service bringing excitement into the lives of Riders today having given 25 years of faithful service.

After one year of riding with Little Bits, Brian graduated to taking private lessons with **Bert Wort** and **Marilyn Saito**, however, when his lesson was finished he would stay on and help out with The Little Bits riding sessions as a Volunteer. Brian continued as a Volunteer and went on to train and Certify as a Therapeutic Riding Instructor in 1983 when **Lida McCowan** conducted another Training Workshop in Edmonton.

Brian is also an Instructor and teaches at the **Roy Saito** Therapeutic Riding School in Calmar. Rumor has it that Brian is also an accomplished Bird Trainer (I wonder how he gets the saddles on those little Parrots!)

Brian is an excellent role model for our Riding Students and shows what a lot of hard work and motivation can accomplish. We are proud of his achievements and appreciate his ongoing involvement with our organization.

Another individual involved with Little Bits early on, was **Ed Carsen**, Ed was also a member of the *Alberta Horse Council*. He volunteered from 1976 until 1980 when he left for Nigeria. Upon returning in 1982 Ed became one of the first NARHA Certified Instructors together with **Dick Lewis**, **Karen Baxter** and **Bridgett Myer** in **Lida McCowan's** class of 1983.

In conversation Ed reminisced about the fun and fellowship with the Instructors, Volunteers, Parents and the many happy, enthusiastic and courageous children in the Riding Program. One memorable anecdote involved the "Innocent honesty" of children. The occasion was Theory Class with Riders from the **Merrydale Centre (Joan Albert's "Angels"!)**, **Lynn** was teaching Horse Anatomy and had just completed naming and discussing the various parts of the horse, when **Danny...** ("Mr. Enthusiasm") noticed an omission and called out at the top of his voice "What about the 'Dink' Lynn, what about the 'Dink'?" Danny's embarrassed Aide was hastily

removing him from the class as he continued to repeat the unanswered question ... his voice trailing "What about the...."

So many children, so many stories. Ed left for Nicaragua in September of 1986 and **Marilyn Saito** took over as Head Riding Instructor. Ed has since returned to Canada and is now a teacher at St. Angela's School in Edmonton.

The Organization...

The "Organization" began as a community "Pilot Project" within the *Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department* under the guidance of Myrtle Leadlay. The organization was originally called **Little Bits Riding Club for the Handicapped** and was on occasion referred to as **The Edmonton Horsemanship Program for the Disabled**. Soon **Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled** became the official name.

The initial target date for the "The Program" start up was to be May 11, 1975, however due to delays by the *City of Edmonton Legal Department* in acceptance of the special legal and consent forms the Program was delayed. Instead, a four-week trial run of the Program was carried out in May. The **Glenrose Hospital** emotionally disturbed children participated, since the children could be readily assessed by hospital staff. The trial session was successful and terminated after four weeks as the children were leaving Glenrose for the summer. A letter was sent out to all the parents telling them about the trial run and announcing that the Program would commence the second week in September.

With everything now in place the full **Therapeutic Riding Program** commenced **September 8, 1975** at Whitemud Equine Academy and was run every Monday and Friday evening:
Monday - 6:30 - 7:45 PM Emotionally disturbed from Glenrose School Hospital
- 7:45 - 9:00 PM Mentally disabled from public

Friday - 6:00 - 7:30 PM Physically disabled from public

Each group was co-educational with 12 children ranging in age from 9 years to 16 years. Within each group were varying degrees of disability, especially in the physically disabled group.

In addition to **Bert Wort**, the Head Riding Instructor, six other Riding Instructors and a Physiotherapist were hired to assist with the riding lessons. The theory part of each lesson was taught by **Cathy Wort** on a volunteer basis (she was unable to be a paid staff member as her husband was already a City employee). The Instructors filled out progress reports after each lesson giving a brief description of activities and the child's progression.

The first 10-week session concluded November 17, 1975. On January 28, 1976 a meeting with both, parents and staff present, was held to evaluate the Program and decide on dates for the next 10-week session.

It was unanimously agreed that the Program was a success and have great value to the children. Myrtle Leadlay proposed that four riders from each group form a Teen Riding Program. Parents and staff were keen on opening up the Program and agreed it was an excellent idea. It was felt that the expansion of the Program to include more and a wider range of individuals would be beneficial and also aid in future grant applications.

The next 10-week session was set for April 5, to June 7 and changing Friday evening lessons to Thursday evenings to better accommodate Volunteers.

It was also at this meeting that concern was raised about the future of the club once the grant funding was used up. A volunteer group of parents formed a committee to look into various ways to continue funding the Program ... this was the beginning of the "**Parent Group**". The initial group members were:

Mr. Garnett
Mr. Aitkenhead
Mr. Auston
Mrs. Zimmer
Mr. Olesky

The initial Government Grant Funding of \$9,414.41 was a one-time grant intended to get the Therapeutic Riding Program started. It was imperative that if the Program was to continue, ongoing fund-raising was needed from the parents of the Member Riders. The source of revenues to cover operating expenses were to be one third from membership dues and riding fees and the remaining two thirds to come from fund-raising initiatives and donations. It was not long before the "**Parent Group**", recently formed, was up and running, their first President was **Mr. Robert W. Garnett**. The Parent Group worked closely with the "**Founding Group**" - Myrtle, Willa and Bert to help with the post-implementation phase and to ensure the smooth ongoing operation of the Club.

