

Riding for the Disabled Association (N.S.W) Illawarra Centre



Tel: (02) 4236 0462

Address: [29 Mt Brandon Rd Jerrara](#)

Website: www.illawarra.rdansw.org.au

Postal Address: PO Box 39, Jamberoo 2533

Email: illawarra@rdansw.org.au

Facebook: [Riding for the Disabled Association NSW- Illawarra centre](#)

Summer Newsletter 2016/2017

Brand New Coach: Jacqui!

We have some VERY exciting news! We now have a brand new Coach here at RDA Illawarra! None other than our very own... Jacqui.

For the past several years, Jacqui has put in so much time and hard work toward her Coaching training, and on October 18th she passed her assessment with flying colours!

Jacqui's supervising Coach, Linda, couldn't be more proud!

"It has been my great pleasure to have been involved in mentoring Jacqui in gaining her coaching qualifications over the last few years.

I've watched Jacqui grow in confidence over this time, and she has blossomed into a fantastic Coach.

Jacqui always arrives with a fantastic plan for the day and is dedicated to ensuring our riders get the absolute most out of their lesson.

I wish you all the best for your future coaching career Jacqui, and I know without a doubt you'll be brilliant!"

We'd like to say a special thank you to our riders, who listened wonderfully and rode so beautifully on assessment day and throughout all of Jacqui's training.

Also a huge thank you to all our amazing volunteers and fellow assistant coaches, and supervising coaches who supported Jacqui all the way.

This wouldn't be possible without you all!



Carmen, Jacqui, Wendy

Jacqui receiving her new Coaching badge from her assessor, Wendy Torr



Jacqui with all the Tuesday volunteers after passing her assessment

We're so excited to have Jacqui, as a brand new Coach, on board for 2017!

New RDA Illawarra Patron: Gareth Ward MP

We are super excited to announce that Gareth Ward has accepted the position as the RDA Illawarra Patron!

Gareth Ward has been an enormous support for our centre for many years, and has especially been instrumental in the success of obtaining several grants for our centre. Some of these include a grant towards upgrading our amenities block in 2012 to make it much safer, more hygienic and user-friendly; another grant to re-build our very run-down "men's shed" in 2013; a grant towards purchasing a new tractor for our Grounds and Surrounds crew, as our old ones needed replacing due to new WHS regulations; and another in 2016 to replace the roofing of our leaking Rec Shed.

Whenever Gareth visits our centre, he always has so much encouragement for all our volunteers and enjoys hearing how our centre continues to impact the lives of so many.



Gareth Ward being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation



We were honoured to have Gareth attend our Christmas Party this year! He got to meet many of our riders and even everyone's favourite ponies!

Gareth was presented with a gift and certificate of appreciation and had the honour of presenting all our riders and volunteers with their trophies and gifts, as our new Patron.

"One of the many great things about being a local MP is serving as the Patron of many outstanding local groups.

I love spending time with the great team at Riding for the Disabled - this organisation gives so much to people with disabilities who get to experience something unique to the sport.

Thanks for having me at your Christmas Party again this year and thank you for the wonderful work you do!" -Gareth Ward

[View the full post HERE on Gareth Ward's Facebook page](#)

We are extremely grateful for Garth Ward, and for everything he has done for our centre.

He always does his very best to help with any requests we make and has gone into bat on our behalf on several occasions. We are extremely fortunate to have him on our side, and now as our new Patron.



2016 Christmas Party



Our RDA Illawarra 2016 Christmas party was a HUGE success! Thank you to everyone who came along to celebrate another fantastic year!

We kicked off the day with pony photos with everyone's favourite ponies, Chloe and Lil' Min, who were all decked out for the festive season.

Then we had a big Christmas surprise... Santa arrived on the fire engine! Everyone had a blast getting to sit in, and explore the fire truck. A huge thank you to Jamberoo Rural Fire Service.



We were grateful to have Gareth Ward, our new Patron, attend our Christmas party and he had the honour of presenting all our riders and volunteers with their trophies and gifts (thanks to New Millennium Trophies).

The award presentation is a special time where we have the opportunity to thank all our amazing volunteers for all their hard work and commitment throughout the year, and present them with a gift of appreciation. Each and every volunteer brings something different and unique to our amazing team with their own passions and abilities, and we are so thankful for every one of them. You guys ROCK!

Then, of course, it was time for the stars to take the stage! Each of the riders received a trophy for all their amazing efforts throughout 2016. It's been an incredible year for all our riders, filled with fun and achievements, and many hurdles and challenges conquered, each in their own way.

A big CONGRATULATIONS to our 2016 award winners: Rider of the year, Cayden; Volunteer of the Year, Alicia Parker; and Young Volunteer of the Year, Shari.

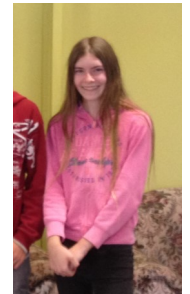
After all the formalities were over, we celebrated with an enormous feast! Thanks to everyone who brought something along to share.



