

Testimonials

Introducing Caitlin.....



How Riding for the Disabled benefits our daughter Caitlin:

We introduced our daughter Caitlin, then aged 6, to horse riding. The idea initially came to us through several of our networking channels, and, being an activity that most children enjoy, we enrolled her.

Our primary area of concern for Caitlin was her weakness through her core trunk; stomach muscles, hips, thighs and back. Caitlin had always had good upper body strength and we wanted to enhance her core trunk and balance. After Caitlin's first year at riding with Tinkerbelle, Caitlin has mastered skills in the correct way to mount a horse from a ramp, sit correctly and hold herself in the appropriate position once sitting in the saddle.

We found that not only did Caitlin's strength improve but also her speech and all round posture. She began riding a scooter, we noticed an improvement in her gait and she seemed to be managing riding her bike better, although her training wheels were still on.

At the end of her first year of riding, Caitlin was able to steer Tinkerbelle around a slalom course unaided. Caitlin is now 8 and in her second year of riding. Caitlin rides every session off the lead and is steering Blokey through the slalom course by herself. Caitlin has progressed to trotting and we are sure the "man in the moon" can see her smile when she is doing this activity.



".....Caitlin has progressed to trotting and we are sure the "man in the moon" can see her smile...."

Caitlin talks to the volunteers about her week at school which helps with simple recollections of what has happened over a short period of time. A Big achievement for Caitlin, within the last 3 weeks, is that she has now mastered riding her bike without her training wheels—an achievement of which we are all very proud. Her balance has improved immensely and she is now a dynamite on her scooter.

We cannot thank all the team at CHCH RDA for all their time, efforts and above all patience! The improvement in Caitlin is mind blowing and the best part for us is she is receiving physical, emotional, speech and cognitive therapy all rolled into one, in an environment which is fun and exciting!

Michelle & Lindsay Fleming

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Introducing

Tessa....

Tessa's story:

My 4 year old daughter Tessa was diagnosed with a metabolic disorder called Glutaric Aciduria Type 1 at 2 years old which has resulted in some damage to her basal ganglia. This damage has resulted in abdominal weakness and balance and coordination problems affecting her legs.

She has been riding with Christchurch RDA since she was 3 1/2 and I have since noticed a difference in her confidence on her pony in the Riding for the Disabled classes and an improvement in the recruitment of her abdominal muscles. She is now able to ride holding on to the reins, and steering her pony with a little help from her side walker. The leg position on the horse is beneficial for getting her to activate her weak ankle dorsiflexors and counteracts the abnormal positions that her legs tend to adopt when walking and sitting.

Tessa was terrified of animals from an early age but is now completely comfortable on a horse and is quite happy to change from one horse to another which has helped with her resistance to change. As an active, outdoor family, we are looking forward to having a pursuit we can share.

Tessa loves riding and we find the whole experience extremely positive.

Kim Sitjes (Tessa's Mum) / Physiotherapist



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