

The Brae

Chairman's report for year April 2014 - March 2015

Staffing

I would like to thank our staff for another successful year and welcome Grant Dudgeon who joined us, as our part-time cleaner, thank you for your continued hard work in keeping the dust and sand at bay.

Riders

This year we provided over 1200 riding sessions and 175 carriage driving sessions to over 300 riders and continue to hear positive feedback.

Liam's mum said "Liam has visibly benefitted from the horseriding sessions with Rolley and last week at school he was given a Head Teachers Award at assembly for positive behaviour and being a good role model to other pupils in school - we can hardly believe this is the same boy"

Casey's dad said "we have noticed a significant change in her confidence, posture, core balance, strength and stability amongst other things".

With Duncan, our physio, achieving his ACPTR qualification, we have been able to introduce Back Riding for children who would struggle to do any other form of riding. He has used Chailey assessments to measure developments between first and final sessions, which have been recorded and made available to appropriate professionals, allowing us to further our collaboration with NHS staff for the benefit of our riders.

Horses

We had to cope with a very difficult period when we lost 3 of our horses, Bailey retired in June and our 2 original horses, O'Reilly and Trixie died suddenly in July & August. Once again, The Brae staff and volunteers donned brave faces and provided business as usual, well done to you all. This also meant that a concerted effort was required to find replacements as soon as possible, and many people helped with this, again well done to everyone involved and we welcomed Duey & Misty in October.

Volunteers

Our volunteer numbers have fluctuated quite a bit at times this year, but thanks to our core group, who step into the breach when required, we have been able to provide our sessions as planned. We rely very heavily on volunteers and are constantly looking at ways to increase their numbers. Our 45 training sessions have all been well attended and with positive feedback, particularly the new Horse Psychology 3 session.

Volunteering is a two way process and it is important that our volunteers feel that they gain something from working here. Aimee said "Volunteering at The Brae is definitely benefiting me. My self confidence is gradually increasing and I find working with the horses has a calming influence on me. I love seeing the riders' faces light up and knowing that the rest of the volunteers and I have helped make this happen."

We also continue to benefit from 'one off' employee volunteering with staff from organisations such as Scottish Water, Novartis, Alliance Trust coming along to help.

We would like to thank the Big Lottery for their support over the past 5 years with our Volunteer Development Programme which has allowed us to provide opportunities for volunteers to receive a wide range of training and support.

Work Placements

We have continued to provide opportunities for individuals to work with us and develop their confidence, communication and employability skills. We have worked with a variety of organisations including, Princes Trust, Triage, Barnardos, Helm, Project Scotland, Job Centre Plus

and St Pauls Academy. Shahanna's mum said that having a placement at The Brae had improved her confidence and knowledge about looking after our horses. Our thanks goes to our core volunteers, supervisors and staff for all their support with these.

Maintenance

Maintenance is something that often happens without anyone noticing. This year we have added 58 tonnes of sand to the indoor arena, modified the stable windows to provide better ventilation, slabbing was extended for a second picnic bench, repairs to kickers, numerous pots of stain applied and a variety of small repairs. Thanks to the team of handy people who helped with these to keep The Brae looking good.

Fundraising

We have had a very busy and fruitful year with a wide variety and large number of individuals and organisations choosing The Brae to benefit from their activities. D&A College Students Fashion Show, Ladbrokes Grand National, Sainsburys, Hafla, Hockey for All, Carse of Gowrie Young Farmers, Police Scotland, Local Sportsmans dinner to name a few. We received the largest amount ever in a collecting can from McAllan & Paterson with the huge amount of £818 and we also ran a range of our own activities including a charity shop, coffee morning, quiz, swimathon and the fabulous Brae Ball. Thank you to everyone who has supported us.

Achievements and performance

Emma, Becca and Sheena attended the Grampian and Highland Annual Conference.

We hosted the annual RDA Regional Training day with approx 30 attending the day from centres throughout the regions and also the Discovery Games with 19 of our riders taking part.

Wendy Sharp passed her carriage driving dressage test, the first for The Brae.

We held our first Nativity play with Wendy McPherson writing and directing and many of our riders, volunteers and horses taking part.

We provided a training placement for 2 instructors for the newly opened Kinfauns RDA Centre and wish them good luck for the future.

We had several award winners: Ruth Urquhart won RDA National Volunteer of the Year, Wendy McPherson won the Dundee Sports Award Community Coach of the Year, Iain Hunter won a Rotary Endeavour Award, The Brae Kelpies won the Rotary Outstanding team Award, Danielle Bryce and Jonathan Bruce won Saltire Summit Awards and Yvonne Miskell, one of our long standing directors, won the RDA Presidents Award.

All in all, another successful year at The Brae. I would like to thank our supporters, our 160 volunteers, our staff and my fellow directors for their dedication, support and enthusiasm in helping to make The Brae the amazing place that it is.

Alison Doyle
Chairperson