



LITTLE BITS

THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION

for persons with disabilities

September 2010

Contact Information

780-476-1233

Business Address:

900, First Edmonton Place, 10665 Jasper Ave.

Mailing Address: Box 29016 Lendrum P.O., Edmonton, AB T6H5Z6

The new phone number to reach the Whitemud stables office is 780-476-1204 and the new volunteer e-mail address is:

volunteers@littlebits.ca

Be sure to check out

Little Bit's recently updated website!
www.littlebits.ca

Morning Vacancies

This past spring was the last ride for the students from Ecole St. Angela due to the restructuring of school programs. Ed Carson was responsible for bringing these students to us and he would have been extremely proud of the accomplishments of them all. We are currently looking for young riders during the morning hours of 9:30 am to 11:30 am.

If anyone knows of potentially interested riders for the morning hours please contact Linda Rault at 780-476-1204

Message From the Chair

Hello riding families, volunteers, supporters and friends of Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association. I am the new Chair of the Board of Directors and a parent of a rider at Little Bits, who has benefited from this wonderful program for 16 years. Despite the fact that my son Neal has severe allergies to horses, riding is his favorite activity. He also enjoys grooming his horse, putting away the tack, leading his horse out to pasture and he is the last rider to leave the barn after class. Seeing the joy in the faces of our riders shows the unique bond that is formed between these specially selected horses and our riders.

Many children and adults with disabilities do not have the opportunity to go out into their communities and access activities they would like to participate in. With support from our donors, board, staff and volunteers, Little Bits is able to offer horseback riding with therapeutic benefits to children and adults with disabilities.

The board has decided to discontinue operation of Camp Horseshoe. Let us know if you are aware of a suitable charitable organization to assume the lease of the camp and to provide a camp experience for children.

Autumn colors make our unique facility in the river valley the perfect location for a trail ride. Enjoy the Fall session at Little Bits and feel free to drop in to see our very special program.

Marketing Little Bits to a broader community is one of our goals at Little Bits as a means to achieve financial stability. Upcoming fundraising events include: Achievement Days, Rodeo Program Sales, a Western Theme Event, a Casino and the Little Bits 'N Bites Breakfast Round-Up. Be sure to sign-up on our bulletin board at Whitemud to help out with these fundraising events that will get the word out about Little Bits!

~ Cynthia Dickins, Chair of the Board of Directors ~

Riding Update

Welcome back to the fall 2010 riding session. Here's hoping that everyone had a wonderful summer and didn't get too soggy!

Instructor News – I am pleased to let you know that Evan Keith will be replacing Lisa Doyle as the second instructor for Sundays. Evan started as a volunteer with Little Bits some time ago and last fall completed her CanTRA Intermediate Instructor Certification. We are thrilled to welcome Evan. Jo-Anne will continue at the helm as she has done for so many years.

Thank you Lisa! - Lisa Doyle will be taking her maternity leave and hopes to return to instructing in the future. We will also be missing Lisa as both the Volunteer Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. Lisa is a treasured part of the Little Bits Riding Program team and her dedication will be hard to top. She is well liked and respected by the volunteers and her fellow staff. She did an excellent job of recruiting, training and placing all of the volunteers in the program, and I know this is no small task. She also took on the numerous responsibilities of running the office and even took it upon herself to run two very successful fundraising initiatives for Little Bits; the hoodie sales and photos raised about \$3500.00. We would like to wish Lisa the best and thank her for the wonderful job she did for us. We hope to have you back on the teaching staff as soon as you are ready.

Canadian Finals Rodeo - For those of you looking to complete your Participation Service Hours, we have the Canadian Finals Rodeo Program Sales coming up in November. This is a fun event to assist with, and you even get to stay and watch the rodeo once you have signed out from your shift. Watch for sign-up sheets in September. ~ Linda Rault ~

Calendar of Events

Saturday, August 21st –
Daisy Days at Northlands
Racetrack

Wednesday, August 25th
- Volunteer orientation.

September 1st – Canadian
Finals Rodeo sign-up
sheets will be posted.

Tuesday, September 7th –
Fundraising event at the
Druid.

