



*RideAbility is a family-focused, non-profit organization dedicated to providing therapeutic and recreational horseback riding opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.*

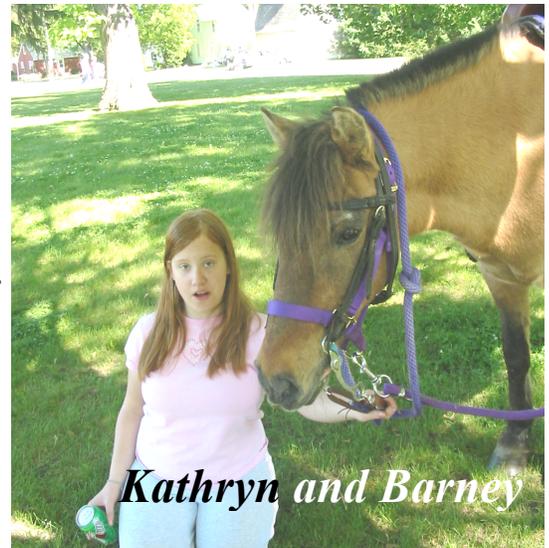
*Dear Friend,*

**My name is Barney, I am a special pony – they say I am very quiet. I really love kids. I am writing to tell you about RideAbility, a wonderful thing happening in our community.**

RideAbility started in 1997 when two young mothers met with a local physical therapist and started a horse back riding program run by their 4-H club. I was there! It was a lot of fun. The kids were so cute. There was Kathryn, Eric, Danielle, Marlena, Nathan, Stevie, David, Brad, Ryan, ... more cute little kids every time! We loved it – Lilly, Misty, Flippy, Stormy, Don, me and others. We met once a week. We gave rides to the kids. Some were in wheelchairs, some couldn't talk, one was blind. We loved them all!!! What special riders they were. They loved us more than any other riders we had ever had!!! They gave us special hugs. ☺ The 4-H club won a trip to the state fair, and RideAbility earned funding through the MN 4-H Foundation. What a fun way to start a beautiful organization. We wanted to do it all again the next summer – so we did!!! And, we kept on year after year. Each year more kids came to ride. After a couple of years we started having older riders too, and they were all great.

One little girl was so special to me. Her name is Kathryn. I went to live with her to be her very own. I helped Kathryn grow up. I love her so much. She has a wheelchair, and we invented different ways for her to get into my saddle. Kathryn can't use her legs, so when she was riding me she used a gaming-bat to tell me when to go faster. It sure worked great. She also started talking to me ... and I listened.

Kathryn's mom and brothers took me to RideAbility classes every summer, and I loved helping all the new kids. What a great life! Every year Kathryn grew bigger and rode better. A couple years ago Kathryn and I rode in the Pine Island parade. People waved at us and it was so fun! After it was over we sat under a tree near the nursing home. Then Kathryn told me she was too big to ride on me anymore. After that I went to live with Kathryn's neighbors. The little girls Jessica and Jaci rode me. I missed Kathryn a lot, but Jessie was so sweet I was glad I was teaching her to ride. Jaci was a spunky little toddler. They were in my care for the summers. But, my age was catching up to me and I was getting awfully tired. By winter I just wanted to sleep...



This year I have a great view of my precious kids - from heaven. They have been doing great! RideAbility celebrated ten years of service and they had a special horse show. I saw Kathryn riding with a beautiful crown on her head – she is a princess now! There were lots of families there. And they have lots of new helpers – walkers, horse leaders, teachers, big strong people, small cute people, and lots of people with lots of smiles! ☺

RideAbility really works! The kids have fun. The brothers and sisters have fun. The parents have fun. The riders get better at balance and sometimes they start walking better. Sometimes they start talking more – like Kathryn did. The kids get better at riding. They are polite and helpful to each other when they play games on horseback. They love it when they throw a ball, or a ring – and they “make it”! These children have better lives because of RideAbility! We love helping the kids and I am so glad they are still giving rides. Can you help RideAbility?

*Say “hi ” to all my friends at RideAbility ...and thank you so much for your help !*

*With love from Heaven,*

*Barney*



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