Volunteer of the Year: Alicia



Rider of the Year: Cayden



Young Volunteer of the Year: Shari

It was certainly an awesome end to an awesome year!



← Pony Photos!

Classes

2016

2016 was a great year for all of our classes, filled with lots of fun and achievements! Our classes finished up for the year at the beginning of November.

Our horses are now enjoying their summer break, ready to come back refreshed for the new year. Can't wait to see everyone again!

Check out some of our awesome class photos below!



2017

We're all excited to be kicking off classes again in March! Below are our 2017 class days and times:

Saturday

9:00am

10:30am

First class date: 4th March

Tuesday

10:00am

11:30am

First class date: 7th March

We're always looking for eager volunteers to join our amazing team –no experience needed!

We're holding a Volunteer Training Day on February 11th at 11am for all new and existing volunteers.

If you're keen to find out more about volunteering in 2017 or to join us on our training day, please contact our Volunteer co-ordinator:

Alicia Parker: 0401 417 463 or volunteersrdailawarra29@gmail.com

If you're interested in finding out more about rider positions for 2017, please contact our Rider Waiting-List Co-ordinator:

Jacqui Clarke: 0417 027 478 or rda.illawarra.waitinglist@gmail.com



Please don't hesitate to contact us; we look forward to hearing from you!

Can't wait to see you all in 2017!

Featured Rider

Dexter's Story

How long has Dexter been riding at RDA?

Dexter started riding with RDA at the start of 2016



What horse does Dexter ride?

Dexter started riding Chloe, but now rides Lil Min

What is Dexter's favourite RDA activity?

Dexter likes doing the "jumps"!

What does Dexter love best about his time at RDA?

Dexter loves being around the horses and loves how stubborn Lil Min is!

In what ways have you seen Dexter benefit from horse riding?

Dexter benefits so much from horse riding. His position and the movement of the horse promotes great stretches for his muscles and has also



improved his core strength.

What is something Dexter has learnt from his experience at RDA?

To be patient with Lil Min!

What changes have you seen in Dexter since he began horse riding at RDA?

Dexter used to get very tired at the end of his sessions, but now he is able to stay awake and have longer rides.

Is there anything else you would like to say about Dexter's experience at RDA?

The volunteers who work with Dexter are amazing and have learnt his cues and work amazingly with him.



A bit about Dexter...

Who is your favourite horse?

Lil' Min

What do you love most about the horse that you ride?

How stubborn little Min is!

What is your favourite colour?

Blue

What are some things you like to do?

I like swimming and music

What is your favourite animal?

Dogs

Do you have any pets?

Mum and Dad won't let us get a pet!

What month is your birthday?

May

What is your favourite food?

Chocolate



Dexter with his face painted!

Featured Volunteer

Caitlin's story

How long have you been volunteering at RDA Illawarra?

To my surprise it has only been about seven months, but really, it feels like I've been around forever! Everyone at RDA has made me feel so welcome and like I'm part of the family. Sorry guys... but I'm going to be around for a very long time!

How did you get involved in RDA?

I really wanted to work with horses so I did some research (thanks google) on local services involving horses. When RDA popped up, I thought it was a great opportunity to learn about horses while sharing my knowledge regarding working with different abilities! I contacted RDA and Alicia was so helpful in getting me involved and... well now they're stuck with me!

Do you have any horses or other animals of your own?

Do fish count? If so, I have 6! But other than that, my apartment isn't big enough for pets. I must admit though, I have thought about sneaking the ponies home!



What do you love most about volunteering at RDA?

Selfishly, there is something amazing about just being out at RDA! It has such a homely feel and I have been lucky enough to meet some really awesome people (both riders and volunteers) that I may never have come across. I'm so thankful for the experiences I have had at RDA and I look forward to many more.



Who is your favourite current RDA horse?

Now that is a hard one!!! It really depends what day it is and the moods they are in! I think Echo is the most predictable, placid and loving.

What has been your favourite experience at RDA?

Definitely the day the equine dentist came to do all the horses teeth! I learnt SO MUCH that day! I am a complete beginner when it comes to horses and being around so many people with horse knowledge and experience was awesome.

What kinds of things do you do in your role as a volunteer at RDA Illawarra?

I feed horses, clean their feet and brush them, etc. I also help out in classes and... I pull ticks from the horses (much to my disgust)!

What are your thoughts on volunteering in general?

Some time ago I read something about treating others the way you want to be treated by others. I think this is a really good motto to live by and volunteering through something you are interested in really supports this statement!

Had you had any experience with horses or disabilities before you became a volunteer at RDA?



Regarding horses, I have always loved them but had never been lucky enough to have had anything to do with them!

Regarding disabilities, I have been a teacher for a few years now and in October this year, I finished my masters in special education! I have always had a passion for inclusion. My philosophy is that everyone, regardless of their ability, should have equal access to opportunities, experiences and resources! It has been my mission ever since I can remember to make that happen!

What is one thing you have learnt throughout your volunteering experience?

That like humans, horses really do have their very own personalities! It has been so cool getting to know them and seeing the amazing care, respect and love they have for their riders. It blows me away how much a horse and rider can communicate, even without words!

