

## **RIDER STORIES FROM SPORT & REC PROGRAMME AS TOLD BY COACH, CLAUDIA CAMERON**

### **Nicholas Talbot – 14 years**

Nick began riding at RDA in 2007; he started on the Therapy programme and progressed to Sport and Rec in 2014. In the 9 years Nick has been attending RDA he has progressed beyond recognition. When he first started he would not even mount his horse, but now he is able to control Santa and mostly rise to the trot. Nick is diagnosed with Autism, and we have mainly been working on communication and independent control of his horse. His riding skills have progressed, but he struggles with the grooming aspect of the course as he is allergic to horses. Nick can become frustrated if Santa is having a stubborn day but learning to work through this is equally as beneficial as when it all goes right.

### **Chloe Moore – 14 years**

Chloe began riding at RDA in 2011; she started on the Therapy programme and progressed to Sport and Rec in 2014. Chloe absolutely loves horses and we soon realised she needed more of a challenge than the educational games she was completing in the Therapy program. Chloe is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (spastic diplegia) so the initial challenge of moving on to Sport and Rec was whether Chloe would become too fatigued during the grooming aspect. We have worked through this with a combination of programme adjustment and Chloe's unwavering determination to complete a challenge! She has really bonded with her horse Honey, who can feel what Chloe is asking her to do without having to use so much leg muscle strength. Chloe absolutely loves trotting and jumping – her term goal was to rise to the trot off the lead rein for 1 x 20m circle, which she has achieved.

### **Caleb Evans – 10 years**

Caleb began riding at RDA in 2013; he started on the Therapy programme and progressed to Sport and Rec in 2014. Caleb's increased confidence and emotional control have been his biggest achievements since joining RDA. He has even become comfortable enough to participate successfully in our Holiday Programme. He has the most caring, beautiful attitude towards his horse, Bessie, and together they are a real speedy team! When he first started the Sport and Rec programme his main challenge was working through 'meltdowns' but as he started to gain confidence and achieve a 'can-do' attitude these 'meltdowns' have become fewer and fewer. Now at RDA he is kind, thoughtful and adaptable, he just loves his weekly riding lessons. Caleb was originally diagnosed with ADHD and ODD however his diagnosis has recently been changed to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

### **Rachel Loader – 9 years**

Rachel began riding at RDA in 2009; she started on the Therapy programme and progressed to Sport and Rec in 2014. Rachel has really got stuck in to the Sport and Rec programme and has worked hard to improve – even taking reins home to practice holding and shortening them. Rachel is diagnosed with

developmental delay, so for her the challenge has been putting everything she has learned together (position, steering, shortening reins, rising etc etc) to be able to ride independently – at a trot – over jumps! Rachel has an amazing 'can-do' attitude and she will keep on trying until she's got it 'sussed'.

#### **Kobie Ballam – 14 years**

Kobie began riding at RDA in 2012; he started on the Therapy programme and progressed to Sport and Rec in 2014. In the 2 years I have been coaching Kobie he has progressed fantastically. The first day I taught Kobie he did not want to get on but now he is grooming and riding independently and even volunteering on a Wednesday doing farm jobs. Kobie finds riding helps him physically (he is diagnosed with muscular atrophy and kyphosis) but we have also been working on strategies to help him work through the times when the pressure becomes too much and he has 'meltdowns'. Volunteering and his increased independence when riding at RDA have also given him responsibilities and a place as part of a team which meets his needs and his commitment and maturity.