

RIDE HIGH Newsletter

Autumn 2017



RIDE HIGH

We're moving onwards and upwards...



I set up Ride High nearly nine years ago and in that time we've changed the lives of approaching 1000 disadvantaged children.

This is such a tremendous achievement and our recent expansion means that we will be here to change the lives of many more disadvantaged children in the future. Please read more about our exciting new venture and new home **The Ride High Equestrian Centre** on page 3.

As always, our success is only possible because of the kindness and generosity of our supporters.

If you'd like to get involved in our new expansion project or would like to support us through fundraising, volunteering or by attending one of our events we'd love to hear from you.

Yours,

Rachel Medill MBE
Ride High Founder and CEO

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from just £2 a month

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EVERY MONTH

Visit www.ridehigh.org
and sign up today!

Finding a positive path

STAR!

Oliver was 14 years old when he was referred to Ride High. He'd just been placed in care and had stopped attending school. He suffered with depression, struggled with relationships and rejected attempts of help. Instead he chose to spend time with people who appeared negative and potentially dangerous and he became increasingly vulnerable.

During his fifteen months with us Oliver had over 10 placements in foster care and care homes. At Ride High, Oliver's behaviour was extremely challenging, but it was Ride High that provided the stability and security that he needed. Over time Oliver's behaviour became more manageable and in many ways more positive.

Gradually Oliver learnt to accept positive feedback and supportive intervention, things which he'd rejected angrily to begin with. He began to talk more calmly and honestly with staff and came to rely on Ride High as the only positive constant in his life. With our support he worked on developing his self-control and self-esteem.

In Oliver's final 1:1 before leaving Ride High he spoke of the positive things in life; his new found love of horses, his hope for the future and his intention to study. He said "**I hardly recognise myself. I don't know where I would be without Ride High**". Just four weeks ago Oliver contacted us to say that he'll be starting college in September.



MK Mayor backs Ride High

Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor David Hopkins has selected Ride High as his Charity of the Year.

The Mayor said "It is a privilege to dedicate my time and fundraising efforts to support Ride High. The charity plays such an important role within the Milton Keynes community; supporting our most vulnerable children in a unique and engaging way that really does change their lives. I firmly encourage the Milton Keynes community to get behind this special charity".



"I love being with the horses and at Ride High I don't have to think or worry about anything else".
Ride High leaver, aged 11.

From loneliness to laughter



Josh was a young carer for his mum. Her illness scared him. He became afraid of leaving the house but staying at home was equally as frightening. Josh suffered from anxiety and angry outbursts, he panicked under pressure and his difficulties with encopresis meant that he missed a lot of school.

Josh joined Ride High when he was 12 years old. At first he was quite reluctant to participate and got angry when faced with a challenge. The horses made him nervous. However, he quickly gained confidence around them and started to identify with the horses that were less popular with the other children; they became very important to him.

Within the first month or so, Josh built trust and a bond with a member of staff and thereafter his negativity reduced and he began to make friends with other children in the group. Instead of getting angry, Josh met challenges with laughter and when he became anxious he wanted to talk about it rather than bottle it up inside.

During his 18 months at Ride High Josh turned into a confident and perceptive young man who understood his anxieties and their impact on his behaviour.



Ride High residential



In August we took eight of our members on the annual Ride High Residential to the Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy in the New Forest.

Everyone enjoyed three days of action packed fun where the children developed their riding skills, spent time caring for the horses, worked

together in the evening to prepare their meals and participated in games and activities. Several friendships were made.

Attending the residential represented a huge challenge for our children. For some it was their first time away from home, for other members new activities such as vaulting made them feel very anxious. However, with support and encouragement from Ride High staff, the children grew in confidence by the day and achieved things they'd never thought possible... including vaulting on a moving horse!

[Check out our video on Facebook!](#)

Trips and visits

Day trips this summer have included VIP tours at Cineworld Milton Keynes, a backstage tour of Marshall Amplification in Bletchley, a day at the races with a visit to the British School of Racing in Newmarket, and a day at Gaddesden Estate visiting their ponies.



School's out for Summer!

The summer holiday can seem very long for our members who often don't have any activities to look forward to. Ride High therefore organises trips and visits and a residential holiday to provide support for some of our most disadvantaged children. For our older children we organise work experience placements.



Summer specials

For the very first time this summer we have been able to welcome many more children to Ride High for short term visits and one-off experiences.

Disadvantaged children who are supported by organisations such as Young Carers Milton Keynes, MK Act and Children and Family Practices Milton Keynes have had the opportunity to ride horses and take part in fun and educational activities in our clubroom. Thank you to Milton Keynes Community Foundation for funding this project which has allowed us to support many more disadvantaged children in MK.



Work experience

Four of our older members were lucky enough to have the opportunity to carry out work experience this summer. Their week-long placements provided many benefits, including developing their communication skills, confidence and helping them to think about what they may like to do in the future.

