



PONY EXPRESS

Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre

6920 Concession 1, Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0 • (519) 837-0558 • www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca

“Riding is Fun” by Ann Caine

Sunrise serves over 100 riders a week, aged 3 to adult. This includes an increasing number of preschoolers, as more families learn about the benefits of therapeutic riding while researching early intervention options. One of our youngest riders in the program was Bentley, who is now 4.5 years old, and continues to enjoy his weekly lesson at Sunrise.

Bentley was born three months prematurely in December 2011. He has a twin brother, Cooper. They weighed in at only one ounce apart (3 lbs 10 oz and 3 lbs 11 oz respectively). Once they were home, Melissa, their mother, started noticing that Bentley's legs were not as flexible as his brother's and his body didn't bend the same. At 8 months of age, Bentley started therapy with KidsAbility twice a week. Melissa researched his condition and by 9 months (earlier for her) there was speculation that he had Cerebral Palsy, which was diagnosed after his first birthday.

Melissa had heard about therapeutic riding and she wanted something 'fun' in Bentley's life. She was encouraged to try riding by the therapists at KidsAbility. At 2.5 years old Bentley had an assessment at Sunrise and then began riding. The goal was to strengthen his core muscles.



The family found that having Bentley do hundreds of “sit-ups” (which was boring) did not achieve the same results as riding a horse (which is fun!), as riding involves every muscle in the body. The horse Bentley rides is Petey, and he thinks of him as his very own.

Bentley had never taken independent steps and he walked on his toes with the help of a walker from the time he was one year old. He also used tripod canes, and could move forward 10 feet with this support.

Melissa and Chad heard about a surgery called Selected Dorsal Rhizotomy, which basically severs nerves connected to the legs to allow greater flexibility. This was available in Canada, but there was a similar, but less invasive, surgery available in St. Louis,

Missouri. Knowing there was a waiting list, Bentley was registered for this very expensive procedure, and the fundraising began, led by his father Chad. In February 2015, Bentley was accepted for surgery in December, so the whole family spent Christmas 2015 in Missouri.

Five weeks after the surgery, Bentley took one or two independent steps; at six weeks this increased to three or four steps...then he covered 50 feet with a cane! Bentley can now walk over 25 feet without his AFO's (Ankle-Foot Orthosis), or a cane!

He has continued to improve in strength and stability, although he still uses his trusted walker when wanting to run around. Bentley's strength has improved so much that he can now turn without holding on.

Riding has been the most consistent therapy Bentley has had for the past two years, and definitely the one he enjoys the most. Melissa would thoroughly recommend riding therapy at Sunrise to others; in fact she already has!

Bentley will proudly ride Petey in the musical ride demonstration at our Celebrate Sunrise! Fundraiser on June 26 this year (see page 3 for details).



Left: Bentley feeds Petey a treat after his lesson. Above: Bentley on Petey, with his leader and sidewalkers. Photos by Melissa M.

“We’re All Winners!” ~ Horse Show 2016

Sunrise rider Melissa McRae counted down the days to Sunrise’s annual Horse Show with mounting excitement. Finally, on Saturday, May 28, the day had arrived, and she waited with anticipation for her turn to ride.

Sitting proudly on her horse Rolex, Melissa carefully followed the instructor’s directions, turning her horse, walking and trotting at specific locations within the arena. Her focus and efforts earned her a 3rd place ribbon in her equitation class, which was followed by two games classes.

Across Ontario, many teenage girls who ride may be enjoying similar experiences - participating in a local horse show. What makes Melissa’s accomplishments unique is that she has a developmental delay. She has worked hard to learn the skills necessary to ride her horse independently - how to listen carefully, plan her movements and communicate effectively with Rolex.

Her mom, Kelly, noted that Melissa never sits as straight as she does in the horse show—she is so proud that she can ride and control such a big horse. Melissa agrees: “Horse show” and “I did this” are her favourite phrases this week!

Her dad, Kevin, agrees, “For Melissa, this is her moment of fame. It gives her such a sense of accomplishment and pride.” This was evident as she proudly showed a recent visitor every Sunrise ribbon that she has earned over the 11 years she has ridden at Sunrise. Her parents videotaped her ride, since there are many people at her school who find it hard to believe that Melissa can ride a horse independently.

Many other riders walked away from the ring with smiles on their faces. Rider Nicholous Caine explained that the best part of the show was, “Getting the ribbons” as he displayed his first, second and third place ribbons. “It’s always a fun day,” agreed his mom Debra.