One of the first fund-raising events was to be the "**Paddock Party**"; Bert, using his horse industry contacts through *The North Central Alberta Horse Council*, invited the various horse associations to come and give a talk and demonstration of their specific discipline to the public at the Paddock Party. This event was first held October 17, 1976 at **Azure Acres**, hosted by **Mr. Don Hunt**. Attendees were charged \$1.00 each or \$5.00 per carload and refreshments were sold by the Parent Group. In addition to the visiting horse association's demonstrations, Little Bits Riders also put on a show, demonstrating the various therapeutic techniques and displaying their newly acquired riding skills. The Paddock Party was a resounding success. The underlying objective of the event was to impress the attending horse associations and have them adopt Little Bits as one of their worthy causes to support in their respective charitable efforts. One of the organizations that took up the challenge was **The Aurora Arabian Horse Association** and has continued its support for Little Bits over the years.

The Paddock Parties continued for a number of years, with future events being held at the **Duke Ranch**, hosted by **Mr. Fred Duke** and at **Meadowview Ranch**, hosted by **Mr. Tommy Fox**.

The following pages - 10 to 22, contain reproduced excerpts from the very first "**Paddock Party Program of Events**", which was lovingly preserved along with other Little Bits memorabilia and documents for the past 25 years by **Raylene Manolescu**.

Raylene was at that time part of the "Implementation Group" working as assistant to Myrtle Leadlay in the *Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department*, and also was **Volunteer Coordinator** and a **Riding Instructor** for Little Bits. Raylene, now with *Grant MacEwan Community College, Community Enrichment Department*, is still an active equestrian as a member of **The Klondike Square Dance Riders**.

Milestones along the way...

The “Formative years” - 1975 to 1978, saw the establishment of a good strong foundation for the Therapeutic Riding Program and the Little Bits Riding Club

The organization obtained its “**Certificate of Incorporation**” under the Societies Act of Alberta, February 8, 1978. The role of guidance and support was still provided through the *Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department’s Myrtle Leadlay* and the *Parent Group* provided additional support, especially in the area of financing the Program, as the initial funding was now depleted.

In addition to the continuing annual Paddock Party fund-raiser, 1979 saw the introduction of the first **Strawberry Tea** ... a garden party event hosted by Myrtle Leadlay and Willa Lundy. Supporters, local dignitaries, various business and organization representatives were invited and entertained. The first event was well received and raised \$1866.27. The Strawberry Tea became an annual event for a number of years.

1980 was the **Province of Alberta’s 75 th. Anniversary** and The Little Bits Riding Club promoted public awareness by entering a splendid float in the **Klondike Days Parade**. The kids had a ball and the float aroused a lot of interest in the clubs activities.

As knowledge of the good cause and accomplishments of Little Bits spread within the community, so the doors of opportunity opened. In this case it was the ranch gates of **Meadowview Ranch** and the **Annual Cutting Horse Competition** hosted by **Tommy and Clara Fox**. This became a benefit event for Little Bits.

For the first time in 1981 Little Bits organized and put on what was to become the **Annual Pancake Breakfast** in conjunction with the Cutting Horse Competition. It was a great fund-raiser, in addition to public donations; the **Cutting Horse Competitors** donated their winning purse monies to Little Bits. The Little Bits Riders also demonstrated their skills prior to the Cutting Horse events. It was indeed a “Gala Event” and its success was aided by the support of the **Edmonton Zonta Club**. The Corps of Commissionaires Band provided the musical entertainment. The **Parent Group** was responsible for cooking up a mountain of pancakes, bacon, and sausages, together with strawberries and whipped cream. The first Pancake Breakfast raised \$1,000; each successive year saw this amount dramatically increase. In 1988 our club’s patron **Helen Hunley Lieutenant Governor of Alberta** was in attendance, arriving in a stately horse drawn carriage.

1981 saw the formation of the first “**Board of Directors**”, this group was dedicated to serving the membership by setting policies and making decisions that would help ensure the Club’s future success. They met monthly and communicated and collaborated with the Parent Group to achieve the clubs goals and objectives

The inaugural Board of Directors members were:

Tony Sheppard - Chairman.
Sharon Breitreuze - Treasurer.

Harold Clark
Marion Hood

Willa Lundy
Myrtle Leadlay

Don Hunt
Irene Earl Muriel McGuire

The 1981 Parent Executive members were:

Ron Clack - President.
Bert Wort - Vice President.
Irene Earl - Recording Secretary.
Joan Albert - Corresponding Secretary.
Marj Zimmer - Treasurer.
Joan Olesky - Social.

Kyle Osler - P.R.
Kathy Matson- Phone.Com.
Josie Lario - Phone Com..
Herta Frank - Vol List
Joan Eirich - Wait List.

The 1982 Board of Directors members were:

Tony Sheppard - Chairman.
Sharon Breitkreuze - Treasurer.
Harold Clark
Bob Garnett
Myrtle Leadlay
Willa Lundy
Bert Wort

Muriel McGuire
Marion Hood
Don Hunt
Marg Cook
Ken Komm
Sharon Curry

The 1982 Parent Executive members were:

Don Matson - President
Ron Clack - Past President
Ken Leason - Vice President
Vacant - Recording Secretary
Joan Albert - Corresponding Secretary
Carol McBurney- Corresponding Secretary

Marj Zimmer - Treasurer
Kathy Matson- Social
Irene Earl- Phone Com.
Pat Janke- Phone Com.
Herta Frank- Volunteer and
Membership Coordinator

In July 1982 discussions were held to explore the opportunity of purchasing the physical assets - buildings and equipment, of **Hope Mission Camp**, located at Joseph Lake near New Serepta. The campsite, 20 acres, located on the north Shore of Joseph Lake, is Crown Land and as such is leased through the *Government Department of Lands and Forests*.

