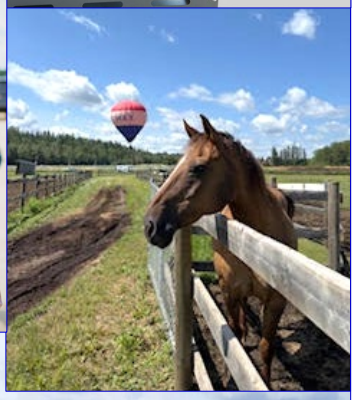
LITTLE BITS
THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION
for persons with disabilities

info@littlebits.ca **www.littlebits.ca** **October 2026**
Facebook: *Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association* **Instagram**: *littlebits_therapeutic_riding* **X**: *@LittleBitsYEG*

Little Bits 50th Anniversary

In June 2025 we were proud to celebrate our 50th anniversary with an open house, tours, and a whole lot of fun! Thank you to REMAX for sponsoring this event with their bouncy castle and hot air balloon!



Volunteer Highlights

We have the most amazing volunteers! A huge thank you to the incredible individuals who give so generously of their time and energy to support Little Bits. ❤️

Volunteer Shoutout

We'd like to give a special shoutout to the following volunteers, who each contributed **over 100 hours** during our Winter, Spring, and Summer sessions in 2026:

- Kris J
- Krista B
- Ciaran O
- Sunny P
- Nic M
- Lynn J
- Daniela G
- Brent M

We are so grateful for everything you do to support our riders, our horses, and our Little Bits community. Your dedication makes such a difference!

Volunteer Anniversaries

5 Years
Joss M
Lynda T
Meaghan F
Linda N
Alyssa S

10 Years
Leanne W
Marlyn B
Sophie M
Krista B

15 Years
Olivia H

Congratulations to Olivia B!

Olivia received the **Kids Take Action award** in April 2026! CTV came and recorded a segment on her winning this amazing and well-deserved award for her dedication to helping her community. Well deserved, Olivia!



What our parents have to say about our volunteers

"We are so appreciative of everyone who volunteers to help with this program. Words are not enough - the joy and feeling of accomplishment that you give through your generosity and patience is immeasurable."

"Our son has been riding with Little Bits for more than 20 years. He is difficult to communicate with verbally and he can be very difficult to handle at times, but through the years all the volunteers who have had to deal with his moods, and there are too many to mention by name and many who have come and gone, have stepped up admirably to make riding his most favourite recreational activity and have had a significant impact on his emotional well being. Very much appreciated."

"To our volunteers: You are the backbone of our community. Whether you're leading a horse, side-walking with a rider, or keeping our spirits high, your dedication changes lives every single day. You don't just give your time; you give your heart. We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to Little Bits and all the riders! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything you do!!!"

Staffing Updates

Hey everyone, my name is **Jaida**. I'm very excited to get to be a part of Little Bits! I feel very privileged to be part of such a remarkable program and work toward my CTRII Certification. I am also a university student pursuing a degree in psychology. One day I hope to combine psychology and horses and build a career involving the two!

Horses are truly special animals and I really believe they have a place in the field of psychology. I came to be a part of Little Bits through Lisa and Lynda T who have known me for years through WELCA. With Little Bits I'm the Barn Manager on Tuesdays, Volunteer Coordinator on Sundays, as well as doing mentoring with Lynda T on Tuesdays. I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know everyone!



Jaida



Christine

Hi, I'm **Christine**. I'm a relative newcomer to the horse world, but as an OT I have lots of experience with people with varying levels of ability. I'm excited to bring what I know and combine it with what I learn from the riders, horses, and instructors, to help make each rider's experience fun, safe, and positive. I am an instructor in training, and I am hoping to take my CanTRA exam this Spring!

Volunteer Orientation Sessions

January 6, 2027 (Winter session)
September 2, 2027 (Fall session, to be confirmed)

If you are interested in volunteering, please fill out an application at littlebits.ca/volunteer-application-form
or contact us at volunteers@littlebits.ca

Upcoming Riding Sessions

Winter 2027
January 10 to March 17 on Sundays and Wednesdays

Spring 2027
April 4 to June 14
(Sunday, Monday, Tuesday AM, Tuesday PM, Wednesday) excluding May 23 & 24

Summer 2027
July 19 to July 23 (current riders only)

Fall 2027
September 12 to November 22
(Sunday, Monday, Tuesday AM, Tuesday PM, Wednesday) excluding October 10 & 11

FEE INCREASE – EFFECTIVE 2027

LBTRA is proud to have maintained the same level of fee subsidies for our riders for over 15 years. We are committed to keeping our program as accessible as possible for the children and adults we serve.

Much of the grant funding and financial support LBTRA receives is determined by the number of children and youth participating in our program. With this in mind, we have carefully considered our fees and will be implementing a two-tier fee increase for children and adult riders beginning in 2027.

This decision has not been made lightly. Rising costs associated with operating our program, including horse purchases, feed, veterinary care, facility rentals, and other essential expenses, have made an adjustment necessary to help us continue providing a safe, supportive, and valuable riding experience for our participants.

