



SPRING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our Spring newsletter. Whilst we see blossom on the trees and spring flowers in the gardens, we are yet to see much of the spring sunshine! However, the mood at Ride High is optimistic as we are expecting 2024 to be as busy as ever. We have many exciting plans for the year ahead, including the development of more clubroom activities to engage the hardest to reach children. For us to deliver this vital service to children of Milton Keynes and surrounding areas, we rely on grants, and the fundraising activities of our supporters. We anticipate this year will continue to be challenging for fundraising, so whether its hopping on your bike and joining our cycle challenge, organising your own fundraising event or nominating us as 'Charity of the Year' at your place of work, your actions are pivotal in enabling us to continue transforming the lives of the most vulnerable children.

This latest newsletter will highlight just a few of our recent success stories which, without your help, would not be possible. Thank you for taking a moment to read our newsletter and please continue to support us in whatever way you can.

With best wishes,

Olivia Sugdon
CEO, Ride High

What's been happening at Ride High?

Foaling around....

We would like to introduce the newest members to the Ride High Equestrian team... Loki (top) and Te Fiti (below)! Euphoria and Moana are doing well and have taken to the role of 'mum' perfectly. Both foals are proving to be bundles of energy and have already become firm favourites for many of us here at Ride High. Keep and eye out for them when visiting us.



Growing in confidence



This year we started our first ever non-ridden programme for children referred to us by Young Carers. They started the 12-week programme in January and their sessions have covered all aspects of groundwork, enabling the development of a range of skills. From mucking out to exercising the horses, the group have thrown themselves into the

programme with full enthusiasm. We sat down with two members of the group, Mitchell and Hera, to talk about their experience so far. Despite both being full of energy and chatting away, Hera and Mitchell shared that they often feel anxious in social situations. Hera said, "When I first started Ride High, I was really nervous because it was people I didn't know, but now I look forward to coming because I have my friends here." Mitchell continued "The first few weeks I was insanely nervous, but now I feel a bit more like myself... At the start when they would ask for a volunteer, I wouldn't do anything, but now I am always the first to volunteer."

When asked to describe Ride High in their words Hera replied, "I would describe Ride High as a very comforting space. Everyone is really nice here and it definitely helps you come out of your shell... Ride High is eye-opening. Now I have more of an insight of what to do and what it's like working with animals." Mitchell followed up with "I would say Ride High is enabling. You learn to be confident. I can do these things even though I didn't think I could!" We hope they enjoy the rest of their time at Ride High and continue to grow in confidence over the coming weeks.

Diamonds are Forever fundraising ball

On 27th January we hosted our annual fundraising ball at Leonardo Hotel in Milton Keynes with the 220 guests enjoying an evening of glitz and glamour. MKFM's Trevor Marshall was compare for the evening and live performances from the Bond tribute act and band 'XO' made it a night to remember. We would like to thank everyone who supported the event, including those who donated items to the raffle and auctions, our volunteers for giving up their Saturday night and to our long-standing supporter Sysmex for sponsoring the event.



Ride High was delighted that the evening raised just over £65,000.

Save the date for next year:
Saturday 25th January 2025!

Shining bright



The highlight of the evening for many people was hearing the powerful speech from Andy, one of Ride High's members.

Like many teenagers, Andy's mental health began to decline during COVID, meaning 2 years later when it was time to take her GCSEs she really struggled. Her school attendance rate was low at 27% and despite seeing therapists, Andy still battled with her mental health and at 15 years old made a second attempt at taking her own life. After being referred to Ride High by CAHMS, and spending 5 months on the waiting list, she secured a place on a 12-week programme. From the moment Andy stepped onto the yard she fell in love with Smartie, one of our ponies. Whispering in his ear and sharing her problems with him made everything feel better. Over the 12 weeks, spending time with the team, riding Smartie, and bonding with other group members, Andy could see the brighter side of life and her sessions at Ride High gave her something to look forward to. Andy grew into a confident, vibrant member of the group; a contrast to the Andy who started the programme.



Since leaving Ride High Andy has continued to grow. She is now studying at equine college and is looking forward to all the opportunities the future holds. Andy regularly volunteers at Ride High, spending time looking after the horses, alongside helping children who are now on the same programme she previously completed herself. Andy's bravery to share her story to a room of 220 people, moved many to tears and resulted in a well-deserved standing ovation. Her strength and determination to make a change is admirable and an inspiration to young people. We look forward to continuing to see Andy flourish and following her passion of working with horses.

MK Inspiration Awards

We are pleased to announce that Andy has been shortlisted for the 'Inspirational Young Person' category at the Milton Keynes Inspiration Awards. To be shortlisted from over 3600 entries is a tremendous achievement, we are extremely proud of Andy and wish her the best of luck on the night! We have also been shortlisted for 'Outstanding Local Charity' so thank you to everyone who nominated us. The charity with the most votes wins the accolade. Please share and encourage as many as possible to vote. Please click below to place your vote.

[Vote here](#)

Current Appeals

Make a Wheel of Difference with Kind 2 Mind 2024

This May we will be taking part in The Big Give's fundraising event 'Kind 2 Mind'. The match-funded campaign focuses on supporting charities that work towards improving mental health. The campaign will start on 14th May, for 7 days, and we will be looking to raise £5000 to kick off the fundraising campaign to purchase a new people carrier. We need to raise £2,500 through online private or company donations to unlock our match funding.