"It was the first time I'd done work experience so I was nervous but the team were really kind and I learnt such a lot. Not just through the tasks I was given... but also about what it's like to work in an office and how it's different from school".

Thank you to RSM UK, Sysmex UK, Fossil UK and Adam for providing such valuable experiences for our children.





Onwards and upwards



Ride High is very excited to announce that we have just taken possession of a riding school in Milton Keynes that will become our new home and enable us to continue to change the lives of many more disadvantaged children in the future.

The Ride High Equestrian Centre (formally Loughton Manor Equestrian Centre) set on a beautiful 37 acre site, right in the heart of Milton Keynes, will be the permanent home for the charity but will also be a riding school open to the public offering riding lessons, liveries, pony parties and hacking. All the profits from the riding school will support the charitable work of Ride High.

The new site will allow us to increase the number of children we work with, to offer our children the opportunity for work experience, apprenticeships and employment and help to ensure that Ride High will be here to support many more children in the future.

The Ride High Equestrian Centre will be the first public riding school in the UK which exists to change the lives of disadvantaged children so everyone who rides will be helping to change a child's life.



2008

Ride High was established in 2008 by Rachel Medill MBE

6

We started with just 6 children in a portacabin

1000

Ride High has now helped to transform the lives of nearly 1000 children

90

With a waiting list of over 90 children it's now time to expand

For more information about The Ride High Equestrian Centre visit www.ridehighquestriancentre.co.uk.



Join the Ride High Runners for the MK Marathon!

Run for Ride High in Milton Keynes' very own Marathon, Half-Marathon or Half-Marathon Relay on Monday 7th May 2018. Ride High is proud to be a charity sponsor of the event.

If you're looking for a challenge then join our growing team of Ride High Runners and help us to reach our fundraising target of £8,000 to sponsor two children to come to Ride High for a year.

We'll support you with your fundraising and will be there to cheer you along on the day. You will also receive a personalised Ride High running vest.

The runs are consistently ranked in the Top 10 Marathon's and Half-Marathon's in the UK! They take in the natural beauty of Milton Keynes; the lakes, parks and cycle paths and end with a superb finish at Stadium MK.

Registration is already open and more information can be found at www.mkmarathon.com.

If you are interested in running for Ride High please contact Helen Dixon at helendixon@ridehigh.org or on 07743647511.

Volunteer Spotlight

Rosemary Grout

Having been with us for more than four years, Rosemary is one of our longest standing volunteers.

"I have ridden and owned ponies for most of my life. I decided to volunteer at Ride High because I wanted to help others enjoy the fun I have had. My highlight so far came last year when I heard Ride High being interviewed on Three Counties Radio. I recognised the voice of one of the children who I had worked with since he first started with us. He was a very shy boy and terrified of the ponies to start with, but to hear the confidence with which he spoke to the radio presenter made me realise how far he had come, and I felt very proud that I had been a part of this.

Ride High has definitely helped me to become more confident with children and young people and gain some insight into the problems they may have.

If you think you would like to help disadvantaged children then I would thoroughly recommend it. You will meet some lovely people and have a lot of fun".



Dine High

Thank you to everyone that hosted a Dine High event this summer. So far, your efforts have raised nearly

£7,000 with some events still to take place! Thank you for sending us your photos – we're pleased to see that everyone enjoyed taking part!



Dates for your Diary Festive Fashion Evening – Thursday 30th November, at 7:30PM

Calling all ladies! Bring your friends and family along to our Festive Fashion Evening at Chicheley Hall. Fizz, fashion and fun guaranteed!

Ride High Ball – Saturday 27th January 2018

Join us for our biggest night of the year. Details on how to book your tickets will be available soon.



Meghan's story

Meghan, aged 10, had the enormous responsibility of caring for her disabled younger sibling and lived with her extended family while her father tried to overcome an alcohol addiction. She struggled with friendships at school and relationships in the family.

Meghan arrived at Ride High very withdrawn and found it difficult to make connections with other children and adults. As her confidence grew around the horses, she found it easier to accept challenges in other parts of life. She learnt to trust the staff and saw that she could do things she'd believed were beyond her.

Over time Meghan became a confident member of her group. She made good friends and enjoyed talking to visitors about Ride High and helping new members settle into the group. She enjoyed time in the clubroom and developed a sense of pride in her achievements. Meghan made the most of every opportunity offered to her at Ride High and chose to join trips away that meant she socialised with other members she didn't know.

After 13 months at Ride High Meghan left with much greater confidence and a sense of happiness.

"I love spending time with the horses. I have learnt so much and I'm so happy with myself".



It costs just £4,000 to change a life forever - please help us change more lives like Meghan's.

DONATE TODAY: www.ridehigh.org/makeadonation

Alternatively, you can send a cheque made payable to Ride High Ltd to:
The Dove House, The Avenue, Aspley Guise, Beds, MK17 8HH

Thank you for your support

A BIG thank you to all our supporters:

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