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www.littlebits.ca

November 2017



From Old to New

It was a long time in the making, but a new riding facility has opened right in the heart of the city of Edmonton for everyone to enjoy. Whitemud was a well-used building that had stood in the same spot for many, many years and had allowed a lot of riders to get their first start at horseback riding. There are so many great memories that were made in the old arena at Whitemud but the barn and arena were far past their due date. With no insulation, the tin roof could be loud and leaky during storms and the ATCO offices left a lot to be desired.

Little Bits has operated a program out of the facility since 1975. As the years went on, our program grew from 30 original riders to the current 115 riders during each session, but we were unable to meet the demand to increase our numbers. The new climate-controlled facility allows our riders to comfortably ride in all seasons, so we can now offer a winter session with 25 new riders from the waiting list.

The well-lit arena, our new tack room and grooming stalls and the indoor plumbing make it a pleasure to work in such a wonderful facility. Spectators can watch in comfort from the seating area and the arena footing allows the volunteers and horses to walk on a solid but soft, dust-free footing. Workers are still reorganizing the grounds and reclaiming the land where the old arena once stood and bit by bit, it will all come together. We will certainly be enjoying our new facility for many years to come.



The old barn is gone!



A Tricky Move

Before the old arena was to be torn down, we needed to find someone capable of moving our large storage shed to its new place by the Keillor Cabins.

After many phone calls and internet searches, Jo-Anne found Brent from Trekken – Tilt Deck Services Ltd. Brent assured us that he could move the shed and he was true to his word.

In just over 2 hours, the shed was gently loaded, carried to its new local and settled back down with no damage occurring. We use the shed to store excess tack and supplies and it was a great relief to have it moved without incident. Many thanks to Brent for his efficient work!



Fall 2017 Orientation



2018 Winter Session

Orientation: Wednesday January 17, 2018

Mandatory for all NEW volunteers

We only hold one orientation, so please attend

Sign In from: 6:00 pm to 6:30 pm

Introduction Talk from: 6:30 pm to 6:45 pm

Sample Lesson: 6:50 pm to 7:15 pm

THEN Break Into Groups for more hands-on experience

Finished by: 9:00 pm

Wednesdays: January 24 to March 14

Wednesday afternoon classes start 4:00 pm, ending at 9:00 pm

Winter riding session is ONLY for those already on our waiting list.

No current riders will be accepted.

2018 Spring Session

Sundays: April 1 to June 17

Sunday all day classes

start 10:00 am, ending at 6:00 pm

(No riding on May 20 - May long weekend)

Tuesdays: April 3 to June 12

Tuesday morning classes

start 9:00 am, ending at 1:00 pm

Tuesday afternoon classes

start 4:00 pm, ending at 9:00 pm

Wednesdays: April 4 to June 13

Wednesday afternoon classes

start 3:00 pm, ending at 9:00 pm

2017 LBTRA Service Awards



Beth Hicks – 5 years



Pauline Busch – 5 years



Brian Bykowski – 5 years



Debra "Debbie" Patches – 5



Joy Clough – 5 years



Julia Mortensen – 5 years



Claire Sandercock – 5 years



Ivan Todosijczuk – 5 years



Leanne Wothington – 5 years

2017 LBTRA Service Awards (continued)



Mary Bennett – 5 years
Graciela "Chely" Zacarius – 5 years



Andrea Wiebe – 10 years



Elizabeth Mayfield – 10 years



Roy Fisher – 10 years



Stuart "Pumpkin" Dennis
15 years



Wesley "Wes" Treleven
15 years



Gwen Halabiski – 20 years



Linda Rault
30 years

Jo Anne Billington
30 years

Ros Schell
30 years

Higgins: The Gentleman's Horse

If you go back a few years, you might recall a beautiful Dutch Warmblood named Higgins. He was easy to spot in the field with his chestnut flaxen colour, high regal head carriage and ear tips that tried to touch. Higgins was used for Little Bits riders that were independent, but he was no easy ride; he would make each rider work for their lesson. After an injury that put Higgins into retirement, he was lost; he no longer had a schedule to keep. Because Higgins was low horse in the field, he was ready to move onto the next chapter in his life.



