



Welcome & Kia Ora

Well the last few months have been really incredibly busy. As hosts for the NZRDA national training seminar we had a lot to achieve to make sure that this amazing facility and the wonderful people that support it as volunteers and benefactors was shown in the best light.

Our volunteers committed long hours in support of the therapy demonstrations we presented and our riders also made huge commitments in time to show the other 55 RDA branches from around NZ what they had achieved from their equestrian therapy programs.

Legacy Trust helped us cover the costs we had to carry to host the day of demonstrations and workshops.

A highlight of the weekend was the NZRDA Rider of the Year Award given to our rider Hayden Roper jointly with Otorohanga RDA rider Brayden Guilford.

Once again we were saying goodbye to international students, this time two young women from Germany who during their time with us made a great difference. They contribute so much and become part of the family so that saying "goodbye" is always sad.

You will notice that one of our long-time supporters, Zariba has taken up the sponsorship of this newsletter. They are an organisation that provides tremendous support to the not-for-profit sector and will have a word to say in each edition of our newsletter. We are delighted that they are partnering us in this project.

With the introduction of more sport and recreation and life skills therapy programs not only have the rider numbers increased but also the actual therapy hours provided.

This is a very busy place! We couldn't do it without the support of our marvelous volunteers and our generous benefactors and grant-making organisations – *thank you to all our supporters – your contributions in time and with finances are greatly appreciated.*

Tauranga RDA hosts for NZRDA National Conference

This annual event on NZRDA's calendar brings together representatives from the 56 RDA branches from around the country. Featuring as part of the three day agenda is a day of discussions and presentations on matters that affect all the branches as well as a full day at a group attending workshops and looking at practical demonstrations. The AGM is also held during the weekend.

As host group we had a request from NZRDA to provide demonstrations on some of the programs we offer our clients. Coach, Claudia Cameron selected a group of her Sport and Recreation riders to demonstrate the outcomes being achieved with that program.

The Sport and Recreation program is a development of the Graduation program initiated a number of years ago with funding from Sport Bay of Plenty. The aim of the program is to provide riders who have been in our equestrian therapy program with the skills and confidence to enable them to feel they could attend a mainstream riding school if that is the path they wish to follow. Not all of the riders in the program have that ambition and for them the aim is for the program to provide them with transferable skills to help them succeed in other sporting and recreational activities they may wish to follow.



The demonstration which featured these young riders was in the format of a drill with horse and rider trotting over small jumps. These young riders impressed the representatives from many of the 55 other RDA groups and considerable discussion with coaches from around the country with our own coaches resulted.

Coach therapist, Sharon Aldersley mounted a demonstration with a group of her adult riders. The aim was to show that riders who originally started in a one-on-one or intensive therapy program can ride safely in a group that provides them the added benefits of increasing social interaction with other likeminded adults in similar life situations.



As with the demonstration Claudia mounted it showed a program that allows riders to pursue riding as a sport or recreational activity while continually taking into consideration the physical implications of riding at a new or more challenging level. According to Sharon the demonstration showed the advantages of sometimes allowing 'achievement of activity' and 'fun risk taking' to take priority over 'correct therapy positions' while ensuring health and safety guidelines are maintained. Following this demonstration all the riders were presented to the RDA representatives and some spoke of how the program had brought great benefit to their lives by not only assisting them with their physical objectives but by providing them with 'a social life'.

The preparation for these demonstrations took place over months not days and called for a huge commitment not only from our riders but also from an incredible team of volunteers who turned up day after day to work with the riders, horses and coaches to perfect the demonstrations.

Several very useful workshops were also held over the weekend. A saddle fitting demonstration was especially valuable to our group as we had been experiencing challenges finding a saddle to fit a couple of our wider horses. Other extremely valuable workshops were with Nash Francis from Animal Muscle Release Therapy (AMRT) based in Cambridge in the Waikato.

Nash practices Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Acupuncture, Acupressure & Moxibustion. Furthermore, she also utilises specific trigger point therapy and soft tissue manipulation technique for wellness & performance in horses and dogs. Using some of our RDA horses she also demonstrated desirable conformation as well as issues and discussed ways of addressing them. There was something to learn for everyone.

