

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



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Autumn/Winter Newsletter 2016

Fundraiser: HORSE GEAR SALE

On Saturday April 2nd 2016 we held a Fundraiser Horse Gear Sale to raise some much needed funds for our centre.

It turned out to be a fabulous day with loads of horse gear up for sale. We had mountains of saddles, bridles, reins, saddle pads, rugs ...you name it!.. going at bargain prices.

In addition to the gear for sale, we also had a sausage sizzle, saddle for silent auction, and a raffle with fantastic prizes! A big thank you to Close to my heart Horse Bracelets for donating our first prize of a beautiful personalised horse hair memory locket.

Saturday was such a great success that we decided to continue the sale on Sunday for our Horse Gear Sale Day 2!

We continued the raffle and silent auction for Day 2 and had loads of eager bargain hunters who left with armloads –even carloads!- of gear and smiling faces.

So the weekend turned out to be an amazing success. Even after the weekend was over we continued to get enquires about the sale. So we decided to hold another small sale the following Thursday and still had people streaming through the door.

We'd like to thank Horseland Wollongong for their donation of their trade-in saddles and to everyone else who has donated gear to us over the years. Your donations supplied us with enough gear to make this possible.

We'd also like to say a huge thank you to all our incredible volunteers who put in so much time and effort to make this happen. You guys are amazing! And a special thanks to Michelle and Trish, two lovely ladies who came to the sale as bargain hunters and ended up helping us immensely in so many ways.

And last, but certainly not least, everyone at RDA Illawarra would like to say an ENORMOUS THANK YOU to every single person who came down to support our centre at the sale over those three days. Thank you for making our Horse Gear Sale a great success!

We're so stoked to say that the sale raised over \$2,500 for our centre, which is far more than anyone had anticipated! These funds will greatly assist in keeping our centre in operation and be able to continue to impact the lives of each of our riders every week.



Fundraiser: BlueSky Outdoor Experts Grand Opening BBQ

BlueSky Outdoor Experts Illawarra have recently opened their store in Shellharbour and held their grand opening on Saturday May 14th. They allowed RDA Illawarra to run the BBQ for the opening with all the funds going to our centre.

It was a great day! Thank you to Baker's Delight, Illawarra Smallgoods and Woolworths for donating the goods for the BBQ and thank you to all the volunteers who came down to help. It was fantastic to see some of the parents and carers getting involved!

And a huge thank you to BlueSky Illawarra for this opportunity. Visit them on the web at www.blueskyillawarra.com.au

Funding for New Roofing

We had a special visit from Gareth Ward MP and Hon. John Ajaka MLC on Tuesday 9th of February.

They came to our centre to present us with \$10,000 of funding they were able to secure for us towards much needed new roofing for our Recreational Shed, which has been leaking and was in need of replacing.

RDA Illawarra is extremely grateful for all they have done, and are doing, for our centre.

Thanks to Shellharbour Roofing, the new roofing is now in place and we no longer have to worry about having a leaking shed during rainfall!



Coach's Note

Hi all!

Just a quick note to let you all know what's been happening at our lovely centre.

It was very hard last year with the centre closed due to the work on the dam. I would like you all to know that just because classes had to stop, it didn't mean that our volunteers got a break! There still needed to be someone at the centre every day to check and feed the horses and our wonderful grounds and surrounds fellas still needed to keep the place spick and span! To all you wonderful people I thank you for your great efforts in keeping things running smoothly.

This year started fantastically! All our riders returned from last year, and it was wonderful to see everyone's smiling faces again. We also began a second class on a Tuesday this year, which has been fabulous, and we are excited to be starting Saturday classes in a few weeks time with some new riders and lots of new and eager volunteers!

Classes have been running well and our three trainee coaches have been very dedicated to completing their studies and working hard on their lessons to achieve the next steps to becoming an RDA Coach. I must say I am extremely proud of them for their hard work!

RDA Illawarra is truly a wonderful place to be, full of fantastic people who love to be there and lift my spirits week in week out.

Thank you all for being a part of our centre!

Linda Pullen

President/Coach



Classes



Classes are finally up and running again for 2016!
After a challenging year of being unable to run classes last year due to the decommissioning of Jerrara dam, it's been fantastic to have classes in full swing again.



Tuesday:

We kicked off this year with two classes on Tuesday mornings. All our previous Tuesday riders returned to join us for first class, and were excited to be able to start up a second class with a new group of riders.

Classes have been running fantastically and each of the riders are continuing to show improvements and having a great time every week, which has been great to see.

Our three trainee coaches -Jacqui, Kirsten and Kerry- have been taking turns in running sections of the classes between them and have been learning a lot and gaining confidence from these experiences.

It's been awesome to see all our returning riders progressing so well, even after such a long break. And we're just amazed to see our new riders picking things up so quickly progressing every week.

Lots of fun and smiles all round!