Higgins found a home with a wonderful couple that have made life more pleasant, the perfect retirement for such a noble horse. Here is an update on Higgins at his new home and how he is doing.

Higgins is such a pleasure to be around. He's a gentleman for the farrier and vet, calmly allows the other horses to boss him around, and always greets us with ears forward. He sees the vet every six months for dental work, but handles it like a champion. Despite having less than a full set of teeth, his favourite thing in the world is grazing! He spends as much time as he can be munching grass and loves dandelions. He gallops up (flying changes and all) for his dinner of beet pulp, soaked cubes and complete feed. Higgins also loves being groomed, especially neck and head scratches. He's truly a special guy!





This is the first year that LBTRA was invited to participate in the **Birdies for Kids** program. On Tuesday, November 14th, 2017, the Chair of our Board of Directors, Jodee Pearse, went to Canyon Meadows Golf Course in Calgary for the wind-up meeting. While there, she was presented with a cheque for **\$12,030.00** and the letter shown below.

Here is an excerpt from their website:

“Birdies for Kids is a non-profit program run under the Calgary Shaw Charity Classic Foundation. This program was introduced to the 2015 tournament and is a program designed to help raise funds for local charities, engage the community in the tournament, and provide matching funds for each charity involved. The program itself acts as a partnership builder between donors and charities, as all money will flow through the Calgary Shaw Charity Classic Foundation towards Alberta charities. All administrative costs and efforts for the program are covered by the Shaw Charity Classic tournament, meaning that charities have no costs associated with the program and 100% of all funds donated through the Foundation will go directly towards the charity selected. On top of your donation, the most exciting part of BFK is the matching pool. For your generous contribution, up to 50% will be matched and the funds will go directly to your chosen charity.”

November 6, 2017

Linda Rault
Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association
Box 29016 Pleasantview PO
Edmonton, AB T6H 5Z6

Re: Donation

Dear Linda Rault,

The Shaw Charity Classic aims to not only provide Calgary with a first-class professional sporting event accessible to families, but also to bring much need dollars to local children's charities.

We commend you for the commitment and work that Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association does to enhance the lives of children and youth in Alberta. We were happy to have you involved in the Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink program and hope you'll consider joining us again in 2018.

On behalf of the Patron Group, Shaw Communications, AltaLink, and the Shaw Charity Classic, please accept this donation of \$12,030 towards Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association. We hope that this donation will make an impact in your organization's ability to make a significant difference in the lives of children and youth in Alberta.

The total amount is broken down as follows:

Total Charity Solicited Donations: \$8,020
Matching funds: \$4,010

Thank you again for the outstanding work that Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association does in our community; it is an honor to support such an important initiative.

Sincerely,

Sean Van Kesteren
Executive Director



Patron Group

Clay Riddell
Allan Markin
Jim Riddell
Keith MacPhail
Guy Turcotte
Gary Peddle
Michael Culbert
Stephen Ames

Foundation Board of Directors

Clay Riddell
Jim Riddell
Brad Shaw
Jim Little

**On Tuesday, November 14th,
members of the Al Shamal Directors Staff
presented Little Bits with a cheque
in the amount of \$2500.00.**

**Ken Schmidt and Dave Whitfield
presented the cheque.
Neil and Ken White also attended
the presentation ceremony.**

**Many thanks to the
Al Shamal Shriners Directors Staff
for their continued support of Little Bits.**



Below is the speech they made prior to the cheque presentation:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. When people think of the Shriners, they quite often think of clowns, the funny hat we wear, men riding in little cars or on tiny motorbikes, or circuses. We don't deny that we have a lot of fun, but we have fun with a purpose. I would like to tell you about the serious side of the Shriners.

The concept of Shriners International was formed by a group of Masons in New York City in 1870 and the first official meeting of the first Shrine Centre was held on September 26, 1872. There are approximately 300,000 Shriners worldwide with nearly 200 Shrine Centres in North & South America, Europe, and Southeast Asia.

In June 1922, Shriners International opened the first Shriners Hospital for Children in Shreveport, Louisiana. We now operate 22 Hospitals for Children, including one in Mexico City and one in Montreal, Quebec. In August of 2015 we opened a brand new state of the art hospital in Montreal on the McGill University Campus. This replaced the original hospital there.

