

# RIDE HIGH Newsletter

Spring 2017



**RIDE HIGH**

Welcome to Ride High's first newsletter of 2017.

Wow!  
What a fantastic start to the year!



As you read through I hope you'll agree that together we continue to make a significant impact on the lives of disadvantaged children in Milton Keynes. The heartfelt stories and feedback from Ride High leavers illustrate how their time with us really does transform their lives. **Our aim this year is to support 220 children.** There are a variety of ways you can get involved to help us, including volunteering with the children or hosting an event during Dine High week in June. If you have your own fundraising ideas we'd be happy to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rachel Medill MBE  
Ride High Founder and CEO

**Play the Ride High Lottery from just £2 a month.**

Three cash prizes guaranteed every month and from May there will be a 4th "bonus prize" up for grabs!

**Visit the website to sign-up today**

## Silver Screen success



Ride High rolled out the red carpet in January, welcoming over 290 guests to the Ride High Silver Screen Ball at Jury's Inn Milton Keynes. Special guest and patron of the charity, Jeremy Vine, headlined the evening which raised enough money for us to transform the lives of 28 children through Ride High for the next year... and when we say transform this is what we mean...

At the Ball two Ride High graduates, Emma Wright and Carrie White, found the confidence to stand on stage and tell their own personal stories about how the charity changed their lives.

Emma was referred to Ride High after being severely bullied. It completely destroyed her self-confidence and she became very depressed and anxious. **"Ride High changed my life. Without it, I wouldn't have had the courage to leave my house. It helped me to manage my anxiety and to trust again. Ride High has given me the confidence to do things I never imagined possible".**

From the age of 8 Carrie carried the secret burden of an abusive home life. She joined Ride High at 14 and eventually found the strength to confess what had happened to her. **"Ride High was my lifeline and without it I wouldn't have the job, home and positive future that I do today".**



We would like to thank everyone involved in making the event such a huge success and helping to transform the lives of so many children. A special thanks goes to our wonderful volunteers and sponsors RSM UK and Sysmex UK.

The 2018 ball will take place on **Saturday 27th January 2018**



**Watch the new Ride High film:** Hear about Ride High from our children's perspective; the children tell us how Ride High helps them to overcome their challenges and fears.

## To dream the impossible dream

Daniel aged 14 is living in care. Having previously suffered with post-traumatic stress disorder he came to Ride High with very low self-esteem. He barely spoke a word and didn't engage with the other children or join in with activities.

After a couple of months at Ride High and a change in carer, Daniel started to open up and to share things from his past and present. During a review session he placed himself low down the scale for 'hopes and dreams' as he'd been told that he couldn't work with zoo animals because he wouldn't get a full suite of A\* GCSE's. In response Ride High arranged a visit to the zoo, to meet keepers to talk about their careers. They spoke to Daniel and the other children about their school experiences and the training they undertook to become a Zoo Keeper. It became clear that following in their footsteps wasn't out of reach after all.

In the minibus home Daniel said "I'm so glad I got to come to Ride High because without it I'd never have had an experience like this". The visit filled Daniel with hope and confidence that he does in fact have the ability to not just dream but to achieve his dreams.



## Horsing around

During February half-term our children enjoyed some fun and educational trips out including a visit to the National Horseracing Museum and the British School of Racing in Newmarket.

We were also very lucky to receive a visit from Para Olympic Dressage Rider Amanda Shirtcliffe. Amanda told us how, against all odds, she is following her dream and training hard to compete in Tokyo 2020. Amanda was a great inspiration for the children telling them "Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do something. Anything is achievable with hard work. Just do it!"



Amanda Shirtcliffe (centre) with Ride High children and staff.

## Charitable Challenges

Meet four wonderful people who are embarking on an exciting personal challenge for Ride High.



Claire Davey, Rachel Small and Rebecca Wood are training hard for the Paris and London Marathons in April, and Brad West is getting on his bike to cycle RideLondon London-Surrey 100 miles in July. If you would like to sponsor them please visit [www.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com) and enter their name. In May the Milton Keynes Region Santander Runners are running the MK Half Marathon and a team of 20 employees from LifeSearch Milton Keynes is taking part in Tough Mudder.

Good luck to you all!