The Board of Directors approved the purchase of Hope Mission Camp for the sum of \$12,000 subject to successful lease approval. There was also an understanding that the Parent Group would maintain and operate the camp facility, utilizing it for the benefit of the club membership. The facility comprised a main building which included the dining hall, kitchen, office, storage room and shower stall. Other buildings were five cabins, storage shed and two outhouses. There were no power or water services on-site; a gas-powered generator provided the electricity for the main building. Water for the kitchen had to be hauled in and pumped up into a head tank in the loft and the stoves and water heater were propane.

It was not until the summer of 1983 that the final Government Lease arrangements were in place and very little was done with the camp that year.

The 1983 Board of Directors members were:

Sharon Breitreuze - Chairman.
? - Treasurer.
Tony Sheppard
Willa Lundy
Myrtle Leadlay
Muriel McGuire
Marion Hood - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director

Harold Clark
Arnie Mottershead
Don Hunt
Marg Cook
Ken Komm
Sharon Curry

The 1983 Parent Executive members were:

Orest Olesky - President
John Zapach - Vice President
Ian Coates - Treasurer
Connie Krempien - Recording Secretary
Joan Albert - Corresponding Secretary

Lillian Clack - Social
Janet Scholey- Ph. Com.
Leslie Park - Ph. Com.
Jane Oberg - Ph. Com.
Doreen Hiebert- Volunteer
and Membership Coordinator

Spring of 1983 was the first **Annual Garage Sale** fund-raiser, it was truly a "Garage Sale" as it was hosted by **Sundance Motors** and held in their workshop. The sale was a success financially and also a great way for the member families to interact and have some fun. The Annual Garage Sale event ran for 4 or 5 years and was eventually dropped in favor of other fund-raising efforts.

Summer of 1983, June 24, the **Special Olympics** were held at the **St. Albert Rodeo Grounds**. The event included all four Disabled Riding Programs operating in Alberta. Instructors **Ed Carsen** and **Marilyn Saito** together with a number of **Little Bits Riders** participated in this demonstration-sporting event.

In the fall of 1983 the *Provincial Government Department of Energy and Natural Resources* advised us that in response to our request they were evaluating the road access to our Joseph Lake campsite. This was encouraging news as the existing access was little more than a muddy rutted cart track.

The 1984 Board of Directors members were:

Arnie Mottershead - Chairman.
Sharon Breitreuze - Treasurer.
Ken Komm
Tony Sheppard
Willa Lundy
Marion Hood - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director

Myrtle Leadlay
Marg Cook
Muriel McGuire
Sharon Curry

The 1984 Parent Executive members were:

Ian Coates	- President	Kathy Matsen	- Social
Shirley Church	- Vice President	Myrtle Couture	- Ph. Com.
Paul Hebert	- Treasurer	Elaine Markham	- Ph. Com.
Connie Krempien	- Recording Secretary	Jane Oberg	- Ph. Com.
Rex Carey	- Corresponding Secretary		

Spring of 1984 heralded the good news that the *Provincial Government* had allotted \$40,000 (including County of Leduc providing machinery and manpower) for construction of a private road into our Joseph Lake campsite. Construction began in June, clearing a wide swath through the wooded area, (those trees provided firewood for camp for the next 10 years!).

It was about this time that it was decided to rename The Little Bits Riding Club camp facility at Joseph Lake. A competition was held amongst the Club's Riders to come up with a new name for the "The Camp". The winning entry was submitted by **Jason Carey**, the facility was now to be known as "**Camp Horseshoe**".

Summer of 1984 was the beginning of Camp Horseshoe renovations and site clean up; there was much to be done to make the facility suitable for disabled campers. To accomplish this a "Facility Management Team" was established to plan and initiate work activities. The team included, **Ken Komm, Sharon Breitreuze, Rex Carey, Doug Wentworth, and John Markham**. Due to road construction and all the other work activities, no formal camp programs were planned for the summer although some weekend camping use was made of the facility.

The summer of 1984 was also a busy time for the Club's Riders; Whitemud Equestrian Centre and Little Bits Riding Club hosted the equestrian events for the **Alberta Summer Games**. Thanks to the combined efforts of Little Bits Instructors, Volunteers and Parents the event was a great success with our riders picking up their fair share of the awards.

Little Bits also sent one of their "Star Riders", **Arlene Aitkenhead** to represent Canada in world-class competition in June 1984. Arlene was selected as a member of the **Canadian Equestrian Team** at the **International Games for the Physically Disabled**, held in Long Island, New York. We were so proud of her hard work and dedication as she brought home a **Silver Medal** in the Dressage event and a **Bronze Medal** for the Obstacle Course competition.

September 15, 1984 was the first "**Ride-A-Thon**", organized by the Board of Directors and held at Whitemud Equine Centre showground. Members, Riders and friends obtained sponsors to pay a donation of an amount per lap, each lap 1 Km, up to 5 laps. The event raised \$4,869 and became an annual fund-raiser for a number of years.

The winter of 1984/85, February, **Ed Carsen**, the Head Riding Instructor, recalled was the time that we hosted a one-day "Winter Fun Party" out at Camp Horseshoe. The activities included snowmobiling, snowshoe racing, tobogganing and other kinds of mischief that occur when snow is involved. The occasion was rather unique as our membership kids and families were hosting a number of refugee families from Guatemala; they had never experienced snow before. It was a

sight to behold to see the children frolic in the snow and afterwards toast marshmallows over a cheerful log fire.

