



Handi-Riders

December 1, 2011

Dear Friends,

Can a horse teach a 3-year old boy to talk?

The following story was shared with us by the mother of a 3 year old who has been diagnosed with mild autism. He is also visually impaired as well as speech delayed. We'll call him "Brandon".

"My son was only three years old and was not talking except for a few words. Our speech therapist recommended Handi-Riders. I thought Brandon would be too afraid of the horse and we would end up just going back home. When we arrived everyone was so helpful and understanding. The staff and volunteers were wonderful. They took Brandon by the hand and guided him to meet 'his horse' and helped him get on the horse. I couldn't believe my eyes. My son was allowing strangers to help him on a horse and he looked like he loved it! I had to hold back the tears as I was overwhelmed with emotion. In order for the horse to go he has to use his words and say 'walk-on'. Brandon learned to connect the power of his words. Shortly after starting Handi-Riders he spoke his first sentence while we were grooming one of the horses. Brandon is now 5 and a half years old. This last session we enrolled his brother Jacob, who is three years old and developmentally delayed, in the Handi-Riders therapeutic riding class. On Jacob's first day Brandon grabbed his brother's hand and took him around to everyone there and said 'I'd like to introduce you to my brother Jacob'. Now big brother is acting more like a big boy and showing his little brother the ropes."



Our program encourages physical, academic, social and emotional growth with emphasis on the rider's abilities. Brandon's is just one of many success stories we hear from families each year at Handi-Riders.

Handi-Riders provides therapeutic riding and hippotherapy for the purpose of contributing positive experiences and life enhancing changes to individuals with cognitive, physical, and emotional special needs, including youth 'at-risk' and veterans with disabilities. Thanks to donations from hundreds of individuals across northern California, we have improved the lives of thousands of riders from Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties

since our inception three decades ago.

It is during this season of year that Handi-Riders needs your help most of all. Thanksgiving through New Year's is a quieter time around Handi-Riders with riders off on holiday break. Life at the ranch switches from classes for riders to training for horses, as we prepare for Winter Session in January. Your gift will ensure continuation of our programs through all the seasons of the year, and for years to come.

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for a Happy New Year from All of Us at Handi-Riders!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Bernard

Suzanne Bernard
Executive Director