For some riders, this was their first Sunrise show. Becky, another mother, shared that although her daughter was nervous about trying something new, her instructor reassured and encouraged her, resulting in her deciding to give it a try after all! She now looks forward to her next show at Camp Sunrise this summer, and adding to her ribbon collection.

Special thanks to the **Rotary Club of Fergus-Elora** for sponsoring our ribbons, and to all the volunteers that assisted at the BBQ and in the ring on show day. Thank you all for supporting our equestrians on this special day!



Clockwise from top left: Melissa rides Rolex in her 3rd class, having already earned a 1st and 3rd place ribbon; Grace (Riding Club) guides Lagallo over a small jump; Hannah on Jaffa is all smiles after winning two 2nd place ribbons; Luke competes in the sword race, assisted by his horse Pixie (braided for the occasion) and two volunteers; Jordan (left) and Sarah celebrate their achievements.

Celebrate Sunrise! June 26, 2016



The Board of Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning Centre, and Honorary Director Tommy Hunter, are proud to announce that the special guest for this year's "Celebrate Sunrise!" fundraising event will be **Dr. Roberta Bondar**, Canadian astronaut, physician, scientist, photographer and author (pictured at left).

The event will be held at Sunrise on Sunday, June 26, 2016, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.—rain or shine! Guests will see a musical ride and therapeutic driving demonstration by program participants, have the opportunity to meet the riders, and witness first-hand the excellent results they achieve through this horse-based therapy program.

Delicious food, prepared by local chefs, led by Moe Vidotto (Savour the Season), will be served in the spacious tent, followed by both live and silent auctions, with great items to be won.

In keeping with our 2016 theme, "Up, up and away!" there will be exciting flight-based auction & raffle items, including hot air balloon, Cessna, helicopter and glider flights...plus tickets to any WestJet destination. Of course, the auction also includes many lovely items for those who wish to keep their feet on the ground. Please visit our website: www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca for a sneak peek at the auction prizes...and the appetizing food menu!

Tickets can be purchased on-line at <https://guelph.snapd.com/#/events/view/932850>, in person at Scotiabank (Guelph branches) or by calling 519-837-0558 ext. 35.

Please order your tickets by June 20!

A list of all "Celebrate Sunrise!" sponsors and supporters will be published in our Fall 2016 newsletter. Special thanks to our Harvest Sponsors UPI Energy LP and Magic 106.1 FM / CJOY 1460AM



Sunrise Hoofbeat Challenge Sept. 24, 2016

Experience a great Saturday morning in the country with your family, at Sunrise's annual Hoofbeat Challenge fundraising event. Come and enjoy the Sunrise trails, and those on four adjacent farms. Bring your dog, or bring your horse! With face painting, pet photography, a silent auction, door prizes and a great food truck, there is something all family members to enjoy.

Entry is a minimum of \$50 in pledges raised. Register by September 1 to be entered in a special Early Bird Prize Draw! All registrants receive free T-shirts, lunch and special gifts.

Raise pledges and support this organization, which offers exercise, socialization and empowerment for children and adults with special needs, through the love of riding horses.

Please visit our website, www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca, or call 519-837-0558 for registration information, start times, and other event details.

A list of all Hoofbeat Challenge 2016 supporters will be published in our Christmas 2016 newsletter.

Hearts & Hooves

Our programs would not be possible without our amazing equine therapy team - just ordinary horses doing an extraordinary job. Anyone who has had a horse knows just how much is involved with keeping them healthy and happy. Fortunately, we have a whole team of supporters helping to make that possible for our horses.

Horses' hooves need to be trimmed every 6-8 weeks (and shoes examined for wear)! Our team of farriers (or blacksmiths) ensure our horses have happy feet. Thank you to **Garry Barnim, Adam Buckton, Paul Fischbach, Cathy Lesperance, Michele MacRae and Tristan Miles** for their services.

Thank you also to those companies that donate vaccinations for our horses, keeping them healthy: **Bayer, Boehringer Ingelheim (Canada) Ltd, Merial Canada Inc., Merck Animal Health Canada, Vetquinol and Zoetis**. Our deworming medication has

been donated by **Dr. Desiree Chen** (King Street Veterinary Hospital) for many years, and this spring **Dr. Carol Graham** (Graham Animal Hospital, Hillsburgh) has joined our donor medication team.

We were thrilled to receive grants from the **Harold E. Ballard Foundation, Harry Foster Charitable Foundation and Rotary Club of Guelph Trillium** to purchase new horses for our program. This has helped us to replace horses that are approaching retirement. Thank you!