Featured Horse

Echo



This is Echo, one of our dearly loved four-legged friends at RDA.

Echo joined our RDA team at the end of 2013, and we don't know what we'd do without her! She is such a hard working girl who never puts a foot wrong. She's reliable, gentle, and such a joy to all her riders.

One of her very first riders was heard to say "I fell in love on my first ride".

Echo is proof of how adaptable our RDA horses are. We got to speak to Echo's owner about her life before RDA and her history as a barrel racer!

"I was 13 when I started barrel racing her and we won numerous events together, but her gentle and kind nature was what kept me feeling safe when I was riding."

She's been on big charity rides and pony club events and her lovely nature always shone brightly, both on the ground and in the saddle.

Echo even gave birth to a filly back in 1997, and has since become a grandmother!

Having once been an RDA volunteer herself, Echo's owner had seen first-hand how well the horses were looked after and the joy they brought to so many lives, and she knew this was the future she wanted for her.

"I hope everyone is having as much fun with her as I did!"

Even at 28 years old, Echo's still going strong and enjoys her life here at RDA. Week in and week out we know we can depend on her.

She has truly won the hearts of so many, and we are so grateful to have her in our herd.



Echo in her life before RDA



Volunteer Fun Facts!

Things you never knew about our volunteers!

Tonia

Volunteer/
Sponsor-a-Horse Co-ordinator



What is your favourite..?

Colour: **All shades of blue**

Animal: **Horses (of course!). Lions come in second**

Food: **Chips and wedges**

Type of Music: **Roll 'n' Roll**

What do you prefer?

Pizza or hamburger: **Pizza –all kinds! I could eat it every day!**

Cats or dogs: **Dogs. They're so loyal and loveable!**

Summer or Winter: **Summer, definitely! It means being outdoors and BBQs.**

What are your hobbies? **Hiking, reading, and I'm learning how to ride a stand up paddle board**

What are three names you go by? **My friends often call me "T," my niece calls me Theia ("auntie" in Greek), and Antonia**

What is your favourite sport? **I play a bit of tennis, but not very well! I watch show jumping and dressage, and ice hockey**

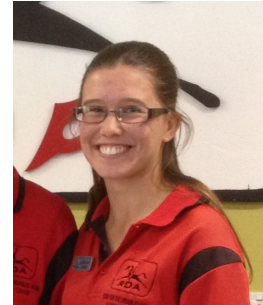
Who is your favourite RDA horse? **That's a very tough question because they're all special! I'll say Molly because the two students I have worked most closely with adore her. She's a sweet girl.**

What month is your birthday? **August**

If you could travel anywhere in the world where would you go? **It's difficult to pick just one place! I'd like to visit Rome, Egypt, and the Great Barrier Reef.**

Kirsten

Volunteer/Assistant Coach/
Newsletter Editor



What is your favourite..?

Colour: **Turquoise and purple (and all pastel colours!)**

Animal: **Horses and Labradors**

Food: **Chocolate ...sorry, not much beats chocolate!**

Type of Music: **Contemporary**

What do you prefer?

Pizza or hamburger: **Homemade Pizza –YUM!**

Cats or dogs: **Dogs (especially Labs)**

Summer or Winter: **Summer,,, except for EXTREME heat!**

What are your hobbies? **Baking and horse riding**

What are three names you go by? **Ummm... well I seem to have somehow accumulated many random nicknames over time, each with stories behind them, but I mostly just go by Kirsten!**

What is your favourite sport? **Horse riding (pleasure riding), and often enjoy watching my brother play cricket.**

Who is your favourite RDA horse? **Gosh, I love them all! But I definitely have a soft spot for our newest team member, Molly.**

What month is your birthday? **July**

If you could travel anywhere in the world where would you go? **I've LOVE to go to Spain to visit the country of my family heritage**

Wishing you all a Happy 2017



From Everyone at RDA Illawarra!

A HUGE thank you to all our supporters in 2016!

- [Gareth Ward MP](#)
- Carl Winkler -Farrier
- [Equistry Equine Dentist](#)
- [Simply Luxe](#)
- [Horseland Wollongong](#)
- [New Millennium Trophies](#)
- [Jamberoo Rural Fire Service](#)
- [Shellharbour Roofing](#)
- [Close to my Heart Horse Bracelets](#)
- [Illawarra Smallgoods](#)
- [Bakers Delight](#) –Stockland Shellharbour
- [Simpson Signs](#)
- RDA Illawarra Horse Gear Sale Supporters
- [Horse Sponsors](#)
- [Dapto Leagues Club](#)
- [Shellharbour Workers Club](#)
- [Harcourts Real Estate](#)
- AND ALL OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS!

Sincere apologies to those whose names may have not been mentioned. Your support is very much appreciated.



Help us Build our Sponsor a Horse Program

This program is a fantastic way for people to get involved, especially those who do not have a lot of time on their hands. If you can help by distributing some of our Sponsor a Horse Program forms amongst your friends and colleagues, please contact the Centre. Sponsorship starts from as little as \$10 a month and makes a great present. **Mini and her friends would like to thank their present sponsors for their continuing support!**