Shrine Hospitals provide specialized care for children requiring treatment for orthopedic needs, burn injuries, spinal cord injuries, musculoskeletal disorders and cleft lip and palate. Our hospitals also provide state of the art research facilities in all of these areas. All care provided at a Shrine Hospital is at no charge to the patient or family. In Canada this doesn't seem like a big deal but families in the United States could potentially be facing a cost of tens of thousands of dollars to treat a child. It currently costs us approximately 3 million dollars a day to operate our chain of hospitals. This is accomplished without any government funding or refunds for patient care from insurance companies.

Our mission is to:

- Provide the highest quality care to children with neuromusculoskeletal conditions, burn injuries, and other special healthcare needs with-in a compassionate, family centered and collaborative care environment.
- Provide for the education of physicians and other healthcare professionals.
- Conduct research to discover new knowledge that improves the quality of care and quality of life of children and families.

This mission is carried out without regard to race, color, creed, sex or sect, disability, national origin, or ability of patient or family to pay.

Our local Shrine Centre, Al Shamal, has approximately 700 members. Al Shamal has nearly 100 patients on our active roster attending Shrine Hospitals in Montreal, Quebec; Portland, Oregon; and Spokane, Washington. We also have patients that receive their treatments at local clinics and hospitals, including the Glenrose Hospital, under the direction of the specialists at one of the Shrine Hospitals.

In addition to financially supporting the Shrine Hospitals, Shriners support care for children in our local communities. Al Shamal Shriners have provided financial support to the Glenrose Hospital, The Stollery Children's Hospital, Kids with Cancer programs, Camp HeHoHa, Robin Hood Association, E4C School, The Rite to Learn Foundation that operates a specialized learning facility for children with dyslexia, and a number of other local causes. It is now our pleasure to assist Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Association by presenting this cheque for \$2500.00.

Gwen McDonald Halabisky – Horse Person!

by Heather Mercer

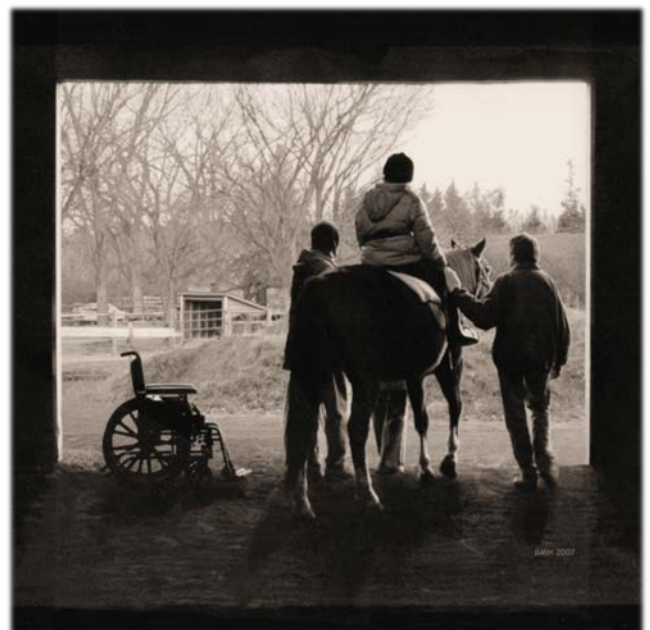


Gwen Halabisky is being honoured for her 20th anniversary (1997-2017) with Little Bits. Gwen has a PhD in Math Education; her dissertation was on the topic of “Teacher Development.” She taught mathematics and physical education in junior high school and Math Curriculum Instruction at the University of Alberta.

Gwen always has been and will be a perfect volunteer for Little Bits. She has a great heart, a kind and positive attitude, is very flexible, and is always ready to lend a hand with the riders, horses, and other volunteers. She always makes new volunteers feel welcome, taking them under her wing and showing them what is expected. She is a large part of the Tuesday morning classes. In addition to volunteering on Tuesday mornings, Gwen has also been available for other classes during the week. She also has helped Little Bits in other ways by selling programs at the Canadian Finals Rodeo and taking pictures of volunteers doing their jobs.

Gwen has told me that some of her fondest memories of Little Bits are having good feelings when helping others. Always wanting to be a horse person, Little Bits has given Gwen quality time with horses and helping people. Gwen always looks forward to the interactions with students, staff and the other volunteers.