Saturday:

We're super excited to announce that Saturday classes will be starting up once again in just a matter of weeks!

Trainees Jacqui and Kirsten, have decided to take on Saturday classes under the supervision of Carmen (one of our Coaches), and are looking forward to getting them up and running and learning a lot from this experience.

We held a volunteer training day on Saturday 28th May for our influx of new Saturday volunteers. Almost a dozen new volunteers braved the wet and cold to come down to the training day, and despite the weather it went really well. It was fantastic to meet everyone and get them all prepared for the coming classes. It's so wonderful to see so many new enthusiastic volunteers!

Saturday classes will be commencing on Saturday 18th of June. Can't wait to see many of you there!

Brand New Saddle Yards!

Below are some photos of the finished work on our new saddle yards. We couldn't have asked for a better job! :)

We'd like to say an extra special thank you to council workers Cameron and Scott for donating their time to come down to finish the saddle yards -and even do extra work- on their days off.



TAFE Course: Monitoring Horse Health and Welfare

On Tuesday May 31st our Coaches and their Assistant and Trainee coaches gained the opportunity to attend a one day fee-free course at Yallah TAFE on Monitoring Horse Health and Welfare.

We were reluctant to have to cancel classes on that Tuesday morning, but we knew it would be an extremely valuable opportunity to help better our Coaches' knowledge on monitoring the health and welfare of our RDA horses.

It turned out to be a fantastic day and each of the Coaches took home a lot of valuable knowledge to apply to our ongoing care for each of our faithful horses at the centre.

TAFE Illawarra are currently offering a large range of fee-free courses on a large range of different topics. Check out [TAFE Illawarra's fee-free short courses HERE](#).



Volunteer Story

Alex's Story

How long have you been volunteering at RDA Illawarra?

About 8 years.

How did you get involved in RDA?

I first began at RDA as a rider and also volunteered in other classes on the same day. I rode for about 2-3 years until I got my own horse. After that I decided to keep volunteering because I loved helping out and enjoyed being in a fun and uplifting environment.

Who is your favourite current RDA horse?

Hmmm...either Big Min or Lil Min...I can't decide!

But my favourite RDA horse of all (over the whole time I've been there) is Nudge. He was the horse I used to ride.

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

Yes -but there are too many to count! I have a horse, a pony, goats, dogs and chickens...just to name a few.

What do you love most about volunteering at RDA?

It's hard to pin-point just one thing, as I love so many different aspects of it.

I love seeing each of the riders progress week by week.

I love having the opportunity to help others.

I love that it's a really comfortable and uplifting environment to work in because everyone accepts you just the way you are.

I love having the opportunity to work with a variety of different horses and that they each have different personalities that you have to learn to adjust to and work with.

What has been your favourite experience at RDA?

I really enjoyed working with a particular rider a few years back. She was only able to ride for about a year or so, but every time this little girl rode, she had a smile from ear to ear from the moment she got on the horse. It was very rewarding to see how happy it made her.

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

I've helped out with a large range of different tasks and activities throughout the years I've been volunteering at RDA. Some of these include preparing horses for class (including catching, grooming, saddling, etc.), assisting with setting up the arena, feeding horses, leading horses and riders in class, untacking, rugging, among numerous other things.



Alex leading in class

What are your thoughts on volunteering in general?

I think it's great to get young people out and about and gives them a way to look out for others. It's a great way for people to step out of their comfort zones, build confidence, and can sometimes lead to lifelong commitments and friendships.

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

I'd been riding on and off since I was about five years old, but I had never had any experience with other people with disabilities.

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

Expect the unexpected!

Rider Story

Millie's Story

How long has Millie been riding at RDA?

Millie started riding in 2013

What horse does Millie ride?

Millie currently rides Molly, but she has also ridden Barney, Zida, Daisy, Echo, and Lil Min

What does Millie love best about her time at RDA?

She loves the horses. They are so soft and calming. She says riding always makes her week better; no matter how many bad days she has, at least she can look forward to Tuesdays.

What is Millie's favourite RDA activity?

Jumping and trail rides

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

Physically, riding develops her core strength and endurance and helps her relax. Socially, it improves her communication through interaction with the volunteers and other riders
Cognitively, riding helps her with focus and motor planning.

What is something Millie has learnt from her experience at RDA?

Millie has really developed her sense of body awareness, personal space and co-ordination. This is evident as she is now able to lead a horse through a gateway without squishing the volunteer, can control her body movement when riding to direct the horse and look where she wants to go, and is developing focus and concentration skills that are helping her in the classroom.

What changes have you seen in Millie since she began horse riding at RDA?