The 1985 Board of Directors members were:

Arnie Mottershead - Chairman.
Ken Komm - Vice chairman.
Doug Wentworth - Treasurer.
Sharon Breitreuze
Tony Sheppard
Bert Wort
Willa Lundy

Myrtle Leadlay
Muriel McGuire
Marg Cook
Connie Krempien
Ray Hazlett
Gloria Reimer

Marion Hood - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Don Hunt - Honary Director

The 1985 Parent Executive members were:

Shirley Church - President
Irene Earl - Vice President
Doug Wentworth - Treasurer
Barb Hart - Recording Secretary
Rex Carey - Corresponding Secretary

Don Matsen -Social
Pam Steeves -Ph. Com.
Gord Roller -Ph. Com.
Connie Krempien-Volunteer
and Membership Coordinator

With Camp Horseshoe now in habitable shape and some new asphalt paths built, plans were made to run 3 one-week camp programs in the summer of 1985. **Ed Carsen** volunteered to be Camp Director; he recalls that **Bob Stirrett** ("Cowboy Bob") was the Trail-Boss; **Leslie Cox** was the Cook and some "New Canadians" - **Peter Zizler, Raul Escabar** and **Oscar...?** were the Camp Counselors.

Each week 10 - 12 campers participated in the program. The Camp Program, though a learning experience, was a great success and included horseback riding, waterfront activities, arts and crafts and campfire fellowship.

The Facility Management Team together with several volunteers including **Al Knopp** and friends from the **New Serepta Lions Club**, constructed an outdoor riding arena to better facilitate the riding activities at camp.

In August 1985 the Little Bits Riding Club Riders were invited to perform a "Musical Ride" to help celebrate the **Paralympic Sports Association's 20 th. Anniversary** at the Fox Ranch.

The **Little Bits Annual Xmas Party** attended by some 320 people and held at the **A.C.T. Centre, Rundle Park**, was especially significant this year as it was the "**Clubs 10th. Anniversary**". **Myrtle Leadlay, Willa Lundy** and **Bert Wort** received plaques in recognition as "Founding Members" and for continuous service as Directors. Plaques were also presented to the "Founding Members" of the Parent Group who were still involved in the Club. Certificates were presented to all other original members, winning Ride-A-Thon participants and special Volunteers.

The 1986 Board of Directors members were:

Ken Komm - Chairman.
Arnie Mottershead - Past President.
Gloria Reimer - Vice President.
Ray Hazlett - Treasurer.
Leslie Ouwerkerk - Recording Secretary.
Sharon Breitzkreuze
Tony Sheppard

Bert Wort
Willa Lundy
Myrtle Leadlay
Muriel McGuire
Marg Cook
Gordon McDonald

Marion Hood - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Don Hunt - Honary Director

The 1986 Parent Executive members were:

Dennis Rugutski - President
Connie Krempien - Vice President
Doug Wentworth - Treasurer
Marie Rugutski - Recording Secretary
Rex Carey - Corresponding Secretary

Kathy Matsen - Social
Barb Nicoll - Social
Dawn Madill - Ph. Com
Irene Earl - Newsletter

The summer of 1986 the Summer Camp Program was increased to 5 one-week integrated camps that included both disabled and non-disabled campers. This greatly improved the scope of programming and the enjoyment of the campers.

1987 got off to a good start with the wonderful donation of a van complete with installed power operated wheelchair lift, from **Molsens**. The presentation was made at the **Super Rodeo** at the Northlands Agricom on March 28. In attendance to accept on behalf of Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled were **Ken Komm**, **Madeline Blanchette** and a number of **Little Bits Riders**. The van would be used for special transportation needs and as the emergency standby vehicle out at Camp Horseshoe.

During 1987 a grant application came to fruition with the **Minerva Foundation** funding a major portion of the cost of installing electrical power to the Camp Horseshoe site. Using other grant monies from **Labats** targeted for camp upgrade, we were able trench and run power to all the cabins. The Camp Facility Team completed the job in one weekend thanks to the technical expertise of volunteer **Paul Ouwerkerk**. What a joy it was to just switch on lights instead of having to fire up that temperamental noisy old generator. Also we were able to replace the old gas stoves with more reliable newer electric stoves.

The 1987 Board of Directors members were:

Ken Komm - Chairman.
Arnie Mottershead - Past President.

Muriel McGuire
Gordon McDonald

Gloria Reimer - Vice President.
Ray Hazlett - Treasurer.
Leslie Ouwerkerk - Recording Secretary.
Sharon Breitzkreuze
Willa Lundy
Marion Hood

Rex Carey
Tom Enevold
Bernice Gordeyko
Darlene McDonald
Pat Rosin
Doug Farnell

Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Don Hunt - Honary Director

The 1987 Parent Executive members were:

Madeline Blanchette - President
Dawn Madill - Vice President
Nicki Roden - Treasurer
Martha Ware - Recording Secretary
Rex Carey - Corresponding Secretary

Kathy Matsen - Social
Barb Nicoll - Social
Myrtle Couture - Ph. Com.
Irene Earl - Newsletter

1988 commenced with an important milestone event, the amalgamation of the Board of Directors with the Parent Group to form a new expanded Board of Directors. The move was made to enhance the overall operation of the Organization and to avoid a lot of duplicated effort.

