

Benjamin

Born in the Hatzic Prairie of Mission BC, approximately 30 years ago was a spunky little dark bay horse with a beautiful white blaze, four white socks and just enough white spots in inconspicuous areas to confirm his heritage. A POA/TB cross gelding, "Benjamin" came to his present owner and owner for life in 1996. After an incredible 20 years of teaching children and adults, both with and without disabilities to ride, he is now enjoying a much-deserved full retirement being loved and spoiled every day as the we now give back to him for giving so much to us over the years.

It is impossible to count the number of people Ben has touched in his life. He started his career as a school horse in 1996 in Mission BC in a small private riding school with 25 students and from there, he moved into the Therapeutic riding program in Richmond for the next 9 years of his working life. During his years in a riding school environment, he made a difference for so many.

As a lesson horse in the therapeutic riding program, with a personality far exceeding his physical size of 14.2 hands, he stole the hearts of clients, their families and program volunteers alike. He was obedient to instructor voice commands and patient with young riders learning balance, coordination, developing fine and gross motor skills, and social skills. With his riders, Ben clearly knew the most vulnerable, standing immobile as if a statue in the cross-ties while a visually impaired rider explored with touch and learned about horses and tack. Ben loved to play with the volunteers during pre-lesson tackup – "pick up the lead rope" was his game. Once secured to a quick release trailer tie at the hitching ring; if the lead rope was placed within reach he would without fail, pick it up and drop it on the floor prompting the wonderfully dedicated program volunteers working with him to pick it up and put it back – only to have the cycle begin again. As long as someone was willing to participate in this game, he was happy to play it!

In 2010, Benjamin retired from the Therapeutic program and returned to his home town of Mission BC where he soon met another young girl who could benefit from his years of experience as a special lesson horse. He took this young lady from a new rider requiring the full support of a leader and sidewalker to a completely independent walk, trot, canter rider, enjoying a half-lease. She also had the joy of competing on him in the summer of 2015. She left the arena glowing with pride after receiving each and every well-earned ribbon.

Ben now hangs out enjoying treats, pats and love from all who know him. He continues to entertain at every available opportunity with his spark of mischievousness. He's considered the "receptionist" of the stable as he wanders about and greets his human friends upon their arrival.