

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

RYDE Centre

2006

Volunteer Induction Booklet



Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) Ryde Centre Induction Booklet

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Riding for the Disabled Association at Ryde.

Our RDA Centre receives no Government funding or Financial Assistance from the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney (RRCS). We depend on donations from the public, fund raising conducted by our committee and sponsorships from local organisations for our horses. We have no paid staff at our centre.

This Induction booklet is designed to provide new Volunteers with basic information on RDA and Ryde Centre.

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RDA RYDE CENTRE

2006 Office Bearers

President	Stacy King	0412 128 735
Vice President	Angela Lind Steve Cohn	9499 2363 9958 7074
Secretary	Joe Orland	0407 004 019
Treasurer	Barbara Davies	9874 7443
Committee	Nola Baker Jenny Armstrong Jaci Armstrong Aneva Borthwick Jane Newton Lee Crispin Robin Grindrod	9876 8128; 9868 2055 9868 5576 9868 5576; 0414 224 417 9909 1831; 0400 091 831 8819 4223; 0423 814 230 0401 496 730 9427 0350
Volunteer Co-Ordinator	Aneva Borthwick	9909 1831; 0400 091 831
Rider Co-ordinator & Registrations	Joan Grant	9874 2742; 0411 250 915
Horsecare Team	Don Davies Jaci Armstrong Phyllis Dodd	9874 7443 0414 224 417 9653 2350
	Barbara Ludwig Brenda Phillips	9966 0961 9809 6294

Ryde RDA meets 1st Monday of the month at 7.30pm at
"The Shed"
59 Charles Street, Ryde 2112

AGM: 1st Monday March each year

ALL WELCOME

Correspondence should be addressed to:
The Secretary, Riding for the Disabled, Ryde Centre
Post Office Box 3124, Putney NSW 2112

'The Shed' Phone No: 9809 0430

email: ryde@rdansw.org.au
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RDA RYDE CENTRE

Coaches

Tuesday	Angela Lind	(Coach)	9499 2363
	Barbara Ludwig	(Coach)	9966 0961
Wednesday	Barbara Ludwig	(Coach)	9966 0961
Thursday	Brenda Phillips	(Senior Coach)	9809 6294 0413 755 619
Friday	Wendy Torr State Assessor	(Senior Coach)	9874 7982
	Louise Neill	(Senior Coach)	9498 5504
	Jan Pike	(Assistant Coach)	9674 2301
	Phyllis Dodd	(Assistant Coach)	9653 2350
Saturday 1 & 3	Jane Newton	(Senior Coach)	0423 814 230
	Nola Baker	(Coach)	9876 8128
	Jaci Armstrong	(Coach)	9868 5576
	Toni Fearn	(Assistant Coach)	0409 035 736
Saturday 2 & 4	Barbara Davies	(Senior Coach)	9874 7443
	Stacy King	(Coach)	0412 128 735
	Jo Davis	(Coach)	0414 976 354

All decisions regarding the running of lessons & the management of the riders & horses are made by the coach of the day.

HISTORY

The philosophy of using horses for people with a disability is not new. The Greeks used horses for rehabilitating wounded soldiers in the fifth century BC and indeed throughout history, riding has been prescribed as a means of improving the mental and physical well-being of people with disabilities.

Last century, therapeutic riding was recognised by Dame Agnes Hunt, who established the first orthopaedic hospital in the United Kingdom. Dame Agnes Hunt understood the real need for laughter and companionship in the recovery of health, and the importance of horses and riding for her patients. Her work was followed up with soldiers who had been disabled during both world wars and many hospitals deliberately encouraged riding as a means of therapy.

At the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, Madame Liz Hartel, a Dane who had contracted polio and was normally confined to a wheelchair, left her chair for her horse's back and then proceeded to win a silver medal in the dressage event. This achievement naturally received worldwide attention, focusing on the fact that "It is ability that counts, not disability". Her courage and achievement gave encouragement to many people.

Following the Games, Riding for the Disabled centres began springing up in countries throughout the western world. The first Australian centre was started in 1964 by Mr and Mrs Peter McIntyre, who with the help of a few friends, started to give riding therapy to people with disabilities by inviting them to their property just outside Brisbane. South Australia commenced operation in 1970 and was followed by Victoria in 1971. In 1972 Mrs Pearl Batchelor, a riding school instructor and Mrs Nan Everingham, a physiotherapist founded the New South Wales branch. Western Australia, Canberra and Tasmania all started in the following years.

