



RIDE for JOY



PARTNER IN JOY

Eliza is a smart, imaginative, and social 7-year-old. She's always loved animals, so we requested an assessment and got on Ride for Joy's waitlist as soon as she was old enough. She started lessons in the summer of 2020, and ever since then, riding has been her favorite activity of the week!

Eliza was born with spina bifida, a birth defect in which her spine did not fully form in utero. Some of her nerves did not develop fully, so she has reduced communication between her brain and her lower body. Eliza uses ankle foot orthotics and arm crutches to walk. She also rocks her wheelchair with fun light-up wheels for longer outings in the community.

Horse riding provides a dynamic environment for Eliza to strengthen her core and improve her balance. She activates parts of her body she doesn't normally use in her daily living activities. She enjoys riding

backward, which is a unique way to further extend the therapeutic element of riding. Her favorite riding activity is trotting; the instructors and volunteers are always willing to accommodate this request so she can trot safely.

In the two years she's been riding, Eliza has gotten to know Sassy, Madonna, Tucker, and most recently Sunny. These four-legged friends and their dedicated human volunteers have helped Eliza excel in her riding. She started lessons with a lead walker and two side walkers. She is now learning to ride without a lead line or any side walkers. It has been such a blessing to see her growth in ability and confidence.

Eliza is motivated by her love of animals and feels a special connection to horses. She never forgets to thank Sunny with a pet



and snuggle after each lesson. It is obvious that all the people in the arena are bound by a love of horses. It is truly heartwarming to see the kids, instructors, and volunteers smiling and laughing together each week. Eliza was invited to ride at the charity event this year, where she was thrilled to meet another horse lover with a wheelchair, Amberley Snyder.

Our family is so thankful to Ride for Joy and its contributors for making horse riding available to our daughter! It's been such a



fun bonding experience between Eliza and her oldest sister, who also rides. Thank you for providing gentle horses and for training instructors and volunteers in accessible riding. We are thankful Eliza can pursue her love of horses and ride in a way that is tailored to meet her needs.

—Amanda W.
Eliza's Mom

Ride for Joy delivered equine-assisted activities and adaptive riding experiences to 230 individuals in the past 12 months. Will you partner with us in compassionate, therapeutic riding experiences this holiday season? With your help, lives like Eliza's can be greatly enhanced.

Your gift can be mailed in the enclosed, addressed envelope, or you can go to RideForJoy.org/donate-2 to contribute online.

Your financial gift of any amount will provide adaptive riding and equine-assisted activities to veterans and students with special needs or chronic illnesses. We are funded by the generosity of donors who care about the transformative power of horses to heal, refresh, and empower students.

May your 2023 be filled with joy! Happy holidays and Merry Christmas from our herd to yours!

—Denae Warren
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