



Dear Hidden Acres Friend,

We'd like to introduce you to Ryan, 9 years old. **He calls Hidden Acres his happy place.** Most days are tough for him, especially when he's at school. His dyslexia makes reading and writing difficult, which affects the rest of his work. He often talks about feelings of stress and anxiety.

But when he walks into the stable, everything changes. His mother, Liz, says Ryan is a different person when he's on the farm. "Being [at Hidden Acres] really boosts his spirit," she said. "Working with the horses is something for him to look forward to every week. It's always a positive experience. It's uplifting. He's finally able to relax and feel calm and at peace."

Liz credits the horses with helping Ryan gain confidence and practice compassion. **He has formed a special bond with his equine partner Carlos.** Ryan learns quickly when they work together. Since his first day at Hidden Acres three years ago, he's made great strides in improving his communication and problem solving skills while staying focused for longer periods of time, all of which have made a big impact on his independence and educational goals.

And while he's now an advanced therapeutic rider, some of his favorite interactions are still the unmounted activities he learned early on, like grooming. "He has so much empathy now, for animals and people," Liz said. "He's more giving. He's always thinking about the horses and buying them gifts as a way to thank them for what they do for him."

Ryan's parents knew he loved animals, but they continue to be surprised at the strong effect equine-assisted activities have on him. Where many other things, like team sports, academics and other extracurricular activities have come up short, equine-assisted activities have excelled. **The horses help him cope.**

But they don't stop with Ryan. Last year our horses, volunteers and staff members served more than 200 children and adults with physical, developmental and emotional challenges, providing a total of more than 1,200 therapeutic sessions!

***Because it is our mission to provide these unique, life-changing services to those in need regardless of financial means, all of these sessions were either fully or partially subsidized by Hidden Acres – possible only with the support and generosity of donors like you.***

The need only continues to grow, particularly for Ryan. As school becomes increasingly difficult for him, Liz expects the farm to be a comforting constant in his life. Like all of our participants, he looks forward to working toward new goals, while improving his riding skills and learning invaluable lessons as he goes. **Please help us ensure we can continue to make a meaningful and lasting impact in our community by giving a gift today.** We welcome donations of any amount. As we work to fulfill our mission of serving those in need, everything helps.

Thank you so much for your support,

Mary and Theron Simons  
*Founders and Executive Directors*

Jeanna Pellino  
*Program Director*

