



# Riley's Progress

By Sandra Evans

In the summer of 2003, Riley joined the therapeutic riding program at Richmond Therapeutic Equestrian Society (RTES). Diagnosed with Ataxic Cerebellar Atrophy, Riley was able to sit up but his balance was poor and he was unable to walk or even bear weight on his legs. A cheerful young boy, Riley enjoyed his weekly rides and activities on horseback. As with most children participating in our program, Riley wasn't aware of the huge physical benefits of his participation.

Now six years later, Riley is 11 years old and we have been privileged to watch him continue to grow and develop from the young boy with very low muscle tone, sitting slouched on the horse, requiring the full assistance of two side walkers, to where he is today. Riley now rides his horse with a leader and one side walker walking beside for safety; he's learning to control his horse using the reins and can now sit tall in the saddle and balance on his own. We have watched him slowly but surely increase his strength and improve his balance.

Riley has progressed to the point where he is now walking with just a little help occasionally to stay balanced. When you watch this young man make his way from the rider's lounge to the horse on his own two feet, requiring so little support, it really is the most fabulous, heartwarming moment anyone can experience. With his family, RTES staff, and fabulous volunteers behind him all the way, Riley has achieved so much.

RTES is very proud of Riley and his accomplishments. We can honestly say that this is what therapeutic riding is all about.

The story of Riley is one example of how therapeutic riding benefits children with disabilities. There are success stories such as this every day but therapeutic riding



PHOTO: ERIN MCRAE

**Riley can now walk with very little support thanks to his work at RTES.**

is very costly to provide. We all know the high costs associated with having horses, especially in the city. We are proud to call the beautiful Twin Oaks Farm our home, and thank Twin Oaks for their support; but our fabulous home does give the impression that RTES is a wealthy program, which is definitely not the case. The families of our riders pay in lesson fees only a small portion of what it costs to provide the program. Approximately 85 percent of the operating costs of this program come from donations and depend on the fundraising efforts of the society. We need all the help we can get!

RTES is holding its 14th annual fundraiser. The "Lead with your Heart Luncheon" will be held Sunday, April 18, at the Executive Airport Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre in Richmond.

With times being what they are for many businesses and non-profit societies these days, meeting this year's goal is more important than ever. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 to help us continue providing this fabulous therapeutic activity to children and youth with disabilities in Richmond and surrounding communities.

If you can assist us by providing an item for live or silent auction, or would like tickets to the event, please contact Sandra at the stable at 604-241-7837 or by e-mail at rtes@shaw.ca.

## A Benefit Event for PRDA at the Races

By Michelle Meacher

Please join us at Fraser Downs Raceway in Cloverdale on April 17, 2010 at 6:30 pm for a fun night of fundraising for Pacific Riding for Developing Abilities (PRDA) in Langley. Tickets are \$25 each, or \$185 for a table of eight. Tickets include: Burger & Beer, Silent Auction, Games of Chance and, of course, live horse racing! Call Donna at 604-530-8717 or email admin@prda.ca to book your tickets now! See you there!

PRDA Therapeutic Riding — Changing Lives, One Hoofbeat at a Time.

## 2010 BC Summer Games

By Jane James

Para-dressage will be included in the 2010 BC Summer Games to be held this year in Langley on July 22 to 25. All equestrian events will be held at Thunderbird Show Park. Para-equestrian will join the disciplines of dressage, jumpers, reining, and vaulting at these biannual multisport games. This will be a step up for many riders with a disability. Riders who have participated in the BC Disability Games will have an opportunity to compete at a higher level. However, riders do not have to have competed in a Games in previous years. There are restrictions on riders who have competed