Riding relaxes Millie and definitely makes her calmer. She knows that she can't ride if she is feeling anxious, as the horse will sense it, so she works really hard to reduce her anxiety before getting to RDA. Sometimes this is really difficult for her as she is also excited about riding, so she needs to run laps around the yard and bounce on the trampoline to expel some of the energy before she gets on the horse and has to focus. She relaxes immediately once on the horse and loves riding bareback due to the extra sensory input that it gives her. Millie is less anxious after riding due to the physical exertion and concentration it requires, and is calmed by the soft touch of the horse. Millie's school also sees how much she benefits from riding, even during school hours, and they write it into her IEP (individual plan) as a goal.



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

Millie's confidence has also improved as she is able to have control over some pretty big horses that she has ridden. The volunteers help with developing this confidence as they give the riders space to make decisions and encourage their input into the direction of the lesson. We are very grateful for the many opportunities that RDA provides.

-Millie's Mum

A bit about Millie...

What is your favourite horse?
Molly

What is your favourite colour?
Purple and silver....this week.

What month is your birthday?
July

What are some things you love to do?
Horse riding, playing with my dog Charlie, and scootering. I also love to draw Space Elephants.

What is your favourite animal?
An Elephant. I LOVE elephants! Especially pygmy elephants.

Do you have any pets?
I have a goldfish called Alexztraza the life binder; 2 cats, Ashley and Mishka; 2 rabbits, Bella and Steven; 2 chooks, Professor Pegglesworth and Black Beauty; and my Cavoodle puppy Charlie. One day I'd like to get a pygmy elephant.

What is your favourite food?
Mandarins and peanut butter sandwiches....but not together.



Millie's Space Elephant drawing

Horse Story

Meet Molly.

Molly is our newest addition to the RDA herd. Molly came to our centre in our summer holidays early this year, and from her very first training session we knew she was going to be an absolute gem. She's got such a gentle and placid nature and just flew through her training with flying colours. We haven't found anything that phases Molly yet! After her first few training sessions during the summer break, we decided to put her in a "mock class" for the final test. So with a handful of our horses and volunteers, and one of our trainee coaches riding Molly bareback, we simulated a class setting, and she performed like she'd been doing it all her life. It didn't matter what we threw at her (literally and metaphorically!), she stood up to the test every time.



So for the first class back in 2016, Molly was introduced to her new riders and they fell in love immediately!

She's been such a perfect addition to our centre.

Here's what one of Molly's new riders had to say about her:

What do love most about Molly?

Millie: That she is big and comfortable like an armchair. She is very patient when I am not.



Volunteer Fun Facts!

Things I bet you never knew about our volunteers. :)

Jacqui

Volunteer/Vice President/Trainee Coach



What is your favourite..?

Colour: **Yellow –like my car!**

Animal: **Horse**

Food: **Cheese**

Type of Music: **I love all music**

What do you prefer?

Pizza or hamburger: **Neither**

Cats or dogs: **Dogs**

Hot or cold weather: **Hot**

What are your hobbies? **None**

What are three names you go by? **Jac's, Jacqui, Jacqueline**

Do you play or follow a sport? **No**

Who is your favourite RDA horse? **Star –I love Arabs!**

If you could travel anywhere in the world where would you go? **Assam in India –and I'm going there in November!**

Linda

Volunteer/President/Coach



What is your favourite..?

Colour: **Red**

Animal: **Horse**

Food: **Seafood**

Type of Music: **Soft Pop**

What do you prefer?

Pizza or hamburger: **Hamburger**

Cats or dogs: **Dogs**

Hot or cold weather: **Definitely Cold!**

What are your hobbies? **None. Not enough time!**

What are three names you go by? **Linda, Mum, Boss :)**

Do you play or follow a sport? **No**

Who is your favourite RDA horse? **Mini (a.k.a "Big Min)**

If you could travel anywhere in the world where would you go? **I would love to travel around Australia.**

New Facebook page

We are excited to announce our new Facebook page!

Keep up to date with all the latest news from our centre and help us get the word out by liking and sharing our page!

Find us at:

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



Interested in Volunteering?

We are ALWAYS looking for eager volunteers to come and join our wonderful team at RDA Illawarra!



You don't need any prior experience or qualifications, just a willingness to learn and desire to help others.

Ground Maintenance, fundraising, and help on class days, are just some of the jobs that we're always in need of people to help out with.

So if you're interesting in becoming a volunteer, don't hesitate to contact us!

Alicia Parker –Treasurer/Volunteer Coordinator:

Mob: 0401 417 463

Email: treasurerdaillawarra29@gmail.com

Find us on [Facebook](#).

We look forward to hearing from you!

WISH LIST

Do you know anyone who could donate any of the following items?

Horse feed, Portable PA system,
Water tanks, Horse float, Generator

DONATIONS

A huge thank you to the following for their generous donations/grants, donations in kind and product:-

Shellharbour Roofing,
Carl Winkler Farrier,
Horseland Wollongong,
Close to my heart Horse Bracelets,
Illawarra Smallgoods,
Baker's Delight,
Woolworths

Sincere apologies to those whose names may have not been mentioned, your donations are 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!