Effective in 2027, fees for each 10-week program will increase as follows:

- **Children:** $25 increase per 10-week session
- **Adults:** $50 increase per 10-week session

We understand that any increase in fees can affect families and individuals, and we have made every effort to keep this adjustment as reasonable as possible while ensuring the long-term sustainability of our program.

Thank you for your continued support, understanding, and commitment to LBTRA. We are grateful to be part of such a wonderful community and look forward to continuing to provide meaningful riding opportunities for our participants.



On September 3, 2026 we hosted our **Fall Orientation** and had an amazing turnout! A total of 61 new volunteers came to learn about what we do. We are so excited to add so many new people to our team!



On August 22, 2026, we had the pleasure of attending the **Canadian Derby** and hosting a **50/50 raffle in support of Little Bits**. We're thrilled to share that, together, we raised an incredible $11,500! A huge thank you to everyone who helped make Derby Day a success, and to everyone who purchased a ticket and supported our riders and horses. We couldn't have done it without you!

This year we were once again lucky enough to be chosen by Rogers to be a charity supported through their **Birdies for Kids** campaign. Rogers matches 50% of all donations made to Little Bits, and this year our incredible ridership collected a whopping **$36,514.99** during our yearly Achievement Day Fundraiser. This means that the total amount with the Rogers matching will be well over $50,000. We were also honoured this year to be chosen as a featured charity and had our sign on Hole 1 of the golf tournament!

ROGERS
Birdies for Kids
Presented by ALTALINK



Say hello to our new horses!

Coulson

This gentle giant is an Appaloosa Percheron cross, born in 2005. Did you notice his tail? It is common for Appaloosas to have short tails due to their genetics; but have no fear, this good boy has been a trail and lesson horse, and handles it all with ease!





Zami

This guy started in our classes this Fall and has been fitting right in! Can you believe that this handsome guy is 26 years old?! He has been at Whitemud for a while now and has fit seamlessly into the Little Bits classes. He has done a bit of everything including gymkhana, 4H, and some jumping.

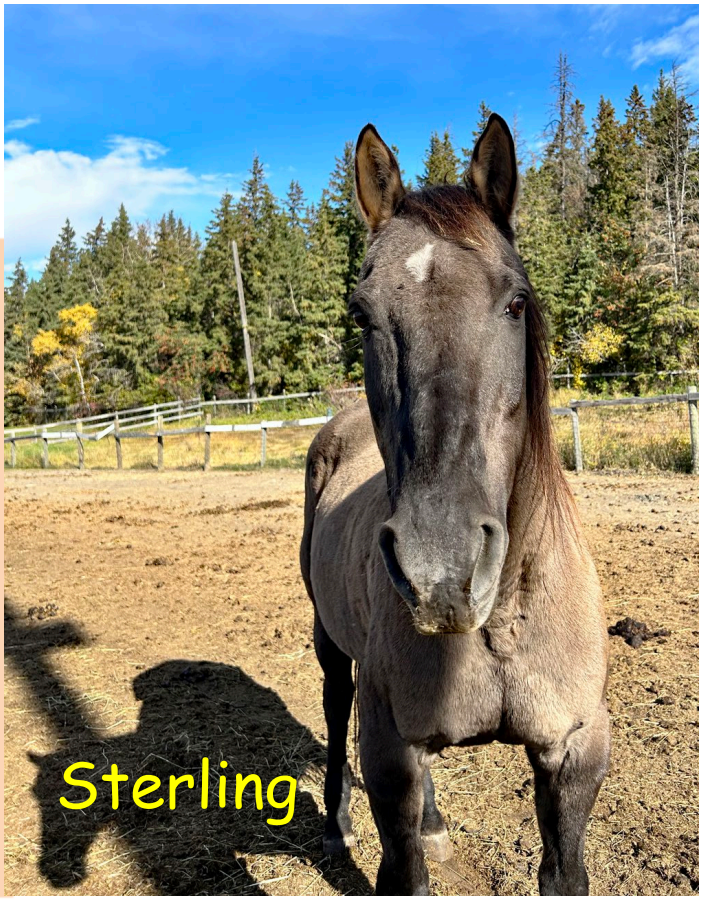
Ruby

Ruby joined the LB team and moved to WELCA in April 2026. She was born in 2011 and has experience in many disciplines. She has done it all, western, trail riding, jumping, indoor/outdoor and even some therapeutic lessons, too. She is a very confident and calm mare. She has fit into the program this Fall so easily and has been a wonderful addition; her riders and volunteers fall in love with her sweet and calming presence.



Sterling

We welcomed Sterling to our herd in April 2026, and he has fit in very nicely here! He is a beautiful Quarter Horse Gelding born in 2008; he is the only horse here with his distinct grulla colouring recognized by tan-gray hairs on the body with dorsal stripes on the back and black point coloration on the lower legs, mane, and tail. He started in the Fall session and has shown himself to be a calm and careful partner, and we are very happy to have him on our team!





