

TEAM UNICORN TIMES



MAY 2021
Edition 1

Welcome to our first Unicorn Centre newsletter. Thank you to everyone who suggested names for it, we hope that you approve of our choice!

Participant Rachel sent us this great design for our first edition, so thank you Rachel!

Individual Highlights:

- Road to Restart & Horses**
- Volunteers**
- Staff**
- Diploma Courses**
- Fundraising**
- Stop Press**
- How you can help**



Welcome to Team Unicorn Times

We hope this newsletter will be a good way to let you know about what's happening at the Unicorn Centre: news, views and events.

We'll try to send out one quarterly, but there may be more if anything special is happening that we want to share with you.

If there's a topic you want us to cover in future issues, let us know, and we'll do our best to include it.

We'd also love to receive your stories, poems, photos and experiences at the Unicorn Centre, so send them in to jelphee@rdaunicorncentre.co.uk.



ROAD TO RESTART

It's been a long time coming, but we can now finally say that we're well along the Road to Restart. You'll find things seem a little different when you return, but we have made sure that it will be safe for everyone.

Independent riders are now returning, and we are starting to contact those riders who need some extra assistance in terms of side walkers. We were lucky to receive a Sustainability Capacity Grant from Middlesbrough Council to provide training in leading and side-walking for parents/carers so more participants can return to riding.

Blackberry, our horse riding simulator, has already started work with Trustee and Coach Judy, and they've been really busy. Blackberry is a great re-introduction

to riding, or for assessment, or for practicing dressage skills. Get in touch if you'd like to book a session.

HORSES

Our real horses are fit and ready for lessons now and Spider, Alby, Lily, Spike, Caesar, Thunder, Tinka, Patrick, Louie, Billy, Dolly, Duke and Gypsy can't wait to see you all again after all this time! You'll notice that there are some missing: Charlie and Magic have retired to a wonderful forever home, Freddie has moved to a new home where he's having lots of fun, and we sadly lost Lady and Alfie due to health reasons.



“Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Centre. Their contribution is invaluable”

VOLUNTEERS UPDATE

We’ve been delighted to welcome some of our Supported Volunteers back to the Centre, supported by staff members Denise, Cheryl and Shuban and Trustee Joan. They work really hard on the yard, and unlike most of us, really enjoy hay net filling and poo-picking as well as lots of other activities towards achieving their Asdan qualifications. Those who haven’t yet returned are enjoying their on-line sessions with the team.

Our wonderful team of volunteers is gradually returning to the Centre. Some are helping on the yard or at our dressage competitions and a team is preparing the Centre for opening up by giving it a good spring clean and tidy. We’ve had many donations of equipment over the lockdown period, and they’re helping with sorting it all out, and selling what we don’t need for Centre funds.



SORRY TO SEE YOU GO

There have been some big changes over the last eighteen months. Sadly Kim, Christie, Rachael, Katie and Heidi have all moved on with their careers elsewhere. We miss them all and wish them well in their new positions.

Recently we said goodbye to Yard Manager Kim who joined us 9 years ago initially as a yard assistant. Her main responsibility has been the yard and horses, and we’ll all miss

her bubbly personality and fun lessons. See photo!

Yard Manager Christie joined us about 9 years ago as a yard assistant and then progressed to Yard Manager standing in for the Centre Manager during her maternity leave. Her main role has been to coach our Middlesbrough College learners and ensure they qualified – which she did very successfully.

SORRY TO SEE YOU GO cont.

Yard Manager Heidi has worked at the Centre on and off since it opened in 1998. She's been a huge asset to the Centre over the years, latterly concentrating on delivery of the diploma courses. She's a fabulous coach, and we hope she'll be able to freelance at the Centre from time to time.

Katie started at the Centre as a student completing her Diploma levels 1, 2 and 3 in Horse Care with flying colours. She was taken on as a yard assistant, progressing to coaching and worked here for about 10 years with a brief gap working elsewhere. We have also recently said goodbye to Rachael, who joined us in 2017.