The 1988 Board of Directors members were:

Gloria Reimer - Chairman.
Ken Komm - Past President.
Martha Ware - 1st. Vice President.
Rex Carey - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitzkreuze - Treasurer.
Sue Doolittle - Recording Secretary.
Willa Lundy
Muriel McGuire
Arnie Mottershead
Myrtle Leadlay - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Marion Hood - Honary Director

Bernice Gordeyko
Doug Farnell
Tom Enevold
Bob Hahn
Dawn Madill
Esther Macdonald
Linda Rault
Bob Bissell
Roman Hoerber

Now that electrical power had been installed at Camp Horseshoe the next priority was to have a water well drilled. The big question was where to drill? The local rumor was that the man to see was **Mr. Janke**; apparently he had been water divining for nigh on 70 years. The day Mr. Janke arrived at camp to divine for water we were all excited expecting him to work with some "Special Divining Rod"; no such thing, all he used was a "*plain old broom handle!*" We all watched intently and followed like sheep as he wandered around the site, broom handle balanced horizontally across his fingers. The broom handle dipped, he stopped and scuffed the ground with his boot. "Dig here" he said, "Sixty to eighty feet should do it". The spot was just a few feet in front of the main building. When asked what the charge was for the service, Mr. Janke replied "I'll have a glass of crystal clear water when you get your well finished". The well Driller came the following

week and sure enough they hit water at 65 feet and set the casing to 80 feet! The water was plentiful and of good quality, a bit high in iron content but suitable for use.

In the early summer, Camp Horseshoe was host to thousands of "Guests", unwelcome guests ... it was the year of the Tent Caterpillar! The infestation was so bad that we paid to have a Crop Duster Plane spray the entire site before the invaders ate all the foliage and then started on the campers!

The Little Bits Riding Club was the beneficiary of another fund-raising opportunity; they were invited by **Northlands** to take over from **The Variety Club of Edmonton**, the making and selling of Daisies in conjunction with **The Canadian Derby... "Dash for the Daisies"**. This event was to be a very high profile opportunity for the Little Bits Organization and continues to be a profitable annual fund-raising event to this day.

The 1989 Board of Directors members were:

Gloria Reimer	- Chairman.	Tom Enevold
Ken Komm	- Past President.	Bob Hahn
Rex Carey	- 1st. Vice President.	Esther Macdonald
Dawn Madill	- 2nd. Vice President.	Linda Rault
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	Barry Boychuk
Denise Chapman	- Recording Secretary.	Christa West
Leslie Ouwerkerk		Sue Doolittle
Bernice Gordeyko		Wendy Fraser
Lyn Funnell		
Myrtle Leadlay	- Honary Director	
Tommy Fox	- Honary Director	
Marion Hood	- Honary Director	
Willa Lundy	- Honary Director	

Spring of 1990 we broke ground to build the new bathhouse building at Camp Horseshoe. Grant funding from **The Wildrose Foundation** (\$33,000 of the \$42,214), allowed us to construct a bathhouse specially designed to accommodate persons with disabilities that included four toilets, two bathrooms, two wheel-in showers, four vanities and a laundry room. The building was officially opened by **Mr. Stan Fisher** on behalf of the Wild Rose Foundation, ably assisted by a number of the children in camp.

The 1990 Board of Directors members were:

Gloria Reimer	- Chairman.	Tom Enevold
Ken Komm	- Past President.	Bob Hahn
Rex Carey	- 1st. Vice President.	Esther Macdonald
Dawn Madill	- 2nd. Vice President.	Linda Rault
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	Wendy Fraser
Denise Chapman	- Recording Secretary.	Christa West
Leslie Ouwerkerk		Barry Boychuk

Bernice Gordeyko
Lyn Funnell

Tony Sheppard
Bill Gunter

Muriel McGuire - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Marion Hood - Honary Director
Willa Lundy - Honary Director

1991 fund-raising got off to a great start as we ran our very first **Casino**. It was quite labor intensive requiring some 48 volunteers over the two day casino but it was well worth it, we netted a profit of \$35,409. The Casino event continues to be a regular source of revenue as our rotation turn comes around, about every 18 months.

Each fall Board Director **Sharon Breutkreuz** hosts a "Trail Ride" weekend at Camp Horseshoe for club supporters, on this occasion in 1991 a generous donation of \$7,500 was presented by the **Edmonton Klondike Sheriff's Posse**. The donation made it possible for us to purchase a lawn tractor for Camp Horseshoe. The balance went towards purchasing another cabin and other facility upgrade needs.

Other significant grants included \$5,000 from **The Edmonton Community Foundation**, which funded the new corral and pasture fencing at Camp Horseshoe.

During 1991 there was some uncertainty about the future of Whitemud Equine Centre and rumors of closure were rampant. The Riders were so concerned that some of the children - **Jerry, Lisa, Nathon, Emily, Sharon, Margaret, Elizabeth, Rachel and Adrienne** wrote letters to **The Queen** !!. When asked why, the children said, "We did it to save Whitemud". The facility continued to be "Home" to Little Bits Riding Club.

The 1991 Board of Directors members were:

Bob Hahn - Chairman.
Gloria Reimer - Past President.
Bill Gunter - 1st. Vice President.
Rex Carey - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breutkreuz - Treasurer.
Tracey Ewing - Recording Secretary.
Ken Komm
Leslie Ouwerkerk
Bernice Gordeyko
Tom Enevold

Lyn Funnell
Madeline Blanchette
Esther Macdonald
Linda Rault
Wendy Fraser
Barry Boychuk
Christa West
Andrew Howard
Lloyd Thompson

Muriel McGuire - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Marion Hood - Honary Director
Willa Lundy - Honary Director

In 1992 the club's logo was redesigned and incorporated into our new brochures and new lapel pins.

