

🌞 Rider Story: Meet Blayde 🌞

For nearly two years, Blayde has been part of the Tauranga RDA community, and his journey has been nothing short of inspiring.

When Blayde first started riding, he spent a lot of time lying down on his horse, and his body had very little strength — “*like a noodle*,” his family says. Isaac, one of our gentle and steady horses, was the perfect partner for those early days, helping Blayde feel safe, supported, and calm.

As Blayde grew stronger, Bridgee came along — a horse who helped him learn to sit upright, building the core strength and balance he needed. Now, Blayde is riding Rein, a slightly faster horse, and he is *more than ready for the challenge*. He sits upright for his entire session, confidently and without complaint. His family say his posture, balance, and pride in himself have grown more than they ever imagined possible.

One of the best parts of Blayde’s journey has been the people.

It’s impossible for him to choose a *single* favourite volunteer — because, in his words, “*we love them all!*” He first rode with the Wednesday crew and built amazing connections there. After a term or two riding on Tuesdays, he has recently returned to Wednesdays, and the excitement of being reunited with his original team was *heart-warming* for everyone involved.

Blayde’s family say the impact of Tauranga RDA has been *life-changing*:

“He could barely hold his head up when we started. Now he sits tall and proud. He’s built strength, balance, confidence – and relationships with both the horses and the RDA team. We tell our friends and family that RDA is the most amazing experience we have ever had. We are so grateful for the opportunity you give to every rider who walks through the door.”

Their message to the RDA team?

“Keep up the amazing work. The hard work, commitment, and care you put into the horses and riders is changing lives — including ours.”