Two of Gwen’s hobbies are woodworking and carpentry, and she will try to fix anything that is broken. She also loves spending time with her grandchildren. As everyone who works with her knows, she loves photography. Many of the horse pictures in the past were shot and edited by Gwen. I know she is very proud of the picture she took that is on the Little Bits T-shirts. Looking closely at the picture, you will find that it tells you the whole story of Little Bits. Many of the riders, volunteers and staff have a strong attachment to Gwen. She is a caring friend who believes in people and helps give them confidence in themselves. She takes pleasure when the students and volunteers engage with her. It is an honor to volunteer with Gwen, I am sure she will continue to volunteer for several more years, or until her body wears out!



Lynn Johnson

My name is Lynn Johnson. I was born in Edmonton and lived there until high school when I moved to Devon. After graduation I went on to get my Animal Health Tech at NAIT, and then moved to Barrhead to work at a veterinary clinic. After 2 years, I married and moved to Swan Hills where we raised 3 children. I worked as a Program Assistant for 16 years at Swan Hills School with students from kindergarten to grade 12. After living in Swan Hills for 36 years, my husband and I retired and moved to Edmonton where our 3 children reside. I enjoy reading, all sorts of crafts, and spending time walking, gardening and sometimes going for a run.



I have always had a love for horses and have previously owned five of my own. My sister, Molly Clark, had previously volunteered at Little Bits and asked me if I wanted to join her as a volunteer for the 2017 spring session. I checked out the program and the horses on their website and decided it was something I would love to do. I attended orientation night with her and was hooked. The idea of being able to spend time with horses again and to help riders develop their horsemanship skills was irresistible.

Since starting with Little Bits, I have refreshed and expanded my knowledge of horsemanship and met some amazing support staff, instructors, volunteers, riders and horses. The ear-to-ear grins on the riders' faces are the best reward.

Thank you to the staff of Little Bits and WELCA for giving me the opportunity to bring a smile to so many faces.

That's Krista with a "K"



My name is Krista; I've been a stay-at-home mom and Gramma for most of my life. I've always wanted to volunteer but never seemed to have the time. When I did finally have time for myself, I decided to find a place to volunteer. I love animals and I have many pets, so I knew I had to be with animals. My husband said I couldn't volunteer anywhere that I could bring animals home.

I have been riding since I was 6 years old but haven't owned any horses for a long time, so working with horses was the perfect choice -- I knew I couldn't take them home! I decided to look online for something that I could do and that's when I found Little Bits. In all honesty, I volunteered to be with the horses, but these riders are remarkable to be around and I fell in love with them. The horses soon became less important and the kids became everything; I truly felt blessed to be with them.

The other volunteers that I work with are all so genuine with hearts of gold. Then there are the people who run Little Bits: they are amazing and work so hard, making sure everything runs smoothly... plus they are wonderful people to be around. I enjoy every second that I'm here!

Something About Rachel

by Marielle Lam

Rachel has been volunteering with Little Bits for over 8 years and was encouraged by her mom. She loves every minute that she is at the barn. Rachel is hard working and very dedicated to doing everything she is asked, but please don't ask her to go out when it's muddy (it's just not her thing). She also enjoys getting a stall nice and tidy for a horse.

Rachel was a rider with Little Bits from 1990 until 1997 and rode such horses as Shadow Fax, Pax and Zorro in the riding program. The first person Rachel says she remembered meeting was Jo-Anne, who made her feel at home. Rachel's mom would also make the best cakes for the volunteers, and Rachel was very proud of her mom for making these cakes.

I asked Rachel who was one of her favorite horses and she said Patches (a black-and-white pony that was with our program a few years back) because he stepped on her foot once and won a spot in her heart. If you ask Rachel if she enjoys volunteering, her answer is "yes I do." Rachel's mom is now driving her down every Wednesday, so she does not have to walk down the driveway. She is wearing warmer jackets as the weather is getting colder. Some of the other volunteers will often give Rachel a lift down the driveway to catch her bus when heading home.

Rachel is a joy to have around on Wednesday's and we love having her here with us.

Thanks to Rachel from Little Bits!