The 1992 Board of Directors members were:

Bob Hahn	- Chairman.	Lyn Funnell
Gloria Reimer	- Past President.	Tom Enevold
Bill Gunter	- 1st. Vice President.	Esther Macdonald
Rex Carey	- 2nd. Vice President.	Barry Boychuk
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	Andrew Howard
Tracey Ewing	- Recording Secretary.	Lloyd Thompson
Ken Komm		Carol Spriggs
Leslie Ouwerkerk		Mary Chibuk
Muriel McGuire	- Honary Director	
Tommy Fox	- Honary Director	
Willa Lundy	- Honary Director	

A new fundraising venture was entered into in partnership with the **Edmonton Country Rodeo Association** and the **ERAH Disabled Society**; to jointly operate the **St. Albert ("Rainmaker") - "Little Bits Pro Rodeo"**. A lot of hard work went into the event (and it did not even rain!), yet the event was a financial flop. No further attempts were made to run this event.

Also in 1992 the **Ride-A-Thon** was replaced by **Achievement Day ...** designed to show off the individual rider's achievements over the year. Head Riding Instructor **Linda Rault** and Riding Instructor **Jo-Anne Billington** explained the improved format where Riders set personal "Goals" and on the last day of riding in the fall they demonstrate to the audience, their sponsors, that they had achieved their goals. Trophies, Ribbons and Certificates are awarded to the Riders. The Achievement Day program has been extremely successful, both as a fund-raiser and as an incentive for the Riders.

A matching grant of some \$12,174 from the **Edmonton Community Enhancement Program** provided Camp Horseshoe with a facelift. The main building was re-roofed, new siding and doors; cabins were retrofitted to better accommodate wheelchairs and other repairs made at the facility. In addition to contractor time, in excess of 220 man-hours of labor was put in by volunteering Club Members.

The 1993 Board of Directors members were:

Ken Komm	- Chairman.	Tom Enevold
Bob Hahn	- Past President.	Esther Macdonald
Bill Gunter	- 1st. Vice President.	Barry Boychuk
Rex Carey	- 2nd. Vice President.	Andrew Howard
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	Lloyd Thompson

Tracey Ewing - Recording Secretary.
Gloria Reimer
Leslie Ouwerkerk
Lyn Funnell

Carol Spriggs
Mary Chibuk
Sylvia Erickson
Stan Homan

Muriel McGuire - Honary Director
Tommy Fox - Honary Director
Willa Lundy - Honary Director

At the 1993 Annual General Meeting the Organization's by-laws were amended to allow for Directors to run for office for unlimited terms.

The 1994 Board of Directors members were:

Bill Gunter - Chairman.
Ken Komm - Past President.
Mary Chibuk - 1st. Vice President.
Rex Carey - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitreuze - Treasurer.
Leslie Ouwerkerk - Assistant Treasurer.
Tracey Ewing - Recording Secretary.
Bob Hahn
Gloria Reimer
Lyn Funnell
Tom Enevold
Tommy Fox - Honary Director

Esther Macdonald
Barry Boychuk
Andrew Howard
Lloyd Thompson
Carol Spriggs
Sylvia Erickson
Tony Sheppard
Stan Homan
Mike Marples
Rick Caron

Another high profile, high profit opportunity was presented to Little Bits by way of **Northlands** giving us the privilege and exclusive rights of selling the programs at the **Canadian Finals Rodeo** held each November at the **Northlands Coliseum**.

In the fall of 1995 a Task Group of Board Directors and Member Parents was formed to address the increasing dilemma of riders over the age of 18 versus the waiting list of young children waiting up to two years to join the program. As a result of this initiative a grant was applied for from the **Wild Rose Foundation** to expand our mandate to include an "**Adult Riding Program**" (**Big Bits**) in our organization.

The 1995 Board of Directors members were:

Bill Gunter - Chairman.
Ken Komm - Past President.
Mary Chibuk - 1st. Vice President.
Rex Carey - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitreuze - Treasurer.
Leslie Ouwerkerk - Assistant Treasurer.
Tracey Ewing - Recording Secretary.
Gloria Reimer

Tom Enevold
Andrew Howard
Carol Spriggs
Sylvia Erickson
Stan Homan
Tony Sheppard
Mike Marples
Rick Caron

Lyn Funnell
Sarah Gray
Tommy Fox

- Honary Director

Ralph Schroth

Spring of 1996 Little Bits Riding Club enters "Cyberspace". Thanks to the efforts and technical expertise of Volunteer **John Fairweather** Little Bits was now on the World Wide Web (WWW). John created and maintained a web page for us and it can be found at <http://www.compumart.ab.ca/jfair>

The Board of Directors instituted a new policy requiring a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer activity/fund-raising annually by the member family or guardians. In lieu of such activity a cheque for \$200 is held and returned at the end of the year (or a pro-rated portion withheld in lieu of hours worked)

The 1996 Board of Directors members were:

Mary Chibuk - Chairman.
Bill Gunter - Past President.
Ken Komm - 1st. Vice President.
Rex Carey - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitzkreuze - Treasurer.
Jason Chibuk - Recording Secretary.
Lyn Funnell
Tom Enevold

Tony Sheppard
Sylvia Erickson
Linda Love
Julie Milne
Nancy Brown
Keith Roden
Darlene Buchanan

Our grant was approved from the **Wild Rose Foundation** to expand our mandate to include an "**Adult Riding Program**" (**Big Bits**) in our organization. This first year, 1997, the Program accommodated 16 Adult Riders and an additional 16 the following year. The new expanded program was extremely successful in better accommodating the Adult Rider and it also alleviated the waiting list quite considerably for the younger entry level members. The grant not only funded the Adult Program but also allowed us to hire our first full-time employee, **Darlene Gislason**, as **Executive Director of Operations and Development**.

