



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Duncan, Vancouver Island, BC

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association Opens Community Lesson Program

The Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA) is a Duncan-based charity that provides therapeutic riding and equine-based therapeutic services for persons with special needs. In addition to the Association's core therapeutic riding program, CTRA offers therapeutic horsemanship, para-equestrian sport, and adapted equestrian vaulting activities. Stable management vocational training is also available for adults and youth with disabilities or persistent barriers to employment.

CTRA relies on community support to provide life-enhancing programs for individuals and families in the Cowichan region. Fundraising is one of the primary ways that CTRA offsets operational costs in order to ensure that therapeutic services remain accessible for persons with special needs. Starting October 30th, CTRA will be offering community riding lessons as a fundraising activity.

Through the community riding lesson program, CTRA will make a limited number of riding lessons available each session for clients without a referral (i.e. riders without special needs). These lessons will be taught by Equine Canada Certified Coaches using CTRA's extremely safe and extensively-trained therapy horses – making this opportunity a great fit for new or nervous riders.

“Not only are community lessons a great opportunity for local riders, they provide much-needed mental and physical cross-training experiences for our therapy horses – helping them to stay fit and happy in their important service roles” says Jennifer Barnes van Elk, Development Officer with the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association.

Community lessons will be held at CTRA's facility but will take place outside of CTRA's therapeutic programming. Registrants will enroll by the session (typically a 6 week block of lessons, attending once per week), but mid-session intake may be possible with available spaces.

All of the money raised by CTRA's community riding lessons will support the organization's services for persons with special needs. "Community lessons will help CTRA's charitable activities become more sustainable through internally-generated revenue," Barnes van Elk explains. "While *none* of funding received for our therapeutic purposes will support the community lesson program, *all* of the revenue generated by these lessons will support our charitable services. This kind of social enterprise is a critical step towards predictable, self-directed funding and all of the wonderful possibilities that this kind of financial security brings to a charity. Through this initiative, local riders receive top-quality riding lessons while supporting a great cause. In turn, their patronage ensures the future of our services for persons with special needs. It's a win-win-win situation."

Lessons are limited, and space availability subject to program capacity. To register for CTRA's community lessons or to learn more about CTRA's therapeutic services please visit www.ctra.ca or contact info@ctra.ca / 250-746-1028.



*Photo: Therapeutic Rider Emily Mae Swain on "Valaddi"
(Photo Credit: CTRA)*