President of NZRDA, Sarah Haydon provided an excellent workshop on Governance which generated robust and useful discussions touching on a variety of areas important to all groups.

The conference also provided a great opportunity for branch representatives to meet the newly appointed NZRDA CEO, Chris Hooper. Chris spoke of his vision for RDA in NZ and some of the ways that he hoped NZRDA would be able to assist groups in taking that journey to a future of growth and long-term sustainability.

For our Tauranga group we had the opportunity to show our amazing facility and demonstrate to other groups how extremely fortunate we are to have such a supportive community that produces not only wonderful financial support but also wonderful volunteers.

A highlight of the weekend was the awarding of Rider of the Year at the Annual Awards Dinner. Our rider, Hayden Roper received the award jointly with an Otorohanga rider Brayden Guilford. This was a great achievement for Hayden and was roundly applauded by all who had seen Hayden riding in Sharon's demonstration earlier in the day.



All in all it was a great weekend and an opportunity to exchange ideas, meet others who are addressing the challenges we are facing and to build networks that will work to everyone's benefit.

Legacy Trust

At very short notice just before the National Conference we decided that given the unpredictable weather at that time of the year we really should have a marquee for serving meals and for use for workshops. With cost always a consideration we were so thankful that Legacy Trust once again provided us with financial support sufficient for us to hire a marquee and outfit it with tables, chairs and heating. It was a real asset and made a huge difference to the weekend.



Rider of the Term – Rosemary Saunders

Rosemary's coach, Sharon Aldersley says Rosemary is a very worthy recipient of this term's award. Rosemary has had MS for 25 years, which has been gradually getting worse with her now having to rely fulltime on a wheelchair.

Rosemary has been coming to RDA for five years and was for a time the rider representative on our board. Sharon says Rosemary works tremendously hard and is a truly inspirational person. She is very realistic about her condition but is extremely positive. She is a team builder and has been instrumental in organising a social network with the other adult riders she meets each week at RDA.



The social aspects of riding at RDA are very important

for the adult riders as there is little in the community available to them so as well as the physical therapy benefits the program also provides some social time. According to Rosemary the therapy helps her to sit upright and use all her muscles in a way she doesn't in a chair. "I feel like my internal organs get a 'massage' while riding the horse and my legs are stretched in a more prolonged and lasting way on the horse that I can accomplish at home. All in all my body gains huge benefit from this exercise and it is great to do something physical and 'normal'.



RDA Volunteer of the Year Awards

Karen Saunders

– Recreational Services RDA Volunteer of the Year

Michelle van Zweeden

– Recreational Services RDA Junior Volunteer of the Year

This year we were delighted to secure a sponsor for the Volunteer of the Year Award and for Volunteer Week. Tauranga Recreational Services came on board as sponsors for this special recognition program for our wonderful team of volunteers. Two volunteers were selected – as the coaches commented "this is one of the most difficult tasks of the year as we have so many amazing people to choose from". However a choice was made and the Volunteer of the Year was Karen Saunders and the Junior Volunteer of the Year Michelle van Zweeden.



Karen Saunders is a mother of two who despite working full-time has for the past two years committed her time to RDA every Saturday morning when she manages our junior volunteer program. The junior volunteer program is

important for RDA as it introduces young people to the concept of volunteering and develops the skills needed to work with horses and assist those who are challenged by disability or who are at-risk within our community. Karen earned for herself the moniker "camp mother" when she took over the responsibility for feeding and managing 12 young girls for the weekend training camp for junior volunteers. Karen is a whirlwind of

activity behind the scenes for all our major events as she manages and guides the junior volunteer team while they make a tremendous contribution to our operation. Without Karen this program would not be the success it is. The time required to manage this program would make it virtually impossible for our coaches to work with our clients as well as train and supervise the young volunteers and organize them effectively. Manager, Elisha Olds describes Karen as an amazing woman who is a crucial part of our operation.