The 1997 Board of Directors members were:

Mary Chibuk - Chairman.
Bill Gunter - Past President.
Sylvia Erickson - 1st. Vice President.
Keith Roden - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitzkreuze - Treasurer.
John Fairweather - Assistant Treasurer.
Jason Chibuk - Recording Secretary.
Ken Komm
Rex Carey

Tom Enevold
Tony Sheppard
Linda Love
Julie Milne
Nancy Brown
Darlene Buchanan
Bob Hahn
Elizabeth Gredley
Lloyd Thompson

In the fall of 1997 Little Bits was the recipients of another benefit event, **Ride 'N' Rope 'Em**. The event was sponsored by **Eaton's** and **involved** a Media Competition and also 21 teams in the Corporate Challenge plus some 50 individual riders. Whilst the revenue was not that high (\$1,000), the event did generate a lot of media coverage with potential exposure and support from corporations that had not previously been involved with Little Bits.

Over the years Little Bits Riding Club has been truly blessed with many wonderful, dedicated and compassionate Therapeutic Riding Instructors. They have collectively elevated the level of expertise and professionalism of our Programs and continue to create a fun learning experience for the Little Bits Riders.

Editors Note: The following list of Instructors, past and present, is probably incomplete due to inadequate records, please forgive any omissions ... additions / alterations, if brought to our attention can be made in a future edition.

Not necessarily in order of tenure:

Bert Wort, Marilyn Saito, Dick Lewis, Karen Baxter, Raylene Manolescu, Cathy Wort, Brigitte Meyer, Ed Carsen, Esther Macdonald, Karen Mattsen, Lori Shepp, Kevin Lewis, Linda Rault, Lynn Greenslade, Brian Finlayson, Joan Howard, Dorothy Brewer, Lori Krug, Wendy Fraser, Val Majeau, Jo-Anne Billington, Anita Homan, Leslie Ouwerkerk, Lorraine McCartney, Alyson Hazell and Michelle Bissell.

Also recognizing, Barn Managers - **Jordan MacKenzie, Rebecca Dzwiniel, Bronwyn Nicoll, Ros Schell** and Volunteer Coordinators - **Melanie Meardi, Paula Skilton, Susan Marshall, Leslie Ouwerkerk, Raelene Finlayson, Darlene Gislason and Rhonda Skinner**

The 1998 **Volunteer Appreciation BBQ** was a little "Wild" this year as we had the exclusive run of the **Storyland Valley Zoo** for the evening. The fun event was attended by some 233 "Homo Sapiens" who were entertained by a variety of "Resident Species". All were well fed, well behaved and declared the occasion a great success.

Excerpt from the Club Newsletter - "**News Bits**" spring 1998:

A Message to our Volunteers...

Sometimes horseback riding is a team sport. When Volunteers get together with Little Bits Riders, Parents, Instructors and Coordinators at Whitemud on Sunday mornings, Sunday afternoons and Thursday evenings, what happens is definitely a "Team Event"

Wander into the barn, the arena, the lobby, or the little back supply room and you will see the role that the Volunteers play, week in and week out. They cheerfully perform the myriad of tasks necessary to get those kids - and, for the first time in history, the "Big Kids" of the Adult Riding Program - up onto a horse.

Without them there would be no Sidewalkers, no Leaders, no gentle hand staying the physically insecure Rider. There would be no voice of encouragement to urge them to greater achievements and to make their experience a social as well as a therapeutic one.

Without them the never-ending task of tacking up and untacking to ready up the herd for the steady stream of Riders would be a daunting one. The atmosphere along the benches, in the lobby, or in the “snack room” would not resonate with the same quiet (and sometimes not so quiet) enthusiasm and energy.

Whether they are the faithful “Dobbins” of Little Bits, who week after week serve long hours, or whether they come and lend a hand for an hour or two whenever they can, their energy and commitment are the life of this Program.

We hope you, our **Little Bits Volunteers**, will accept our warmest thanks. Please believe us - we really could not do it without you.

.... From the Parents of Little Bits Riders

***Editors Note:** These sentiments have been valid since day-one of the Organization and continue to be so.*

Over the years one “Character” has become instantly recognizable and synonymous with Camp Horseshoe ... “The horse with no name”. The caricature horse was originally drawn by Volunteer **Lori Shepp** for a Pancake Breakfast poster. Lori, a talented artist, also went on to qualify as a Therapeutic Riding Instructor and served the Club for a number of years. As for “The Goofy Horse”, he became an overnight success and was adopted as the “**Camp Poster Mascot**” and used on camp literature. Kids in camp have on various occasions labeled “**The Horse**”....”**Hoofer**”, “**Dobbin**”, “**Goofy**”, “**Giddy-Up**” and a few others. We can only wonder...?

The 1998 Board of Directors members were:

Sylvia Erickson - Chairman.
Mary Chibuk - Past President.
Rex Carey - 1st. Vice President.
Julie Milne - 2nd. Vice President.
Sharon Breitzkreuze - Treasurer.
John Fairweather - Assistant Treasurer.
Darlene Gislason - Executive Director.
Ken Komm
Tom Enevold

Tony Sheppard
Bill Gunter
Linda Love
Darlene Buchanan
Bob Hahn
Elizabeth Gredley
Lloyd Thompson
Penny Mah

Another collaborative fund-raiser was entered into with the **Edmonton Effort Society**. The up-scale event was held November 21/1998 At the Westin Hotel with **Danny Hooper** as the Master of Ceremonies. Pro-rated revenues were donated back to Little Bits from the Silent Auction.