THE BASIC AIMS OF RDA

The primary objective of Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) is to provide most people who have a disability the opportunity to ride and enjoy all the activities connected with horse riding. For people with a disability, riding is both therapeutic and recreational. RDA is in fact one of the few organisations that cater for people with a wide range of disabilities.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

There is a branch organisation in each State. RDA is a registered not-for-profit organisation and donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible.

To assist in communication between the state board of directors and the individual centres, RDA NSW has appointed regional representatives. The duties of the representatives include visiting the centres when possible, maintaining contact by phone and being available to report to the quarterly meeting of the state branch.

The actual delivery of the riding therapy occurs at individual centre level. There is much variation in the history of origins of each centre, some starting from commercial riding schools, some from a few interested horse owners, some based at a special school, sheltered workshop or hospital.

RDA is closely associated with the Equestrian Federation of Australia, the Pony Club movement, the Australian Paralympic Federation, the Delta Society and other Riding for the Disabled Associations throughout the world.

FUNDING

Each individual centre is responsible for raising its own funds. Craft stalls, sales of Chocolates and Christmas cards, theatre parties etc are methods of raising money. The horses may be purchased; quite often they are donated or leased long term. They have to be fed and expensive saddlery and safety equipment purchased. It costs upwards of \$1,200 to keep a horse per year (unshod) and sponsorship is an excellent way of helping with the expense of feed, vet bills and farriers. Because of the high costs, most horses are co-sponsored by individuals or groups such as local businesses, veterinary clinics, service clubs, and student councils of local schools.

Some centres have a paid secretary and/or coach but most are run entirely by voluntary labour. Government funding may be granted to hire a coach or for the purpose of improving the centre. Volunteers are generally rostered and each day will have a different group of people as well as a different coach who is responsible for the actual running of the classes on that day.

RDA AROUND AUSTRALIA

There are over 130 affiliated RDA centres in all states of Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory.

There are presently 38 active Centres in NSW catering for over 1600 riders with disabilities.

New South Wales centres are situated at:

Albury, Ballina, Bathurst, Blue Mountains, Box Hill, Central Coast, Coffs Harbour, Coonabarabran, Cootamundra, Cowra, Dubbo, Goulburn, Griffith, Gunnedah, Kempsey, Kendall, Kiama, Moss Vale, Mudgee, Narrabri, Nepean (Penrith), Nowra, Orange, Raymond Terrace, Ryde, Shoalhaven, Snowy Mountains, Tamworth, Tumut, Tweed Valley, Upper Hunter (Scone), Wagga Wagga, Wauchope, Wollondilly, Yass and Young.

RDA RYDE CENTRE

RDA Ryde Centre began in 1984 in the grounds of the Royal Rehabilitation Centre, Ryde. Ted and Jason were our first two horses, and were donated. During the latter part of 1994, because of plans to build another hospital on the RDA site, our centre was forced to close down for over 12 months, while we were relocated. Our horses were sent away on agistment for that time.

We now have seven horses, the maximum we can house as each horse has his own yard, "Tiger Jones (TJ)" is a Welsh Mountain Pony and the others "Khal", "Bobby", "Major", "Levi", "Omar" and "Wintez" are between 13 and 15 hands.

We have approximately 60 volunteers, including 14 coaches, and over 100 riders per week. We hold classes in the mornings from Tuesday to Saturday and we have a maintenance team that works on Monday. The maintenance team feeds the horses and cleans up the yards and does any odd jobs such as mowing lawns and fixing fences etc. We also have a feeding roster for Sundays.

Our horses stay at the centre all year except during the Christmas break when they are turned out on a property near St Albans for a well-earned rest. During other school holidays they usually get some time off each week when a "day" decides that they are going to enjoy a small break.

RDA COACHES

Our coaches are all qualified RDA Coaches. They are certified First Aiders (updated every three years) and have skills in horsemastership, teaching and management of the centre. Coaches are assessed on these subjects and are graded as Coach or Senior Coach.

The Coach of the Day has full responsibility for the horses, riders and volunteers. The Coach will brief the volunteers before each riding session and at the end of the day discuss the progress of the riders with the volunteers. Discussion with carers or school staff regarding the riders is the responsibility of the coaches only.

The coach will also be able to match a rider with a horse, know whether a horse is well and uninjured and be able to manage the rider and their particular type of disability.