Nyx

This Canadian Quarterhorse cross was born in 2011 and has done a bit of everything. Most recently, he was a western pony! He moved to WELCA/LBTRA in spring of 2026 and quickly settled in with the horses and people! He has a soft and steady personality, and we are excited to have him in our program!

Greener Pastures

We have had to say goodbye to a few of our amazing horses
May they roam greener pastures



Popeye

We are very saddened to share that our beloved Popeye has crossed the rainbow bridge. He has been a pillar of the lesson program with countless stories and memories from nearly every student, volunteer, and staff at WELCA and Little Bits over his many years here. Popeye turned 30 this past year. It is heart wrenching to lose such a legendary pony.

Popeye came to WELCA when a parent of a LB rider bought him for his son to ride, they rode with us for a few years and then went on to other activities. Popeye remained at WELCA and eventually WELCA purchased him and this became Popeye's permanent home.

He was a dignified boy that drew firm boundaries on the ground but was truly a saint under saddle. His iconic nose wriggle and velvet fur will always hold a special place in all of our hearts. He was deeply loved and will be dearly missed. He was such a steady mount, we will miss him and know that he is at peace with his pasture buddies now, may he forever roam greener pastures.





Scout and Reighvan

Scout and Reighvan (Raven) were both such amazing horses with so much patience and understanding. We will miss Scout's steady presence and all of Reighvan's puddles of drool.

In Memorium



Barry

Barry was a patient, kind, and generous volunteer who had been part of the Little Bits community since 2022. He gave so much of his time to supporting our riders, both in the arena and around the barn. He could often be found with a broom in hand or helping to keep the arena clean and tidy, always willing to lend a hand wherever it was needed.

Barry was incredibly giving and could almost always be found with a smile on his face. His gentle nature, quiet kindness, and willingness to help will be deeply missed by everyone at Little Bits. We are so grateful for the time, care, and warmth he shared with our riders, horses, volunteers, and staff.

Thanks to Barry's friends and family and to everyone who made a donation to Little Bits in his memory. We are incredibly grateful for this generous tribute to Barry and for the continued support of our Little Bits community.

Stuart

The entire Little Bits family, including our staff and fellow volunteers, was deeply saddened to hear of Stuart's passing. Stuart was an incredible presence and an inspiration to us all, showing us what it means to live life to the fullest and give generously to others. We are truly grateful that he chose to share his time and talents with our program. His kindness and dedication will be greatly missed.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Stuart's family during this difficult time. We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to them for their generosity in making donations to our program in Stuart's memory. This thoughtful gesture is a wonderful tribute to his legacy of giving back to others.





Memorial Tree

This spring, we added several new names to our Memorial Tree, honouring some of the special riders, volunteers, and horses who have touched our hearts and been part of the Little Bits family. Our community is shaped by the love, kindness, and connections we share, and each of these individuals has left a lasting mark on our hearts. While saying goodbye to those we hold dear is never easy, our Memorial Tree is a beautiful tribute to the lives they lived, the memories we cherish, and the lasting impact they have had on our Little Bits family. They will always be a part of who we are.

There were several options considered for the memorial. The tree image was selected because of the accepted universal understanding of its symbolism: strength, continuity, timelessness, shelter, and community. Three groups were to be memorialized: the **Riders**, the **Horses**, and the **Volunteers** (the "Volunteer group" includes all of the support we receive from Volunteers, Board members and Staff).

The tree image suggested a natural tripartite division. The **Volunteer**s are the roots of the effort, providing the base that holds everything up. The **Horses** are the trunk, supporting the riders both literally and emotionally, and the **Riders** are the branches reaching up, spreading and growing through the therapeutic benefits of horseback riding.

The clock halo sums up the point of the memorial: "Time Flies But Memory Lasts." The Latin isn't quite correct, but this was the translation that was used at the time of carving.

We hold our memories within us, and celebrate those who have passed, but once we ourselves are gone, we need a physical form to communicate those memories to later generations. The tree is Maple. It is constructed in discrete pieces, held to the wall with drywall screws, so that small portions can be removed and taken to the shop when additional names are added. The roots and branches can have new pieces added if more space is required in the future. The trunk has filled more quickly than expected but lower side branches can be incorporated to increase horse space.

At the point where the trunk turns to branches is a stable with a horse looking out to add an element of three dimensionality and create a point of focus. The tree is a two dimensional representation and has to be "read". It requires a certain amount of deciphering; you need to understand symbolism, but the horse is real and immediate. It draws the eye and looks back at you.

The leaves on the branches were added as an afterthought. Without them, the tree suggests winter and an end of things, and although that is what a memorial represents, the passing of life, a few leaves indicate springtime and potential. The good that will come. Placing the tree under the clock serves two purposes. It reminds us that this is all about the passing of time, the receding past, the ephemeral present, and the optimism of the future. The area under the riding arena's clock was serendipitously the only open expanse of wall that was available.

The Memorial Tree was designed and created by Jeff Pelton, Custom Woodworker in Edmonton, AB.