1998 was also a period when Whitemud Equine Centre was wrestling (yet again) with the question of the facility management and it's future viability. The **Friends of Whitemud Equine**

Centre looked to Little Bits, as the facilities major tenant and a “Key Stakeholder”, to become a committed supporter of the efforts to secure the facility for future equine use. Little Bits Board Directors **Ken Komm** and **Keith Roden** were assigned to looking after our Club’s interests and legal positioning with respect to Whitemud.

1998 closed out with another unique event ... the **Annual Xmas Party** was held on the **Edmonton Queen Riverboat**. During the festivities Volunteer **David Bandla** had his head shaved as the price he paid for fund-raising close to \$3,000, a great effort and a lot of fun.

Little Bits continued their close association with **Friends of Whitemud Equine Centre** in a joint fund-raising effort at the 1999 **Northlands Spring Horse Show**. Another successful Silent Auction was held and the Little Bits Riders gave the appreciative audience a demonstration of their equine skills.

The 1999 Board of Directors members were:

Sylvia Erickson	- Chairman.	Tom Enevold
Mary Chibuk	- Past President.	Tony Sheppard
Rex Carey	- 1st. Vice President.	Bill Gunter
Keith Roden	- 2nd. Vice President.	Linda Love
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	John Fairweather
Darlene Gislason	- Executive Director.	Elizabeth Gredley
Ken Komm		Lloyd Thompson
		Penny Mah

For the first time in 14 years there was no formal Summer Camp Program at Camp Horseshoe in 1999. Due to declining Government Grants, restrictive Social Services Funding and other factors, the enrollment of campers had been dwindling. Camp was made available to Members for their personal family use and we also hosted other children’s activities.

The “Whitemud Saga” continued into 1999 with the resignation of **Jean Archer**, *Manager and Operator of Whitemud Equine Centre*, who had supported and served Little Bits so well over the past 22 years. We wish her and her family well in their future endeavors. The *City of Edmonton* called for proposals from interested parties to operate the facility.

On August 29, 1999, an auction was held to sell off the Archer horses and equipment, The **Friends of Whitemud** together with **Little Bits Riding Club Directors** were successful in purchasing four of our lesson horses (**Snowball, Tuffy, Prince and Ribbon**) and tack and donated them to the newly formed **Edmonton Equine Society**, thus ensuring some degree of continuity for the Little Bits Riders.

The formation of the **Edmonton Equine Society** and their efforts to develop a “Master Plan” for Whitemud were challenging but potentially rewarding. Their collaboration and close work with the City of Edmonton were crucial to the future success of the operation of Whitemud.

Little Bits Board Director **Keith Roden** was a member of the “Transition Team”. The new Whitemud Facility Manager and Operator, **Arja Colombijn-Van Os** took over the operation in November.

A grant of \$21,000 was approved by the **Alberta Community Lottery Board** for the design, development and construction of a "Power Lift" - a device to safely and effectively lift a disabled rider from a wheelchair onto and off the back of a horse. The criteria to meet our needs were given to the **University of Alberta Mechanical Engineering Department**. They assigned the "Project" to five teams of Engineering Students to come up with alternate operational designs; target presentation of Project Design Plans being spring of 2000.

With the depletion of the original "Purpose Funding" it became necessary to eliminate the full-time position of **Executive Director** and replace it with the part-time position of **Administrative Assistant / Volunteer Coordinator**.

Darlene Gislason, Executive Director, resigned and was recognized for her excellent work and contribution to our organization.

Rhonda Skinner became the new **Administrative Assistant / Volunteer Coordinator**.

The former **Cutting Horse Association Competition** fund-raiser held each spring was replaced with the **Alberta Reined Cow Horse Association Competition**. The event, as for the past number of years, was held at the **Yodi Ranch**.

The 2000 Board of Directors members were:

Sylvia Erickson	- Chairman.	Bill Gunter
Mary Chibuk	- Past President.	Lloyd Thompson
Rex Carey	- 1st. Vice President.	Tony Sheppard
Keith Roden	- 2nd. Vice President.	Petra Schultz
Sharon Breitreuze	- Treasurer.	Al Gourley
Rhonda Skinner	- Administrative Assistant / Volunteer Coordinator.	Jennifer Powley
Ken Komm		Susan Thompson
		Tom Enevold

The Finishing Post...

As the **Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled** closes out it's first "Quarter Century", we can look back with a sense of pride and accomplishment. The hurdles have been many, the effort demanding, but with determination, persistence and clear focus on our vision and goals, we the **Members**, past and present, have succeeded. We have created and continue to sustain an organization that serves our community by providing children, youth and adults an opportunity to enhance their self-esteem, physical and emotional well-being and develop skills to their full potential.

The next quarter century holds much promise; although we now have stamina, hopefully the hurdles will become fewer and less demanding. As an organization we are progressive and will endeavor to utilize the leading techniques, technology and the personal talents of our Members for the benefit of all.

The name “**Little Bits Riding Club for the Disabled**” has served it’s purpose well in the past. It is as a progressive organization, that we look to the future and a name that more accurately reflects our change in thinking from an “Act of Charity” to that of a “Right to Service”. The new name will more clearly identify - Who we are, What we do and Whom we serve.

To that end the organization’s new name will now become...

LITTLE BITS

Therapeutic Riding Association

.... for Persons with Disabilities

So as we remount and “Walk-On”, we are truly inspired by our **Little Bits Riders** as we see them....“**Take up the Reigns of Life**”.