RDA VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers don't need any prior knowledge of horses, they learn on the job. Jobs may include cleaning up yards, feeding, grooming and tacking up horses, making cups of tea, assisting riders to prepare for class, helping with games in class, or "side walking", to assist or instil confidence in the rider.

Some important things to note:

- **Always sign the "Volunteers Day Book" (this is for insurance purposes).**
- Learn how to tie a quick release knot.
- Always check with a coach before photographing any rider.
- On wet days, our horses still need to be fed and their yards cleaned up so contact your coach to see if you are needed.
- Never wrap a lead rope around your hand. A horse is stronger than you and you risk broken fingers if he decides to pull away.
- When a horse is tied up, don't walk under his neck, go behind or unclip his lead rope and walk around the front.
- Riders must not be mounted or dismounted without the supervision of the coach or appointed experienced volunteers.
- When leading a horse in class, always keep about two horse lengths between you and the horse in front. If you are getting left behind, you may have to cut corners in order to catch up.
- If you are in control of the horse, you must not assist the rider when mounting or dismounting.
- When leading, the horse is your responsibility if there are sidewalkers. If there are no sidewalkers, the wellbeing of the rider comes first.
- Move out of the class into the centre of the arena if there is a problem with your horse or ride. The coach can then address the problem.
- Horses must not be tied to the arena fence when a class is in progress.
- When holding a horse while a rider is being mounted or dismounted, stand squarely in front of the horse and hold each side of the bridle and head stall.

RDA RIDERS

Riders are accepted from all disability groups. Every rider must have a medical consent form signed by their doctor. They are assessed prior to commencing riding so that a suitable individual program can be developed for each rider. Some riders with more severe disabilities are assisted initially by up to two trained helpers and a leader, however, many graduate to riding independently and some to competition level.

RDA Riders include people with: Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, multiple injuries, amputees, Stroke, Arthritis, Down Syndrome, vision and hearing impairment, intellectual and emotional disabilities, learning difficulties and behavioural issues.

With the help of RDA, people who suffer from any of these disabilities can enjoy riding as it provides a significant aid in treatment and rehabilitation.

Our rider's ages have ranged from 3 years to 73 years. Disabilities are varied and we prefer to focus on ability, not disability. Groups of riders come from schools, hospitals and hostels. Our Saturday riders usually come with their parents.

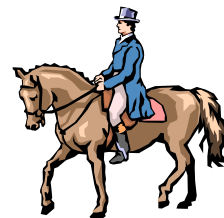
There are strict safety standards in RDA and riders are required to wear Australian Standards Association approved helmets (3838) and correct footwear, which may be provided by the centres. Special equipment is used occasionally; however, RDA attempts to keep conditions as close to natural as possible to encourage the riders to achieve a good position through the use of their own body.

Some of the benefits our riders may enjoy include:

- Improved balance and posture
- Promotion of body awareness
- Increased planning and decision making
- Improvement in gross and fine motor skills
- Increased motivation and learning, and development of reading and speech through games
- Development of eye-hand co-ordination
- Sensory stimulation through activity and surroundings
- Overcoming phobias such as heights and animals
- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem and improved social integration
- Improvement in memory and concentration
- Enhanced mobility and access to new experiences
- Development of language and communication skills
- Learning the value of rules eg: safety and discipline
- Personal challenge leading to achievement of goals
- Learning a skill that many able-bodied people don't have
- Learning about animal welfare by contact with animals
- Participation and opportunity for competition
- Being given the right to take controlled risks
- The promotion of a general feeling of well-being



OUR HORSES



“BOBBY”

Bobby is a 14.3 hands Bay gelding and is on a long lease from his owner. He has been used for dressage competitions at local, state and national level and competes at the Royal Easter Show.

“KHAL” ~ “Golden Kahlil”

Khal was foaled in 1982; he is a Palomino pony 13.3 hands.

Khal is unflappable.

He is a beautiful dappled golden colour in summer and a fluffy ball in winter.

“LEVI”

Levi was foaled in 1979 and thinks of himself as a bit of a glamour boy.

He is a Bay gelding and stands at 15.1 hands.

He enjoys being groomed with a soft body brush.

“MAJOR”

Major was foaled in 1986 and stands at 15.1 hands.

He is an Appaloosa quarter horse cross gelding and a lovely light chestnut colour with white spots. He loves to eat grass.