We transport over 80 children to and from Ride High every week on our free minibus service – ensuring those disadvantaged by low income or travel barriers have equal access to our programmes. Each year we cover over 15,000 miles transporting children to and from the site. Our current people carrier has started to break down and is requiring increasingly regular, expensive repairs. The cost of this vital resource for a new electric people carrier is £38,000. Can you help us meet our target?

Help us raise the roof!

This winter's storms have caused further damage to the two-story barn at the heart of our site.

Daylight can be seen through the rafters and rainwater is leaking into the building. A new roof is now urgently needed to protect our facilities and enable us to continue to safely accommodate children, staff, and volunteers.

To date we have raised £45,000 through grant pledges - but we need to find another £27,000 before this time-critical work can commence. Any support you might feel you can give towards this project will make a huge difference to young lives.



I would like to
donate

Any donations big or small would
be greatly appreciated

We have an announcement....



PRAGMATIQ

Charity of the Year 2024!



We are thrilled to announce that Milton Keynes based company Pragmatiq have chosen Ride High as their 'Charity of the Year'! Stuart Goldwater, Managing Director, Pragmatiq said: "We have been familiar with Ride High for some time, and we are thrilled to be able to support the brilliant work they are doing in our local community. At Pragmatiq, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not just a checkbox, it's a fundamental part of our culture and our partnership with Ride High demonstrates our determination to make a positive impact."

Pragmatiq's enthusiasm to support us with fundraising ideas, volunteering opportunities and raising awareness of what we do make the year ahead look like an exciting partnership.

If your company is looking for a Charity of the Year, or ways to engage your team, please get in contact.

[Contact us here](#)

Loughton love



Loughton Manor First School has been bringing groups of children to Ride High for several years. Lucy Lock, Assistant Head for Inclusion and Key Stage One, kindly shared her experience and the effect Ride High has had on their pupils.

“An example of the impact that attending Ride High can have on children is that one particular child really struggles in school to pay attention to their learning, finds friendships challenging and finds generally listening to instructions tricky. Attending Ride High really supported them in understanding that they *can* attend to something; whether it is mucking out, stroking the horses, listening to others or just being in their presence and feeling the calming properties the horses have. This really supported the child's mental health and wellbeing in understanding they *can* learn and enjoy learning. The ongoing benefits to, not only them, but those around them are tenfold.

Each and every child chosen to attend Ride High is so eager and keen to take part. The build up throughout the week is palpable! "Is it Ride High today?" "Are we getting on the minibus?" Children are so keen to get to the day they go to Ride High that it can always be used as an incentive!”

Whittlebury Park is Riding High

We would like to say “Thank You” to members at Whittlebury Park Golf Club for raising £2,450 for Ride High. The club chose us as their charity in 2023 and collected money from various events and initiatives throughout the year. Club President Peter Coles, his wife Chris and Committee



member Sue Colby, recently visited us to present a cheque.

Peter said “We are thoroughly thrilled to be able to hand over our cheque to such a deserving cause. Seeing what Ride High offers such a wide variety of young adults and children and knowing the difference it makes to their lives is inspiring and I know our members will be delighted to see the results of their efforts.” The money raised by the club will be able to fund a place for a child at Ride High for six months, which will be life changing. Thank you for your generosity and for choosing Ride High!

Challenge yourself for charity!

Ride High Cycle Challenge

Our sponsored Cycle Challenge is back on Sunday 9th June for another year! Make 2024 the year to challenge yourself while also raising vital funds to help support vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the local community.



This is a supportive, team event for cyclists of all abilities, who want to achieve something amazing. Enter as a team (up to 8 riders) or join one of our guided groups led by an experienced cyclist.

We have 25-, 50- and 100-mile road routes taking you through stunning villages and countryside in Buckinghamshire. The routes will start and end at Ride High with pitstops and roaming support throughout the ride. Once crossing the finish line celebrate your success with a BBQ for yourself and supporters and receive a medal hand-decorated by the Ride High children.

If you are unable to join on the day you are welcome to take part virtually. Hop on your bike and complete your miles at home or from the gym.

If you would like to join us click below!

[Sign up here](#)

Date for your Diary

Charity Golf Day



To reserve a space or find out more please contact us.

[Sign up here](#)

Wednesday 25th September 2024

Our annual fundraising Charity Golf Day returns at the prestigious Woburn Golf Club on the Marquess Course. The team entry cost is £1,350 (4 participants) and includes breakfast, three course dinner and entertainment.

"Can I please say how much we appreciated your efforts on putting on this excellent event. You guys were a pleasure to be around and a real credit to an incredible organisation. Everything was organised impeccably right down to the weather! I am sure we will be back next year to enjoy one of the best golf courses in the country" – Event participant 2023

Visit Climb Quest and support Ride High

Ride High continues to partner with Climb Quest Milton Keynes. Book a climbing session online at www.climbquest.co.uk using our unique charity code and you will receive 10% off your climb*. The code is **MKRIDEHIGH2**



Over the 2023-24 school year, Climb Quest is also donating climbing sessions to Ride High, to give the children we support an incredible confidence building experience.

*Offer excludes birthday parties, exclusive group bookings, vouchers and after-school clubs. Code valid for a limited time and cannot be used with any other offer.

Follow Us:



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Ride High

Ride High Equestrian Centre, Redland Drive,
MK5 8EJ Milton Keynes

Mail: marketing@ridehigh.org

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