



Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association

at Providence Farm 1843 Tzouhalem Rd., Duncan, B.C. V9L 5L6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Duncan, Vancouver Island, BC

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Jumpstart Funds Horsepower to Empower

On July 8, 2019, the Canadian Paralympic Committee and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities announced the recipients of this year's Para Sport Jumpstart Fund grants. Included in this list was Vancouver Island's Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association (CTRA), a Duncan-based charity that provides therapeutic riding and equine-facilitated interventions for children and youth with special needs.

CTRA will receive \$32,000 for inclusive and adapted equestrian activities that include therapeutic riding, para-equestrian sport, inclusive equestrian vaulting, therapeutic horsemanship, and adapted equestrian agility. The range of highly individualized opportunities supported by this funding allows a large number of children and youth with unique needs, skills, and goals to participate in the program and benefit from the positive outcomes of sport and play.

"Many of the children taking part in CTRA's programs face barriers that preclude involvement in other community sports and recreational activities," explains Jess Fraser, CTRA's Executive Director. "CTRA provides youth who may experience marginalization because of a disability or mental health challenge a place to get active, develop their strengths, and share their love of horses. The sense of achievement and belonging fostered by our organization is truly transformative. Not only does it better a child's immediate circumstances, it helps to develop and elevate diverse leaders who shape more resilient communities in the long run."

With this grant, CTRA will provide equine-assisted activities and interventions to 125 youth (aged 4-25). Referrals to CTRA's services come from general practitioners, therapists, counsellors, community navigators, and educators and cover a wide array of diagnoses including congenital and acquired disabilities and psycho-social challenges. Funding will help to cover a year of CTRA's operations including regular sessions and spring/summer camps.

CTRA Rider Bryan Downey strikes a pose with therapy horse "Jake" and volunteer Joanne Raab (PC: CTRA)



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CTRA is one of 40 community organizations across Canada receiving support from this year's Para Sport Jumpstart Fund. A total of \$800,000 will be distributed across the country as part of Jumpstart's *Play Finds A Way* movement, dedicated to helping community and sport organizations remove barriers to sport and recreation for children and youth with disabilities.



CTRA Rider Gabi Williamson gives a volunteer a high-five during Ride-a-Thon (PC: CTRA)

The Para Sport Jumpstart Fund was created in 2013 out of a partnership between the Canadian Paralympic Committee and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. To date, over \$2.5 million in funding has supported 90 organizations nation-wide, helping to ensure access to safe and affordable play for approximately 7,000 children.

"At Jumpstart, we are committed to removing financial and accessibility barriers to sport and play so that all kids have the opportunity to get in the game," said Scott Fraser, President, Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. "Through our partnership with the Canadian Paralympic Committee, the Para Sport Jumpstart Fund allows us to expand our reach, help more kids, and work together to create a more accessible and inclusive Canada."

"Sport can have such a positive influence on the development of children in so many ways, and that is only possible if they have access to safe and affordable ways to play," says Karen O'Neill, CEO, Canadian Paralympic Committee. "We applaud the great work of the grant recipients, who are making a huge difference in the lives of kids and who are an important part of the Para sport system in our country at the grassroots level."

About the Cowichan Therapeutic Riding Association:

CTRA has been using "horsepower to empower" the Cowichan Valley since 1986. CTRA is broadly recognized as a leader in the field of therapeutic riding and equestrian sport and is the only centre on Vancouver Island certified by the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA - the national governing body for therapeutic riding and equine-assisted activities) to hold accreditation as an Examination and Training Centre (CanTRA's top designation).

CTRA provides a vital place of inclusion and supports key social determinants of health in the Cowichan Valley. At CTRA, a shared love of horses brings people together - bridging perceptions of difference, catalyzing human potential, and fostering a sense of belonging among participants, families, volunteers, and visitors alike.

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About Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities:

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities is a national charity dedicated to helping kids overcome financial and accessibility barriers to sport and recreation in an effort to provide inclusive play for kids of all abilities. Jumpstart helps eligible families cover the costs of registration, transportation, and equipment, and provides funding to selected organizations for recreational infrastructure and programming.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities understands that for kids, the opportunity to play is about much more than getting active: sports teach important life skills such as courage, confidence and teamwork, and the opportunity to learn and grow through sport should be accessible to kids of all abilities.

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About The Canadian Paralympic Committee:

The Canadian Paralympic Committee (CPC) is a non-profit, private organization with 25 member sport organizations dedicated to strengthening the Paralympic Movement. CPC's vision is to be the world's leading Paralympic nation and this starts with the development of a sustainable Paralympic sport system in Canada to enable athletes to reach the podium at the Paralympic Games, and so all Canadians with a disability can have the opportunity to get involved in sport.

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