Sunday, September 12th –
First day of riding.

November 10th – 14th –
Canadian Finals Rodeo
Program Sales.

November 14th – 17th –
Achievement Days. The
Board has promised some
great incentives for
everyone to work towards.

November TBA –
Western Event.

February 22 - 23 –
Little Bits Casino. Sign-up
sheets have been posted.
There are numerous
volunteer positions to fill
so please take the time to
sign up to ensure we have
enough volunteers.

March – TBA –
Little Bits 'N Bites
Breakfast Round-Up



Emily Tsoukalas



Dana M. and
Miss Rodeo Canada

Fundraising Breakfast

The first annual Little Bits 'N Bites Breakfast Round-Up fundraiser held on March 23rd was a success! Thanks to the combined efforts of many dedicated volunteers and generous donors, a total of \$12,946.96 was raised towards the Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association (LBTRA). Over 240 people enjoyed a french toast breakfast and coffee at the Sutton Place Hotel while Jackie-Rae Greening of CFCW and renowned disability advocate Dr. Bob Steadward emceed the event. We were fortunate to have Mrs. Marie Stelmach join us as the Guest of Honor and also have rider Emily Tsoukalas share her story as the Guest Speaker. Proceeds from the breakfast will go towards fulfilling the goals of the LBTRA, including enhancing the program, purchasing new equipment and reducing the waiting list.



A well-deserved thank you goes out to all those who supported the event, including:

All donors, volunteers and attendees.

Major Donors – Tudor Tack, St. Albert Breakfast Lions Club and George Pemberton.

Breakfast Committee Members and Committee Chair Michael Kroll

Be sure to join us in 2011 for the second annual Little Bits 'N Bites Breakfast Round-Up. Stay tuned for details!

~Nicole Kroll~



Marie Stelmach



Jackie-Rae Greening



Dr. Bob Steadward

Ainsley – Make-A-Wish Trip

As one of her wishes, Ainsley wanted to go to Hawaii and ride horses. Her dream came true for her Make-A-Wish trip. 'Happy Trails' in Hawaii was glad to accommodate Ainsley and her needs as a rider. Since Ainsley has been trying to ride with less help during her lessons with Little Bits, she did not want help at all when she went riding. They gave her a great horse, and were willing to try Ainsley's request for "NO HELP!" Ainsley rode the full 2-hour trail ride with no help, but of course the guide was ready to jump in and help if needed. Ainsley happily rode up and down hills as she rode in such a beautiful setting. Her trail guide, Angel, said Ainsley rode better than most 6 year olds! She just has a love for horses. When Ainsley goes back to her lessons, she may want to ride more often without help! ~ Stacey Yantha ~ <http://www.happytrailshawaii.com/>

Ainsley



Riding with Dad!



Little Bits Team

Board of Directors

We are pleased to have the following members with us for the 2010-11 year.

Chairperson – Cynthia Dickins

Vice Chair – Michael Kroll

Past Chair – Bill Gunter

Treasurer – Susan Thompson

Board Secretary – Sharon Breikreuz

Directors - Julia Johnson, Debra King, Craig Floden, Gordon Wickstrom, Sharlene Van Maanen, Dave Fallowfield

Honorary Director – Rex Carey

Riding Program Staff - A warm welcome back to our dedicated riding staff, led by Linda Rault, the Riding Program Administrator.

Barn Manager – Ros Schell

Instructors – Melissa Slugoski, Sonja Christopher, Evan Keith, Jo-Anne Billington, Lynda Tenneson

Mother and Daughter

At a very bad place in my life, having lost a child, I drove down Fox Drive and noticed a sign on the side of the road advertising for volunteers. I took down the number and made a call. This spur of the moment action opened a door to an amazing group of people and a means to rise above my sadness.

What I didn't realize when I walked into the barn the first day was how much my life would be so affected. I originally had no intent on gaining anything from the children, as I only had a need to connect with the horses, which had given me such joy in my youth. How wrong and naïve I was.

Within a few visits, I was able to experience the joy of the children participating in the program and to feel a huge satisfaction at the end of an evening of walking in circles. I met other dedicated volunteers and leaders who all recognized the great need to continue to support this program.