Rachael set up our highly successful Pony Club.

During the lockdown Claire, Christie, Kim and Katie ran the yard single handed – often not seeing each other for days. They worked really hard and we're so grateful for all their effort and commitment during this difficult period.

THE CENTRE STAFF & TRUSTEES

So our staff team is a little different now.

Claire continues as our Centre Manager, with Emma as Yard Manager, Cheryl is Deputy Yard and Training Manager with new Yard Assistants Hannah and Hannah (very confusing!). Becky C supports learners. Denise is our Volunteer Co-ordinator and she, Cheryl and

Shuban work with our Supported Volunteers.

In the office we have Alison and Helen, who keep everything ticking over, as well as dealing with all the telephone and email enquiries and booking lessons.

Our Trustees are working hard to support the staff and ensure that the management and finances of the Centre are running smoothly.

You may know some of them: Jackie Rubin (Chair), Judy Preston (Vice Chair & Grants), Susan Gaffney (Finance), Garry Toulouse (Business Management), Joan Northend (HR, SVs and Learners), Pat White (Learners & Volunteers), Ian Scrutton (Company Secretary & Governance) and Julie Elphee (Communications).

DIPLOMA COURSES



Learners from Middlesbrough College have been part of the Unicorn Centre since it opened in 1998.

So it is with a heavy heart that we say "Goodbye" to our very last cohort at the end of July.

Sadly changes to funding mean that we'll no longer be offering the diploma courses in Horse Care that we successfully delivered to

hundreds of young people over the last 23 years.

Several learners ended up working at the Centre over the years, including Shuban and Hannah who are with us now.

The diplomas also provided a funding stream for the Centre and Trustees are considering how this is best replaced in the future.

FUNDRAISING – THANK YOU!

“Sponsored runs and walks (including one by our patron Nicola Wilson), a head shave, three online dog shows, Zoom activity classes, online raffles and National Unicorn Day Show, donations of goods and equipment and hundreds of cash donations to our appeals.”

This is how you responded when Covid-19 struck in March 2020, forcing us to cease all

activities.

Our Friends of the Unicorn Centre co-ordinated many of the events and secured match funding for some through Barclays.

But without your support, generosity and kindness we wouldn't be planning to safely re-open again.

SO THANK YOU!

STOP PRESS

EQUINE HERPES VIRUS

As a result of recent local cases of EHV, the Centre has put stringent bio-security measures in place. There will be no horses coming on or off the yard for the time being, so unfortunately the BD Quest Club event on 16 May will not be able to go ahead. We ask our staff, volunteers and learners who have horses at other yards to follow strict bio security practices and only attend the Centre wearing fresh, clean clothing and use the disinfectant boot dip at the entrance/exit to the Centre and hand washing facilities.

Non-essential visits to the Centre are discouraged for the next couple of weeks from anyone who has contact with other horses.

DONATED GOODS

Everybody has been really kind and generous during the pandemic donating many items for us to use or resell for funds. At the moment our cupboards are full to overflowing, so we'd be really grateful if you could pause donating goods while we take stock of what we have. We'll keep you posted when we are ready to accept more items.

“The pandemic cut our income to almost zero, but with your help we'll bounce back.”

How you can help

VOLUNTEERS – WE NEED YOU!

We're looking for people to join Team Unicorn to help with all sorts of tasks such as spring cleaning the Centre, gardening, working on the yard, mucking out, grooming or even poo-picking! We'll also need people to help with riding lessons too, just as soon as we're up and running.

Interested?

Email your contact details to Volunteer Co-ordinator Denise at volunteers@rdaunicorncentre.co.uk and she'll explain the process.

DONATIONS

We are currently accepting donations via our Virgin Money Page: www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/SpringEvents21

CONTACT DETAILS

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We're on the Web & Social Media!

See us at:

www.rdaunicorncentre.co.uk

Facebook: RDA Unicorn Centre

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