Major is being used for local and state level Dressage and he carried the Champion Mounted Games rider to victory in 2003. He was RDA Horse of the Year 2004 at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

“OMAR”

Omar was foaled in 1979; he is 15 hands and was a one owner horse for his first 16 years. He has a lovely temperament and usually comes when called.

“TIGER JONES” or “TJ” for short

TJ was foaled in 1980 and is a 12.1 hand Welsh Mountain Pony cross.

He is a hard working little boy and is used for our very small riders.

“WINTEZ”

Wintez is the newest member of the Ryde RDA horses. He is a light Palomino gelding and stands at 14.3 hands. He is 18 years of age. Wintez has already joined our competition team, competing at our local dressage days.

BASIC HORSE MANAGEMENT

Because our horses are handled every day by a different group of people and each day by more than one person, we try to keep to a standard of practice to make it easier for the horses and workers alike and in the interest of safety.

Some important points:

- Always let the horse know where you are.....talk to him and run your hand down his body as you approach his hindquarters while grooming etc. Take hold of his tail if walking around his back and stay close.
- It is best not to look a horse in the eye unless you are making a strong point.
- If more than one person is working with the horse they should all be on the same side. If one person moves to the other side the other people or person should move also. This way if the horse decides to move away he will move away from everyone and no one will be knocked over.
- When leading, a loose lead is the kindest way as a horse uses his head and neck for balance. Try and walk level with his shoulder. If there is a sidewalker, you may have to walk a little more towards his head so as to make room for the sidewalker.
- The horses must not be allowed to graze or eat treats when a bridle is fitted.

Each horse has his own bucket of equipment and his tack is labelled and stored against his name. When tied up, his lead rope must be tied to a piece of string (do not use hay twine) so if he pulls back it will only be the string that will break. When we groom our horses, they are placed in a holding yard and tied up. Special attention is given to the girth area to prevent sand from grinding into his skin when girthed up. Our horses are unshod as they only work on soft ground. Their feet are picked out daily and if necessary are oiled or treated (for thrush in wet weather etc). To pick out their feet it is best to work from their heel to their toe to prevent damage to the soft part of their foot, a triangular shaped part called the frog.

The horses are fed twice daily on lucerne hay. When someone first arrives in the morning the horses are fed their breakfast and they are fed again when we leave at around lunchtime. The water troughs are filled up daily and cleaned out weekly. Food treats such as apples and carrots must be cut up into small pieces to prevent the risk of a horse choking.



TACK

Head Collar / Halter:

The headcollar is used at all times, even with the bridle, and each horse has his own, with a lead rope. They usually have a lambs wool "fluffy" on the noseband. The headcollar should not be left on when the horse is turned loose.

Bridle:

The bridle consists of the browband, headpiece, noseband, cheek piece, bit and throat lash. When done up the throat lash should have a 4 finger space between it and the horses throat. Check with an experienced volunteer that the throat lash is fastened correctly. When he is not being used the bridle should be removed. At the end of the classes the bit must be scrubbed thoroughly in the bucket with brush and steel wool. Sometimes if the rider is hard on the horse's mouth we will attach the reins to the headcollar instead of the bit.

Saddle Blanket:

The saddle blanket goes over the horse's back, under the saddle. It should be placed higher than needed on his withers and moved back into position to prevent the horse's hair from being brushed up the wrong way. When the saddle is placed on the horse's back the saddle blanket should be pulled up into the gullet of the saddle at the withers to prevent the blanket from pulling tight over the withers.

Saddle:

Basic parts of the saddle are the pommel, seat, cantle, stirrup bar, saddle flap, girth and girth straps. Each horse has his own but we also use a pony pad, all purpose saddle or just a sheepskin for some riders. When the horse is saddled up, we run the stirrups up the leathers to avoid the horse being knocked with loose stirrups. Some riders use a "monkey grip" on the front of the saddle.

Rugs:

All our horses have rugs. The winter rugs are waterproof canvas lined with a woollen blanket. The summer rugs are "ripstop" cotton and are used to keep the flies away and keep them clean.

To put a rug on a horse- with the outside of the rug facing you fold the rug in two lengthways, lift the rug onto the horse, fasten the leg straps first (the leg straps go around the leg from between the horse's legs and are clipped to the outside of the rug with the clip facing the horse's body). The straps are crossed over each other between the legs. Then fasten the front buckle.

To remove a rug, the procedure is reversed. Undo the front buckle, fold the rug back in half, undo the leg straps and remove the rug gently.

