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June 2018



Birdies for Kids (BFK) Fundraiser

by Linda Rault, Riding Program Administrator

Little Bits TRA has once again been selected by the Shaw Charity Classic Golf tournament to participate in their fundraising arm known as Birdies for Kids (BFK). BFK will help us in raising monies by providing matching funding for up to 50% of the money we are able to raise through this program.

All donations must be made through the Calgary Shaw Charity Classic Foundation, and 100% of donations designated to LBTRA will come directly to us.

Over the past number of years, our November Achievement Days have raised over \$20,000.00 annually. *We would like you to consider asking your usual Achievement Day donors to submit their donations through the BFK system.*

Donations can be made at: <https://shawcharityclassic.com/donatenow/>

Be sure to choose "Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association (LBTRA)" as the participating charity

All BFK donations must be made no later than **September 2, 2018** in order to be eligible for matching

Last year, we had people donate \$8000.00 through the Birdies for Kids Portal and our return was another \$4000.00, for a grand total of \$12,000.00 – so we got 50% more simply from that form of donating.

Just imagine that we are able to raise \$20,000.00 this year – and then BFK will match that with another \$10,000.00 – certainly a fabulous return on our money!!! All administrative costs, fees and receipting is taken care of by the Shaw Charity Classic Tournament.

This is a phenomenal opportunity for us to increase our funding – so the extra 50% of matching dollars will go a long way.

Of course, we will still celebrate Achievement Days on the last days of riding in fall session with our talented and skilled riders, and there will be hot dogs and hot chocolate for all. Our regular Achievement Days incentives will apply to the Achievement Day donations made by the membership.

This information is also on our Facebook page, our website, and our Twitter account:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LittleBits/Volunteers/>

Website: <https://www.littlebits.ca>

Twitter: Little Bits@LittleBitsYEG

Nomination for Jo-Anne Billington CanTRA CTRBI

Thirty years ago this fall, Jo-Anne started as a volunteer at Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association. Very soon after, she became a Certified Canadian Therapeutic Basic Instructor, as well as having a Therapeutic Riding Teaching Certificate from the Cheff Centre in the United States. She then took on the Sunday program riders. Since then, the program has expanded from 36 riders on 2 days to 115 riders over three days, and Jo-Anne is there every Sunday, Tuesday a.m. and Wednesday.

Jo-Anne is very charismatic with her riders, engaging and encouraging each individual. At Little Bits, we have five riders per class and up to three volunteers with each horse and rider team. She is able to select the correct equipment and horse combination to be sure the rider has a safe, progressive and fun ride. Along with that responsibility comes that of also making sure that the volunteers assisting in the lesson are providing the right type of support and assistance so as not to take any independence away from the rider, while still maintaining ultimate safety.

I can only begin to image the miles that Jo-Anne has walked during her lessons at Little Bits – first in the cold, drafty, dirty old arena at WELCA and more recently in the new climate-controlled facility which opened in July of last year. As well, she often takes her riders outside along Keillor Road (adjacent to the North Saskatchewan River) and often right down to the banks of the water. They have ridden on the trails through the forest and up and down the hills around the show grounds – giving our riders a lot of sensory experiences, physical benefits and relaxation.

It takes a trained eye to be sure that each and every rider is getting the most benefit from a ride. And of course, every rider has different abilities, interests and goals. Jo-Anne manages to bring success to each rider and certainly has the ability to turn an unhappy rider to a smiling one in very little time. Her upbeat encouragement and insightful methods of achieving positive results stand out when watching her with her riders.

One of Jo-Anne's strong points is actually her strength and height which she uses on a daily basis at LBTRA. Many of our riders require alternative mounting and dismounting methods and Jo-Anne is one of our "go-to" instructors. She ensures that the riders are mounted safely and efficiently as we want the mounting area to be a "happy place" for our lesson horses. And on the other end she can safely dismount riders in a variety of ways to their wheelchair or to the ground.

One would say that Jo-Anne has always been a team player giving support in the barn and in the office as well. One of our biggest fundraisers happens on the last day of riding in the fall and Jo-Anne hands out the sponsor sheets to our families along with much encouragement to participate. I have no doubt that it is because she engages so well with our members the results of this fundraiser are always overwhelming. In the barn she will groom and tack a horse, sweep the floor and clean stalls if necessary. And yes – with the new footing in the arena where we ride she can also be found using the cordless shop vacuum to clean up urine from one of the horses after a lesson!!

Jo-Anne is meticulous about rider files, keeping updates and maintaining confidentiality. We have riders who have been with us for many, many years and every document regarding that rider may be found in sequential order. This lends itself very nicely to duteous record keeping if there are any questions or concerns about a rider's history.

Over the years Jo-Anne has maintained her current status as a certified instructor by attending up-dates and courses pertinent to her training. Ongoing education is utmost on her radar and she has mentored several other people wishing to attain CanTRA certification. They have all been successful in part to Jo-Anne's comprehensive training. I know that many mentors in the field often are paid but Jo-Anne has always given freely of her time to help others along the long and often trying road to therapeutic certification. She had always been a positive influence to her co-workers – trying to please all requests often at the expense of her own convenience.

