



Introducing you to RIDE, a special horse stable in the Grand Valley

Purpose: The Riding Institute for Disabled Equestrians (RIDE) is a private, nonprofit organization designed to provide equine assisted activities through therapeutic programs to children and adults with disabilities physically and mentally and emotionally developmentally and offers equine-facilitated mental health activities. RIDE is a member of Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. (PATH Intl.) Our program supports mentally at risk students and RIDE offers teambuilding activities from the Garfield School system

Benefits: Equine activities can develop self-awareness, build self-confidence and improve concentration and self-discipline. Horses give the people with disabilities a feeling of freedom and independence. The experience provides incentive for learning. The rider seated on a horse is gently and rhythmically moved in a manner that is similar to human walking.





"My daughter Emma was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when she was two years old, and after a year of therapy with Child Find, we brought her to RIDE. We were hoping the program would help strengthen her core, and it certainly did. But it has done so much more for her. Not only is she a strong girl, but she is a confident girl.

The RIDE program built her muscles, but it also built her self-confidence and her trust in herself to be able to accomplish difficult things. Her patience with horse translates into patience with herself as she navigates new challenges every day. She has gone from a shy, uncertain child to a confident young girl. It has been magical to watch.

Seven years later, she still has as much joy participating in this program as she did her first ride. Our girl can do all the things she's ever wanted to do, all because of RIDE. We are beyond grateful that Emma continues to have this experience.

Thank you so much! "



Small Town- Big Impact

The Grand Valley is a very small and tight community. Hidden away in the small town of Silt on Silt Mesa is the Riding Institute for Disabled Equestrians, also known as RIDE.

The RIDE Program is an amazing program that has a big impact on the valley. RIDE has approximately 40 volunteers EACH day. We have 5 PATH instructors that work all year round. The facilities are ever improving and will continue to improve as the community continues to support this program. This last summer the program received a new custom-built ramp made by a former volunteer. RIDE is on 40 acres and grows most of their own hay for the program. Hay is donated by various ranchers throughout Peach Valley.

The program has also gone from 10 weeks throughout the summer, to Summer Sessions, Fall Sessions, Winter Happenings, and multiple enrichment camps

throughout the year. In 2020, the numbers of clients have already increased this year. So it is about quality, not quantity. We have a vision!



The program started 25 years ago. The program was taken over by Poke and Dee Stiers in 1994. Poke was born and raised in Glenwood Springs and knew that the valley was where he would want to call home after his service in the military was finished.

Poke's family owned several businesses in Glenwood Springs, including Stiers Construction and a B & M Hardware store starting back in the 50s and 60s. Those experiences showed him what the valley was capable of and he chose to build on that legacy. The RIDE Program quickly became a family affair and began to blossom.

Their daughter Stephanie is one of the instructors plus volunteer coordinator and has also brought her 3 children, Kayla, Cody, and Brenna on as volunteers. They eventually became involved more in the office side and fundraising side of the organization.



The grandkids brought in their friends to volunteer and the program continued to grow throughout the years. The program began with just a few students once a

week throughout the summer. The program now has an array of students ranging from toddlers to assisted living residents and Colorado Veterans.



Some of the students have been with the program for 15 years. In that time students have come leaps and bounds and some have even become volunteers themselves. This program has come so far in 25 years. The students, the program, and the facility continuously improve.

"One year we held a military reunion for a veteran since he could not make it to San Diego for the squadron's annual reunion. He was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and when he was riding in the arena, his brothers gave him the salute to honor him and commend him on his strength on his horse! Big surprise for him! "



We serve several of the local elementary, middle and high schools, and several nursing homes and assisted living facilities and the Colorado Veterans Home. The Veterans have been coming out to RIDE for at least 10 years. This year a goal is to have a different type of horse show that will include another Therapeutic Center. We will continue to have our RIDE horse show which has been a success for many years. The 2020 horse show for RIDE is July 27th and 28th. This is the time for our students to show families and friends what they have learned throughout the year.

The most amazing asset of this program, next to the horses, are the volunteers and community members that make it all possible. Volunteers help run these programs and they build the sensory tours for students to touch. Their work for the programs continue to make an impact on all of the students. The program has acquired new sensory tools, including a sensory table, lemonade stand, and an exciting trail ride. Two new trails are Star Wars and Jurassic Park, all built by volunteers.



The next project that the program is looking to get started is a new tack room. The current tack room was built over 50 years ago. The tack room worked for the smaller program when it started, but as the program grows, so does the need for more space to store tack and other supplies needed for the lessons. The fact that the community and former volunteers are the very people that build all of the enrichment tools, ramps, and even the lean-tos used to tack up the horses is what truly makes this program so special.

The community is small, however, it is dedicated and that is the very reason that the RIDE program has been able to grow throughout the last 25 years and will continue to do so for years to come. Please call us to meet our horses, a tour and to meet Dee and Poke.



"We have stories to share with you. At the beginning of RIDE we had a little girl named Jasmine. She was with us for quite a while. Her mom would stand in the corner of the arena in the hot sun to watch her. She was so proud. We have picnic tables under our apple trees for the parents to sit. Jasmine passed away. One of our volunteers from Rifle High school made a gazebo in the very corner she stood and named it the "ok" corral. This is where the parents can sit and everything is okay. We loved our Jasmine, her family came to our 25th anniversary for RIDE. All programs have stories like this, this is why we do it."

"Our friends the horses are such a big part of our families lives, and our futures...the community gets involved and they know the horses too. The RIDE horses are sponsored by community members. The cost per year is about \$2,000.00 a year. All of us at RIDE, want to thank our sponsors and volunteers for helping out and making these dreams come true !"

Dee Stiers



R.I.D.E. was the Non-Profit Organization of the Year for 2017
by the Rifle Chamber of Commerce
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