We appreciate the support of **Settlers Supplies** and our dedicated horse sponsors, who provide for the care and training of these horses each year. **Please refer to the insert for a current list of horse sponsors.**

Announcements

Congratulations to Sunrise staff member Jesse Meatte, whose basketball team won a gold medal at the Special Olympics Provincial Games, held in Guelph in late May.

Jesse started riding a horse when attending Priory Park P.S. His teacher, Donna Christie, brought her students to Sunrise year round and riding their horses was always the highlight of the week. Since that time, Jesse has assumed many roles at Sunrise: volunteer, Leader-in-Training, PSW (at Camp Sunrise) and farm maintenance assistant. More recently, Jesse has been supporting the young adults in the Scotiabank Life Skills Program. His gentle, understanding manner has endeared him to so many children and adults alike. Way to go, Jesse!

Congratulations to Honorary Director Tommy Hunter and Andrea Grainger (both Celebrate Sunrise committee members), who were married on May 20. We wish them both every happiness in their life together.

Sunrise's website is presently being updated and re-designed to be compatible with hand-held devices. This new website will be unveiled soon; check out our new look this summer!

We are delighted to have been selected as Strom's Farm & Bakery's 2016 charity partner. Sunrise's logo will be carved into their giant corn maze, and maze visitors will learn about Sunrise at stations throughout the maze. A portion of all proceeds will be donated to Sunrise. More details will be published on our website this summer or you can visit www.strom.ca

Registrations for Sunrise's Scotiabank Life Skills Development Program are now being accepted, as a second day of weekly programming is launched. This 'horses and horticulture' themed day program, for teen and adults with special needs, focusses on setting and achieving individualized goals in a collaborative, team-based setting. Call 519-837-0558 x 22 for details.

Through a **grant from the Bridgeway Foundation**, Sunrise is pleased to offer **vaulting** (team gymnastics on horseback) and **long-lining** (similar to driving, but without a driving cart) programs in 2016. For more information or to find out how you can get involved in these initiatives, email nicolaharman7@gmail.com

It is with sadness that we share the news of the passing of a former Sunrise rider and camper, **Sarah Byars**. After years of battling the effects of brittle-bone disease, Sarah passed away on Wednesday, May 25 at the age of 18. Sarah will be remembered for her beautiful smile, infectious laugh, and her determination to succeed. Sarah represented Sunrise in the musical ride at the Royal Winter Fair in 1997, and enjoyed attending the Sunrise Christmas party whenever she was able.

SUNRISE UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrate Sunrise!

Sunday, June 26 1:00-4:00 PM

Camp Sunrise

Monday, July 4 - Friday, August 26 - FULLY SUBSCRIBED!

Saturday, September 24

Sunrise Hoofbeat Challenge

Volunteer Training Clinics

Held monthly - call Lynne at x31 for details

*Newsletter designed by Alissa Gibson. Edited by Ann Caine.
Photos by Alissa Gibson & Katlyn Wildfang.
Photo of Dr. Bondar courtesy of NASA*

Sunrise Mission:

"To develop the full potential of children and adults with disabilities and lead them closer to independence through a therapy, recreation, horse riding, life skills and farm related activity program."

Sunrise Programs: *Experience the warm family atmosphere*

- **Therapeutic Riding** lessons for children & adults
- **Scotiabank Life Skills Program:** year-round
- **Riding Club** group English riding lessons for independent riders *
- **Riding Day Camp** for ages 8 to 13+ * (summer)*
- **Farm Discovery Day Camp** for ages 5 to 8* (summer)*
- **"Little Breeches" Club:** an introduction to horses for ages 4 to 7 selected Saturdays (mornings or afternoons) Spring & Fall *
- **Leader-In-Training** summer program for ages 13 to 16
- **Instructor Training** residential and weekend clinics
- **Internships** - residential training opportunities for Canadian and International students (3-12 months)
- **Volunteer Opportunities**

* *These integrated programs are open to children and youth with or without special needs. All instructors are Canadian certified.*

Contact Us

Mail: 6920 Concession 1, RR #2, Puslinch, ON N0B 2J0

Phone: (519) 837-0558 **Fax:** (519) 837-1233

Email: info@sunrise-therapeutic.ca

Web: www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca

Office Hours: MON—FRI 8:00 to 4:30

(Tours & visitors are welcome by appointment.)



Sunrise is a Member of:



Canadian Therapeutic
Riding Association
Accredited Exam/
Training Centre



Ontario Camps
Association

- Ontario Equestrian Federation
- Guelph Chamber of Commerce
- Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
- Volunteer Cambridge
- Volunteer Centre of Guelph-Wellington
- SKIC Supporting Kids In Camp