Jo-Anne has demonstrated a tireless dedication to Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association and our riders for the past 30 years. One could never question her work ethic, her personal ethic or her morals. She has a wonderful smile, infectious laugh and positivity that makes her one in a million. I have been blessed to work with Jo-Anne for all of her 30 years at Little Bits and of course she is much more than a co-worker to me, she is my sounding board, my alter ego, my confidant and most of all, my friend.

Please consider Jo-Anne for your Outstanding Coach/Instructor of the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Rault
CanTRA Coach/Examiner
Riding Program Administrator
Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association

The 2018 CanTRA Annual Awards Committee is very pleased to announce the results of the 2018 CanTRA Awards. Congratulations to the recipients and the centres they serve.

*Andrea Gillies Outstanding Instructor
(sponsored by Gay Wood) is awarded to:*

Jo-Anne Billington, LBTRA, Alberta



Winter Orientation - January 17th

Side-walking
with a rider



Leading a rider



Dismounting a rider



Barn demo

Riding Dates for Summer & Fall 2018

2018 Summer Riding Session

Monday, July 30th until Friday, August 3rd (one week)
for current riders in the program.

Riding time: 10 a.m. ending at 2 p.m.

Volunteer time: 9:30 a.m. ending at 2:30 p.m.

If interested in riding, contact Linda at: info@littlebits.ca

Volunteer Orientation

Wednesday, August 29th, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Mandatory for all NEW volunteers

2018 Fall Session

Sundays: September 9th to November 18th

Riders: all day classes start - 10:00 a.m. ending at 6:00 p.m.

Volunteers: 9:30 a.m. ending at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: September 11th to November 20th

Riders: morning classes start - 9:00 a.m. ending at 1:00 p.m.

Volunteers: 8:30 a.m. ending at 1:30 p.m.

Riders: afternoon classes start - 4:00 p.m. ending at 9:00 p.m.

Volunteers: 3:30 p.m. ending at 9:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: September 12th to November 21st

Riders: afternoon classes start - 3:00 p.m. ending at 9:00 p.m.

Volunteers: 2:30 p.m. ending at 9:30 p.m.

Birdies for Kids Promo Code - 'BIRDIES'

We are excited to share with you the ticket promo code 'BIRDIES'
that will help you save up to 20% on select ticket types!

We encourage you to share this code with donors, clients and friends and family!
The Shaw Charity Classic is a fun event for the whole family and a great way to celebrate an amazing year of fundraising. In addition to golf, we have a bouncy castle, snag golf, arts and crafts, mascot visits, and more!

Visit shawcharityclassic.com/buytickets and use the promo code BIRDIES to save!

Kids 17 and under attend the Shaw Charity Classic for free with a ticketed adult.



JOKER

by Linda Rault

In my many years at Little Bits, I have met and fallen in love with any number of the lesson horses, even though we really shouldn't have favorites. I have known at least 3 horses named Joker, and for the most part they were good horses. The Joker who came to Whitemud from the Thorsby Horse Auction in March of 2004 didn't seem to have a lot of personality: he was plain, big boned, and looked rather ungainly. Clearly it was what was on the inside that made Joker so very, very special.

Traits that we look for in a therapy horse are soundness and freedom of movement, a great mind, honesty, and as an instructor, you have to trust the horses we put our riders on. Joker was certainly honest – he did what you asked him to do with goodness and reliability. He had a great mind when it came to having people in his personal space, with a rider on his back, a leader, and he very graciously accepted two sidewalkers when necessary. Few horses deal really well with this invasion of their personal space. His movement became more compromised as he aged, but with a tremendous amount of veterinary and chiropractic care over his lifetime, he was a treasured horse for so many of our riders.

Joker was also the prankster of the herd. He could be a difficult ride for an independent rider since he decided what he could or would do when off lead: one might say he was exceptionally smart to figure this out. On the other hand, he gave so many riders oodles of confidence when they sat on his back and took control of the reins.

At times Joker was extremely laid back but make no mistake – he was the Alpha horse in his paddock no matter who he shared the pen with. Some might call him a gentle giant - certainly, one who put lots of thought into his surroundings. I assumed he would be a great horse for our mechanical lift. He was sensible, calm, quiet and patient. As I mentioned before, he was smart and he told us in no uncertain terms that we were **not ever** going to hoist a child over his head and lower him or her onto his back in *that contraption*. One for Joker.

Joker also made us work when tacking him up – he only allowed a few of us to actually get the bit into his mouth...I certainly was on my tiptoes hoping he would accept the bit and not make me look incapable of getting his bridle on. Another one for Joker.



Because Joker was purchased at an auction (a big no-no in the world of buying a horse), his background before WELCA was unknown. We can only surmise that he was a trail horse of some nature because he did not like to lead the ride, but instead, follow the horse in front of him. Some riders and/or leaders were successful in getting Joker to lead the ride, but I am sure that on those occasions **he** just decided to go with the flow. Yep... number 3 for Joker. *(continued on next page)*

If you are interested, please read a book about the horse called Snowman – see below – Wikipedia:

“Snowman (c.1948–1974) was a former plow horse who was purchased for \$80.00 on his way to a slaughterhouse and became a champion in show jumping in the United States during the 1950s. During his career he was known as "The Cinderella Horse" due to his "rags to riches" story.

