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*Photo: Rider Ayla Worrall navigates the 2016 Ride-a-Thon course aboard therapy horse "Sage" assisted by volunteers.*

## **CTRA Ride-a-Thon hopes to celebrate Canada's 150 with \$15000**

The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) provides therapeutic riding and equine-based therapeutic services for persons with special needs. The organization offers differentiated programs that include therapeutic riding, therapeutic horsemanship, adapted equestrian vaulting, para-equestrian sport, and stable management vocational development.

The organization relies on community support in order to ensure that these life-enhancing services are accessible to individuals and families in the Cowichan Valley. CTRA's major annual fundraiser is the Ride-a-Thon.

In celebration of Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this year's Ride-a-Thon hopes to raise \$100 for each of the program's 150 annual participants. This goal of \$15,000 would provide full care (feed/hay, horseshoes, vet costs) for 5 therapy horses over an entire year!

Program participants taking part in this year's Ride-a-Thon will challenge their skills during the final week of the spring session with a special obstacle course. Each therapy horse is matched with a team of participants, families, friends, volunteers, and other supporters. Team members raise pledge money as individuals for awesome incentive prizes and as a team in fun competition. For individuals and families that rely on CTRA's programs, the Ride-a-Thon provides an important opportunity to play a role in supporting the organization.

The Ride-a-Thon is also made possible by individuals, organizations, and businesses that sponsor the event. Jennifer Barnes van Elk, CTRA Development Officer, notes that "sponsorships cover event costs like t-shirts and prizes for the kids and ensures that all the pledge money raised by our teams goes directly towards the program." Barnes van Elk adds that "CTRA is still looking for sponsors at the \$200 and \$500 level to help make this year's event a success. "

Community members interested in helping CTRA reach their goal can pledge support to an individual participant, their favorite therapy horse team, or the event in general. While contributions can be collected by team members or received through the CTRA office – the Great Canadian Giving Challenge creates added incentive for online donations in the month of June. In celebration of Canada's 150, between June 1 and June 30<sup>th</sup>, for every \$1 that CTRA receives through their CanadaHelps account (an online donation platform), the organization will be entered for a chance to win an additional \$10,000 grant. Online donations can be made at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/cowichan-therapeutic-riding-association/>.