Michelle van Zweeden is an 11 year old home-schooled volunteer who is at RDA every Wednesday morning. According to coach, Claudia Cameron, Michelle is mature beyond her years. "She is responsible and hardworking". While too young to be directly involved



in leading horses and their disabled and at-risk riders she works away in the background mucking out stables, picking up manure in the paddocks and the many other unglamorous jobs associated with having horses. "She always does it with a smile" says Claudia "and when one task is finished will always find something else that needs doing". Elisha Olds said that the introduction of the junior award alongside the award for the adults demonstrates how important RDA views the development of young people as volunteers. "Our young people are our future and they play an important role in our operation. We have some truly impressive young people on our team so it only seemed right to recognize them with their own award."

Both Karen and Michelle are tremendous assets to our operation and like our other 75 volunteers they are "true givers" and without them we could not run an organisation.



Farmlands Te Puke

Farmlands Te Puke very generously supplied us with some amazing heat-retaining socks for us to award to our volunteers during Volunteer Week. The socks were used as prizes for the daily lucky draw and were a huge favourite with the volunteers. During volunteer week all volunteers received an RDA cap and Angela O'Donnell prepared a special breakfast each day as a way of thanking volunteers for everything they had done for us over the past year.

Photographic support for our new web site

Junior volunteer, Rosie Sheaff may have her leg in plaster following surgery but it hasn't prevented her from volunteering. She together with our stable manager, Terryn Collins has been taking new photographs of all our horses with some truly exceptional results.

Thank you to both of you – it has made a great improvement to our photographic library. Looking at the photos it is easy to see that both understand how a horse is best presented as some of our most ordinary looking equines are now looking quite elegant. See some of the photos taken in the Horse section.

Community

We have had a couple of visits from Retirement Villages over the past couple of months. The first was a visit from a number of residents from the Melrose Nursing Home. It was lovely to see people who spend much of their time home-bound interacting with the horses, ponies and dogs. One elderly lady who had previously been a dressage judge and rider seemed to make an instantaneous bond with our pony Chippie. He wanted to be with her all the time and would have happily climbed onto her knee in the wheelchair given half a chance. It was a lovely visit and we hope they will come again. Omokoroa Lions Club also paid us a visit. They had a special time when they witnessed one of our little riders who had been adamant about not getting onto a horse being placed on his back and then after an initial howl of disapproval breaking into huge smiles and laughter and waving at everyone. Coach, Angela O'Donnell said they had been trying for several weeks to get the youngster onto the horse without success and decided that this was the day they were going to force the issue – our visitors described the occasion as “a joy to see”.

Our mini ponies also made a visit to the Greenwood Park Retirement Village and had a lovely morning interacting with residents, quite a few of whom had very horse related backgrounds and enjoyed the visit immensely. We also met with some of the members of the Village's Aquatic Club who are one of our regular donors. The manager of the Village, Todd Jenkins gave us a great welcome and said that the visit tied into the commitment by the Village to the Eden Principle which is all about enriching the lives of older people. As a follow-up, a group from the Village has booked a visit to come and see us in Term 3.

Wish List

- Sponsor for our Horse of the Term/Year Program
- Sponsor for our Rider of the Term/Year Program
- 25 pairs of Riding Boots in assorted sizes
- Clothes Dryer
- An Equine First Aid Kit
- A set of Lyndon Harrows
- An extra high moveable mounting block
- Rubber Matting for our Stable area
- A Longden Grip - this is a bar attached to the front of the saddle and used to support riders while riding

Thank you



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Zariba is a Tauranga based property investment & development company with a long history of supporting Tauranga RDA.

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ZARIBA'S CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT HAS TAKEN ON AN EQUESTRIAN TWIST...

As part of our developer role at Terrace Views (in Papamoa), we were recently called upon to submit possible street names to Council.

While undertaking this research, we were intrigued to note that both the short term and longer history linked back to stables and horses in the area. We even found a newspaper article from 1906 which spoke of racehorses coming into the region for training purposes.

For those not familiar with Terrace Views and the lifestyle on offer, you can visit www.terraceviews.co.nz. Stage One of the subdivision has already sold out, and we expect building to be underway just before Christmas. Stage Two is nearly sold out, and Stage Three will come up for sale soon.