



Photo: Rider Christian Lawson with therapy horse "Ember" tackle the 2017 pirate-themed Ride-a-Thon course (Photo Credit: CTRA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CTRA Ride-a-Thon Raises \$16,500 for Special Needs Program

In June, the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) held their annual Ride-a-Thon fundraiser to raise money for their equestrian program for persons with special needs. The Ride-a-Thon generates much-needed revenue to support CTRA's services which include therapeutic riding, therapeutic horsemanship, adapted equestrian vaulting, para-equestrian sport, and stable management vocational development. Although CTRA's program welcomes participants of all ages, the vast majority of users are children. CTRA receives no federal or provincial funding (outside of an annual Community Gaming Grant) and relies on the support of fundraising initiatives like the Ride-a-Thon to cover operational expenses and keep their services accessible for the individuals and families that depend on these therapeutic interventions.

In honour of Canada's 150th anniversary, CTRA hoped to raise \$15,000 with this year's Ride-a-Thon. \$15,000 reflected a goal of a \$100 contribution toward 150 participants – coincidentally the average number of unique users accessing CTRA's program each year.

Thanks to the support of individuals, families, businesses, and organizations in the Cowichan Valley, CTRA blew this goal out of the water – raising \$16,500 for their charitable program!

"CTRA relies on the support of our community to make our work possible." says Jennifer Barnes van Elk, Development Officer for the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association. "It is a testament to the generosity of the Cowichan Valley that we were able to meet and exceed our fundraising goal this year. It is truly inspiring to see what can be accomplished when people come together to support a common cause."

CTRA plans on using the funds raised by this year's Ride-a-Thon to help cover the costs of feeding and caring for the association's therapy horse herd. "These are remarkable service animals that give 100% every day," says CTRA Executive Director Anne Muir. "In order to keep this herd healthy and happy, we need to raise a significant amount of money each year to cover the costs of hay, feed, horseshoes, and veterinary care required by over a dozen horses."

The Ride-a-Thon generates money through event sponsorships and pledges raised by participants, families, staff, and volunteers. This year, each therapy horse was backed by a team of fundraisers that collected pledges from family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers. As the money was brought in by each team, their respective horses “raced” around a steeplechase scoreboard. This year’s winning horse was “Tonka” with a purse of \$2,786 raised in support of the program. The top 5 individual fundraisers were participants Lisa Larsen (collecting \$1,135), Traynor Cline (\$862), Ayla Worrall (\$790), Taryn Dandurand (\$750), and Oliver Findlayson (\$710). All of this year’s participants received prizes for their efforts, and Ride-a-Thon week wrapped up with a sunny celebration picnic on June 24th.

“CTRA would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone that supported our 2017 Ride-a-Thon – whether through sponsorship, pledging an individual or team, raising pledges, or donating time as a volunteer,” says Barnes van Elk. “It is because of our community’s unwavering support that we are able to open our doors each day. We cannot express our gratitude enough for this wonderful opportunity to serve our valley and help change lives for the better.”

For more information on the 2017 Ride-a-Thon fundraiser or the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association, please visit our website at www.ctra.ca or contact info@ctra.ca / 250-746-1028.

Thank you 2017 Ride-a-Thon Supporters

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All those that gave in support

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