Snowman was originally used for farm work and in 1956 was headed for the slaughterhouse at eight years of age. On that day, Harry de Leyer, a Long Island, New York, riding instructor, attended the horse auction in New Holland, Pennsylvania, looking for school horses. He arrived late, and the only remaining horses were those waiting to be loaded into trucks bound for slaughter plants. De Leyer made eye contact with a large gray horse that he purchased for \$80. He first used Snowman as a lesson horse for children. De Leyer recognized talent in the horse after he sold him to a neighbor and the horse jumped high fences to return home. De Leyer then began training Snowman as a show jumper. The horse began winning prestigious classes only two years after he was bought off the slaughter truck, and his career lasted five years. He was photographed performing unusual feats such as jumping over other horses, and his calm disposition made him a favorite. He once won a lead-line class and an open jumper championship on the same day.”

I equate our beloved Joker to Snowman. We like to think that Joker is up in horse heaven, resting, eating lots of lush green grass, no flies or mosquitos, socializing with many other famous horses. As Chris, one of the WELCA instructors said “he is likely up there challenging the Canadian-owned Hickstead (Olympic gold and silver medalist in show jumping) to a jump-off.” We will all miss this gregarious, glorious, gentle but great grey horse and remember how many lives he touched, and how many riders got to ride one of the best.

Noelle Harewood

Hi! My name is Noelle Harewood. And yes, that is French for Christmas, which is why I enjoyed the extraaa long winter we had this year ... not. Although I do love a good snowboarding trip out to the mountains, I am just about ready for the sweet smell of burgers cooking on the barbecue, wearing flip-flops, and the sound of a wicked thunderstorm rolling on in.

I grew up in Mississauga, just outside of Toronto. And just as you can imagine, a barn in the middle of the Greater Toronto Area is not something you can easily find. I always loved horses, just as every little girl does and the dream was to be a jockey ... until I became well over 100-pounds. Haha, dream over. Growing up, I always asked for riding lessons as a present. However, my family wasn't financially able to do more than one week of horseback riding during the summer and that only lasted a couple of years. Another dream bites the dust. I became really frustrated at the costs of being able to ride a horse and thought that everyone should be able to ride no matter their physical, mental, or financial positioning. So, the new dream was to have my own ranch where children who faced a disadvantage of any kind could be around and ride the horses just as they pleased. Not very realistic to do this when you live in a big city. Strike three.

I then realized that if I want to work with horses and children, I *actually* would need to learn about horses first. So, I Googled volunteer opportunities that would help me do this and I came across Little Bits. The barn was practically down the street from where I lived and the opportunity allowed me to do everything I loved to do: grooming, tacking, leading, and interacting with children. How perfect!

I love volunteering with Little Bits mainly because of the people. They are so friendly and are always willing to show you how to do something if you don't quite know how to do it yourself. Marielle does such a great job at coordinating the volunteers, Ros makes everything run smoothly in the barn, and the teachers do an awesome job at meeting the physical and mental requirements of the riders. I love giving my time, serving, and helping whenever I can, and it's so cool to see how the riders gain strength and coordination over time. It's been a wonderful few semesters helping with Little Bits!



Sophie Mah

My name is Sophie Mah, and I'm from Edmonton. I'm a dressage rider from another barn and have been riding and competing for around six years. Other than riding, I enjoy playing music, mainly the piano, trombone and the drums, as well as creating and directing films and venturing out into nature and taking photos.

I started volunteering at Little Bits a year and a half ago, because I wanted to take part in helping others enjoy riding and horses as much as I do. I still do. I believe riding is a sport that's not only fun, but also beneficial to you physically, as well psychologically, and should be enjoyed by everyone and anyone who wants to!



Me & Molly!

Pancake Breakfast at the WELCA Horse Show

Location: Whitemud facility
12510 Fox Drive, Edmonton, AB

Date & Time:
Saturday, June 23rd 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Tickets:
\$8.75 per person
Includes pancakes, sausage & coffee or juice

Tickets are available at the Little Bits office
or at greeting table



Andrea Forrester

Why do I volunteer? I volunteer because it's fun, and it gets me out of the house on the weekend. I volunteer with the horses because I really love horses, and I want to work with them for the rest of my life. I have Tourette Syndrome, ADHD, OCD, SPD (Sensory Processing Disorder), anxiety and depression. Volunteering with horses has really helped me a lot. I have a problem with walking with my head down a lot, but since I've started volunteering with the horses, I've started walking with my head up more.

Some things that I like to do is playing games on my phone, going for long walks, reading books, watching movies, volunteering with the horses, and hanging out with my family (including my pets, because pets are family, too). I also love to colour. I'm from Edmonton; I was born at the Royal Alex and raised here.

I have had many animals in my life; when I was younger I had a couple dogs and two cats. None of these animals met each other, though. I even had small animals, such as a hamster and a guinea pig. My family really loves animals, even though my dad is allergic to them.