Roz patiently taught me and gave me the confidence to work with the horses again and also gave me a quiet confidence to meet the youth. I had been terrified to connect with these amazing kids; their challenges scared me.

Fast-forward a couple of years and my family began to grow again. I now had a very real, personal experience with the challenges these youth face. My daughter Larissa was born



Larissa in 2007

and it was soon apparent that she would one day benefit from the Little Bits program. Fortunately, they began the *Itty Bits* program just at the time Larissa was ready to take the saddle. This nonverbal, easily distracted, busy girl settled very quickly into the saddle and for one of the first times in her life, engaged in a task for longer than 10 seconds. Amazingly she stayed the course of the class, time after time. She looked forward to each class and miraculously began to talk about the horse. Over the years Larissa has ridden many different characters and has moved from a

vocabulary including mom and 'hoise' to more than 200 words. She is in Grade 1 and although she is challenged by so much to do in a day, she can focus on many of the daily tasks necessary to succeed.

I clearly recognize this process began the moment Larissa met her first "hoise" and we were all given the hope that she would speak, she could focus and will succeed. So the story continues for us. Little Bits brought both of us hope, friendship and challenge. It also created a special bond between my daughter and I and also a love of the horses, which I am sure we will continue to share, long after she moves on to other experiences. Many thanks to all of those very special individuals, who have reached out to my daughter and I.

~ Pamela Mayne Corriera ~

Daisy Days



On August 20th, Little Bits was invited to attend the fundraising Gala Dinner at Northlands Park. Michael Kroll, Craig Floden, Gordon Wickstrom and Olena Dudych were able to attend the event on behalf of Little Bits. Many people were wearing a daisy by the end of the event and daisy sales amounted to \$495. Little Bits received generous donations from Darrell Landry and Gordon Wilson. Thank you to all the guests for your support!

We were lucky to have the legendary Chris Maccaron as the Guest of Honor. He is a renowned thoroughbred horse racer and retired jockey, in the US Racing Hall of Fame. Chris has numerous victories in the Kentucky Derby, Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup in addition to two Eclipse awards. In 2006, he founded the first riding academy in US, The North American Racing Academy.

Chris is currently working as a racing analyst for TVG Network. He expressed a lot



Craig Floden,

Chris Maccaron,
Michael Kroll

of interest in Little Bits and congratulated us

on our organization's mission and achievements. A big thanks to Northlands for hosting this wonderful event.

As part of a long-time tradition, on August 21st during the Canadian Derby, Little Bits sold daisies at the Northlands Spectrum. Fortunately it was a sunny day and our hard working volunteers did their best. Thank you to all the parents and relatives of our riders who volunteered to help fundraise. We raised over \$4,000 that day with the help of all the people who let us pin a daisy on them. ~Olena Dudych~

Druid Fundraiser

Little Bits volunteer, Jessie Brownrigg organized an open mic fundraiser on September 7th at the Druid. Jessie and her friend Monica sang beautifully and we would not be surprised if one day we see them on the big stage!

We had lots of fun seeing the event come together that night and of course are very happy with the result as well. Just over \$1000 was raised.

Thank you to the Druid and the wonderful staff for hosting our event - you are an amazing organization for having these types of Fundraisers every Tuesday night.

Thanks to everyone who came out and supported Little Bits! We could not have done it without each of you!

~Olena Dudych~

Thank You!

We wish to thank the following individuals, organizations and granting agencies who have contributed to Little Bits in 2010:

◆ TELUS Foundation, Community Investment Operating Grant, Sheriff's Posse, Alberta Culture & Community Spirit Grant, Children's Ability Fund, The Tudor Tack Shoppe Ltd., Welsh's Saddlery and Western Wear, Oiler's 50/50, 3TEN Photo, Production Die Makers Ltd., Footprint Developments Inc., Platinum Holdings Ltd., Coronet Leaseholds Ltd., Culloden Holdings Ltd., World Professional Chuckwagon Association and many others. ◆

Fees cover only a portion of the cost of providing Little Bits riding programs. While Little Bits receives some funding from grants, the majority of the operating costs are generated by hard working volunteers and generous donations. Thank you!

