

The Brae RDA Chairperson's report for year April 2018 - March 2019

We started the year with our 10th anniversary celebrations, commemorative badges for all staff and volunteers, 10 interesting facts on Facebook and endless streams of bunting and plates of homebaking. A volunteer celebration in Volunteers week with RDA certificates, a Volunteer Karaoke night later on in the year and endless photos of happy faces.

We welcomed Alistair Crozier to our board in place of Rob Whiteford who unfortunately had to step down in August for health reasons. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Rob for his support, knowledge, experience and especially his drole sense of humour.

With three relatively new members of staff, this was going to be a year of everyone settling into their posts. Having a CPTRH physiotherapist again after a year long search made a significant difference. She quickly began assessing new riders with physio requirements and soon caught up with the backlog. Her time was spent with 10 one to ones, including backriding clients, and 2 small groups each week. We also provided sessions to 70 riders and 2 carriage drivers per week throughout the year

We held a variety of training sessions for volunteers including: Horse Psychology 1, Leader training, Makaton and Safeguarding, First Aid and Quad Bike Training for the Trainers for staff members. We also hosted the RDA Mounting and Dismounting and Preparing and Assisting in RDA Sessions with 7 of our staff and coaches and 4 of our volunteers taking part. One volunteer attended the RDA Introduction to Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies from an Occupational Therapy Prospective and our coach and two volunteers attended Berwickshire RDA's Vaulting Training Day.

We were very fortunate again to have teams of employee volunteers from BT, Clydesdale Bank and Argenta, all willing to do painting, ragworting, general maintenance and cleaning tasks. We provided work placements for Barnardos and Project Scotland and work experience and Duke of Edinburgh opportunities for many local school pupils.

Our Fundraising this year followed the usual pattern with raffles, Quiz, Pop up Shop, Bingo and the Ball. We were also very fortunate to be the Charity Partner of two local TSB branches, Broughty Ferry and Carnoustie and also chosen by several groups of pupils as their YPI Youth Philanthropy Initiative Project.

Several of our ponies received RDA Long Service Medals which were presented during our Christmas Show and Boris and Duey took theirs with them when they moved on to their new retirement homes. To fill their stables we welcomed Dixie and Dunkeld. On behalf of all of our ponies we would like to thank Lyn Williamson for her support and work with the ponies over the past few years.

Whilst our ponies are the stars of our sessions, the volunteers are the ones that make it happen. We are so lucky to have such a wonderful army of individuals that give their time, energy and enthusiasm through all kinds of weathers, from the roasting hot, dry summer to the baltic, wet and windy winter, they continue to amaze us. To improve communication within the organisation it was decided to appoint a Volunteer Representative on a 6 monthly role, who would come to part of the Board meetings and report back to all the vol-

unteers. The first volunteer to take up this mantle was Linda Leswell who started in February. We also nominated several people for awards -
Linda McDonald won Highland and Grampian Volunteer of the Year,
Nicci Scammel received the Dundee Rotary Endeavour Award,
Katherine Brown was nominated for Dundee Inspire Award
Bob Simpson was a finalist in Dundee Volunteer Centre's, Volunteer of the Year Award
Alison Macintosh and Joan Jack were surprised at the RDA AGM in Glasgow when HRH The Princess Royal presented them with the Dudley-Smith Award for Carriage Driving
Then to top it all, Norma McGovern was installed as Dundee Citizen of the Year.

Our riders also braved the extremes of the weather this year and turned up every week with a range of layers and great excitement at what they would be doing that day, whether it would be inside the arena, outside in the elements, around the tracks, photographs being taken or even starring in a video or TV shoot. We have witnessed so many accomplishments from them backed up by their feedback -

"We are so grateful for this service. No matter how difficult a period Alex is going through, his horse riding always calms him down. Knowing we have a few hours of Alex being settled is vital for our family. It is also great that Alex has an activity that never causes him anxiety"

"Liam listens better here than anywhere! He is a good student. Only unsure to start with as it was all new to him but his confidence continues to grow. Clear/well presented instructions work well. We have not had one issue and cannot speak highly enough of his experience coming to the Brae"

"Kaylee has come on so well since starting this block and has moved onto a bigger more forward pony which has really benefited her riding and confidence. We travel nearly an hour to get here each week but it is more than worth it as both Kaylee's sisters are also made to feel more than welcome and part of the morning."

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that supports The Brae in whatever way they can, together we can create great experiences. Thank You!