## Do something amazing and take on a challenge for Ride High

Achieve an incredible personal or team goal and support Ride High at the same time. Whether you walk, run, cycle, skydive, swim or sail you can do something amazing this year and help us to change the lives of more disadvantaged children in Milton Keynes.

If you would like to do something amazing this year and take on a challenge for Ride High please contact us at: [fundraising@ridehigh.org](mailto:fundraising@ridehigh.org).

## Volunteer spotlight



### Sean Phillips

Sean first heard about Ride High when we visited his workplace nearly two years ago – he's been volunteering with us ever since!



"I help out every Tuesday evening with the Bullseye group. I enjoy helping out with clubroom activities the most; games, arts and crafts and team building exercises all help to increase the children's confidence. I've also had the pleasure of accompanying children on day trips including Badminton Horse Trials and Newsells Stud Farm.

The absolute best part of volunteering every week is that I get to witness and be part of the transformation the children make in their time at Ride High. To know I am helping vulnerable and disadvantaged children in my local community is extremely rewarding.

My involvement with Ride High has given me a whole new perspective on life and I always look forward to coming to the centre every week to see the children."

Visit our website to learn more about volunteering. If you would like to invite Ride High to talk about volunteering opportunities to colleagues in your workplace, please email [helendixon@ridehigh.org](mailto:helendixon@ridehigh.org).

## Come 'Dine High' with me

Dine High is back. Gather your friends, family and colleagues together for good food and good fun and raise money for Ride High at the same time. Breakfast, brunch, afternoon tea or lunch - it's entirely up to you. Whatever you choose just ask your guests to show their appreciation by making a donation to Ride High.

### Recipe for Dine High

- 1 Request a fundraising pack
- 2 Select a dining experience
- 3 Select a location
- 4 Pick a date during Dine High weekend
- 5 Invite your guests
- 6 Serve the food
- 7 Sprinkle on some fun
- 8 Raise some 'doughnations'



For more information and to request your fundraising pack please visit our website.



Thursday 29th June to Sunday 2nd July



## Onwards and upwards

When our members have made significant progress and we feel they are ready, they leave Ride High so we can help more children. Here's some very encouraging feedback from two of our most recent leavers, both of whom we are very proud.



"Thank you to everyone at Ride High for changing my life and giving me the opportunity to see life in a different way. I came to Ride High feeling very sad, depressed and hopeless. I am very glad and proud to say I am leaving with confidence, happiness and hope for the future".

"Ride High has really helped my confidence grow and given me something to look forward to during my darkest moments. Keep doing what you're doing as it's amazing and helped me learn how to make friends".



Visit the new Ride High Blog at:  
[www.ridehigh.org](http://www.ridehigh.org)

# Charity of the Year

As Milton Keynes celebrates its 50th birthday we couldn't be more proud to be a Milton Keynes charity. We receive tremendous support from its businesses and people, and it is because of their support that we are able to make such a significant impact in the community.

We are delighted to have been chosen as Charity of the Year 2017 by organisations Cawleys, GMS Group, Newton Longville Community Association and The Butterfly Factory. We look forward to working with them all this year and beyond and invite other businesses and interest groups to join us to help make a difference to the lives of disadvantaged children in Milton Keynes.



## Adam's story

Adam suffered with severe anxiety, a heightened sense of risk and fear of all sorts of things. He found it extremely hard to be away from his family because he imagined something awful would happen to them while apart.

Coming to Ride High was exactly the challenge Adam needed. It provided a safe and secure place for Adam to be away from mum and have new experiences. One of Adam's biggest milestones was his participation in a residential trip. While away Adam fell off his pony and was distraught – falling was one of his biggest fears. Later, once he'd calmed down and even managed to get back on the pony, Adam said that he was glad he'd fallen off because it taught him that his fears were unfounded.



In September last year Adam moved to secondary school; an event we'd been helping to prepare him for. The move brought about new stresses, but knowing he'd be returning to Ride High towards the end of each week helped him to cope. Two years on Adam leaves Ride High a more resilient and happier child, equipped with strategies to deal with his anxieties and the confidence to fully participate and enjoy life.

**"We will be forever grateful to you for providing a place of sanctuary for Adam (and sanity for myself). Thank you for everything you have done, for all the confidence you have given him; it means so much to us all."**

**Adam's mum.**

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

**DONATE TODAY: [www.ridehigh.org/makeadonation](http://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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