Greetings From Olena

My name is Olena Dudych.

I have been living in Edmonton and enjoying this picturesque city since 2006. I have enjoyed passing through Whitemud and each time I see the horses, I am reminded there is no other place in Edmonton that I enjoy looking at more.



I have worked the past four years while completing my Bachelor of Economics degree at the University of Alberta. I am very thankful, hardworking, and committed to any job I do and I am excited to start as an Administrative Officer for Little Bits and contribute to an organization that has enriched the lives of so many people the past 35 years. It is a great opportunity to work for an amazing organization that makes the lives of so many children and adults with disabilities more fulfilling by bringing them closer to nature, raising their self esteem and also being a place to find new friends.

I will share some of my story so you can know who I am and I also hope to get to know more people in Little Bits as time goes on. I come from Lviv, a well-known city in Western Ukraine that ranks as the number one city to live in the country. Lviv is a great tourist attraction and renowned for its gothic-style old buildings and cobblestone roads, numerous parks and monuments.

I studied English at the Ivan Franko Lviv National University from 2002-06. In my final year, I was fortunate to be accepted as the first exchange student from Lviv in partnership with the University of Alberta. I had quite a year, full of new people, places and culture. After going back to Ukraine to complete my degree in English, I realized how much I missed my independent life in Edmonton and tried as hard as I could to return and get a degree from the University of Alberta. With much help from my family, I paid international fees (triple that of a Canadian resident) while working full-time and graduated on June 9th.

As the Administrative Officer for Little Bits, I will be helping with the day-to-day administrative tasks, including: bookkeeping, assisting with events, grant applications and fundraising in addition to spreading the word about Little Bits to our community. I feel very blessed to be part of an organization that is so meaningful and emotionally rewarding. Most of all, I will help all you riders, parents, staff and volunteers with whatever you need the most - whatever is dear to your hearts, whatever is on your minds. I hope we will enjoy working with each other!

Influence? Why is it that the people who influence us most influence us in ways that are not easily quantified? Through its work with children and adults with disabilities, Little Bits has shown me the heroism of selfless dedication to a worthy cause. I will strive to influence on behalf of all of our riders, and with your support, to ensure the success of Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association.

Truly yours, ~ Olena Dudych ~

Thank You Bernice

Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association is extremely fortunate to have a group of enthusiastic volunteers who provide support to the riding program. They accomplish this by horse handling, side walking, grooming and tacking, serving on the Board of Directors and/or various committees and providing support at special events.

This past year, one volunteer stood out among the rest. Bernice Sweet began volunteering with Little Bits in the fall of 2007. During her first session, she logged an incredible 91.25 hours! Her commitment to the program is truly admirable. The riders that Bernice works with look forward to seeing her each week and she helps the riders with whom she interacts experience the fun of being involved in this recreational, therapeutic and social activity.

In the spring of 2009, Bernice took her commitment to Little Bits to a new level. In her professional life, Bernice is a bookkeeper for a local businessman who owns three companies. In a selfless act of kindness, Bernice approached her employer with a request that would enable her to provide her bookkeeping services pro bono in return for a monthly donation to Little Bits from each of the three companies. This kind of generosity is difficult to fathom. There are very few individuals who would be willing to make this type of sacrifice in order to support a cause they believe in. We are so very fortunate to have Bernice as part of the Little Bits Family.

In March 2010, Little Bits attended the Alberta Association of Fundraising Executives Awards (AAFRE) of excellence luncheon where Bernice was nominated and awarded for her dedication and outstanding devotion to our program. It is a pleasure to honor Bernice for all that she has done for Little Bits. Thank you Bernice! ~ Lisa Doyle ~



Photo: (from left to right)
Susan Thompson, Bernice Sweet, AAFRE Presenter

Supporting Little Bits

We are always looking for new committee members to help with a variety of tasks, including fundraising. Please consider who you could approach to join a committee or help with an event. Our committees need people with a background in human resources, marketing, project management, real estate and physical, psychological or speech therapy.