

INFORMATION ABOUT KENYA RDA

We have approximately 30 horse riders each week, whose ages range from 4-30yrs. They come from a range of social and economic environments, but the majority are from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds. All have mental and physical special needs, for example Autism, Cerebral Palsy, and Down's syndrome.

Our goals are to provide a safe and enjoyable environment where individuals with special needs benefit from developmental, therapeutic and educational equine oriented activities and to build a cooperative link within the community through educational opportunities.

Our organisation was set up as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 28th May, 1997. We are affiliated with Riding for the Disabled in the UK. Since then we have been offering therapeutic riding both to individuals as well as to school groups. We have started a training program for the volunteers so that they can progress to becoming instructors. This could also lead to other groups starting up not only in Kenya but also in Tanzania and Uganda. Kenya as a whole offers very few opportunities for special needs people, so riding therapy is extremely important in helping our students realise their full potentials and so becoming more socially integrated into their communities.

1. Background.

Riding for the Disabled (Kenya) is a charity and is based in Langata, Nairobi and was started in 1996. It is affiliated to the R.D.A. in the United Kingdom. H.R.H The Princess Royal is the President of the Charity in the UK.

RDA Kenya assists the disabled members of society, particularly children many of whom suffer from conditions such as cerebral palsy. The association is incorporated in Kenya under the Societies and Charities Act and is exempt from taxation. The association is run under the guidance of a Chairman, Treasurer and various committee members all of whom are volunteers and unpaid. The bankers of the association are Barclays, I&M Bank and The Old Mutual Society. The annual accounts are audited by ACTIP Limited

2. Objectives for RDA Kenya

The number of disabled children in Kenya is a significant proportion of the population. R.D.A. can offer these people both the pleasure of riding, and the therapeutic benefits of the sport. Riding has proven time and time again to be of huge therapeutic value for both the physically and the mentally disabled.

Both the medical and the remedial professions are universally accepting riding as a potential aid to rehabilitation in its widest meaning, particularly for young adults who suddenly find themselves cut off from former pursuits by illness or accident. The

proven benefits of riding include improved balance, mobility, co-ordination and physical strength, as well as boosting their self-esteem and confidence.

Each student is assessed by a physiotherapist. All the classes are taught by a Group Instructor. They work along side the physiotherapist as well as the students' teacher, doctor and parents. Safety is of the utmost importance, and safety equipment, such as BSI Standard riding hats and safety stirrups are always used.

Our goal is to build an educational and therapeutic centre to enable us to reach as many students as possible.

3. Present beneficiaries

RDA are currently teaching 27 students from a range of backgrounds. There are two large groups, one from Dagoretti Children's Centre and the other from Fairmiles, a school for the mentally disabled in Nairobi. Eleven of these are fully sponsored by either companies or individuals, a further 4 are subsidised by RDA and the remainder come from families able to afford the nominal fees.

Since a visit from Pam Jones of RDA UK, the organisation has put together a teaching programme to enable us, not just to train up more instructors, but also grooms and side walkers. This will eventually mean RDA will be able to send teachers to other areas to assist with new classes and lead the expansion of RDA in Kenya.

Princess, the child in the photograph, started riding with us when she was 4 years old. At that time she was unable to sit up, and spent most of her day lying flat on her back on her bed. After she had been riding with us for a while, her muscles had strengthened to such an extent that she was able to sit up unaided. This meant that not only was she able to join in school, but she was also able to feed herself. Originally she did not communicate with anyone, but now she is able to speak three languages! These huge achievements mean that her quality of life has improved dramatically, and she is now going from strength to strength.



4. Current Facilities

RDA Kenya currently own three horses, lease two and rely on the generosity of four other owners who lend their horses or ponies to RDA every week. Sessions are held on a plot in Langata where the owner has let RDA rent an arena. They own suitable equipment including saddles, riding helmets and other safety equipment. Facilities on the plot which belong to RDA include a removable store, but the arena, fencing and toilet block belong to the plot's present owner. Unfortunately the owner of the plot has sold the property and RDA needs to find a new home within the next six months.

5. Current funding

The charity relies predominantly on donations and fund raising to offset their running expenses. In an average year they generate income of around KSh1.1million (\$15,700) of which nearly half comes from a very active programme of fund raising including an Annual Dinner Dance, Coffee mornings, cookbook sales etc. Annual expenditure is in the region of KSh 850,000 (\$12,000) which results in a modest net surplus averaging KSh 300,000 (\$4,200).

RDA Kenya has a current (end 2005) accumulated surplus of KSh2 million (\$28,000) which we plan to put towards the property project.