



Testimonial Support

John & Kelly Olerud

Their story, as told by Kelly Olerud:

In the summer of 2000, we returned to the Seattle area after John was signed to play for the Mariners. We couldn't have been in a better place - both returning home and expecting our second child. However, it slowly became clear that something may be wrong. In August of 2000, our fears were realized. Although we were blessed with a beautiful baby girl, her troubles began instantly upon birth. Jordan experienced major complications. The first two years were a struggle; she spent a lot of time at the hospital. Feeding tubes, respiratory issues and constant concern over her fragile state were issues we lived with daily.



Pictured above: Jordan during a therapy session atop therapy horse Bjorn with Head Instructor Marci Bender, and Physical Therapist Deb Peet-Walker.

We found Little Bit in 2003, through a recommendation from the Kindering Center. The results experienced by so many of their riders were extremely promising, and we wanted to try it for Jordan. As a rider myself, I understood right away how beneficial this therapy could be. Up to that point, Jordan had faced so many obstacles. She had severe sensory issues, she wasn't sitting up, and she wasn't crawling. Her official diagnosis is a chromosome abnormality that affects both her 5th and 2nd chromosomes. This combination of deficiencies is extremely rare. In fact, Jordan is currently the only known case of its kind. So approaching her disability has been a challenge.

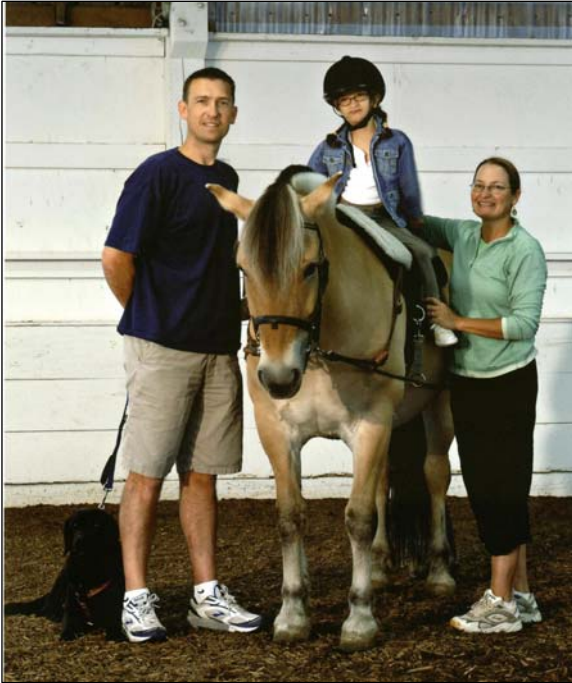
In 2003, Jordan began therapy with Deb Peet-Walker at Little Bit. Then something amazing happened. By her third birthday she started sitting up on her own. Her sensory issues were relaxing and the strength in her core just took off! John and I saw immediately the benefits of this treatment. Her newly found strength also gave rise to a newly found confidence. For a girl who was never able to do anything herself, who always needed assistance, suddenly she could sit atop a 1,200 pound horse independently. Riding at Little Bit has given our daughter a sense of empowerment that could not have been achieved any other way.

We know that right now, our daughter is closer to walking than ever before. Little Bit is a big reason for that. Of all the therapies that we involve our daughter in, Little Bit is the one that we never want to miss. Working with the staff and volunteers has been a huge blessing for Jordan and our entire family.



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“We truly believe that Jordan would not be where she is today if it weren’t for Little Bit” says her mother Kelly.

At left: Jordan aboard Bjorn, with her father John, Therapist Deb Peet-Walker, and assistance dog Shayla.

Quotes:

- “The strength that Little Bit has given our daughter is immeasurable. When she comes here, it doesn’t feel like therapy. Little Bit is the one therapy that we would never give up for Jordan and the one place that we miss when we travel away from home.”
- “It is a major shock when your child is born with a major disability. You just assume that you will have a healthy child. We all take for granted the things in life that seem so simple – eating, drinking, walking, and talking. But with Jordan, we do not. I now see how tough and resilient that kids with disabilities, like Jordan, can be.”
- “As parents, we all want to give our children the best that we can offer. That is why it breaks our hearts that Little Bit has a waiting list of over 200 children. We struggle with the fact that 200 children, just like Jordan, must wait for the therapy that could change their lives forever. We are committed to doing everything we can to change that, to give these children their chance to get on the back of a horse.”
- “On the back of her horse, her disability begins to fade. She is able to do something that ‘normal’ little girls dream of doing.”
- “When you have a disability, you always need other people to help you, to do things for you. But on the back of her horse, for the first time, Jordan can do something for herself. She knows that the staff and volunteers are there for her if she needs them. But the fact that she doesn’t need them gives her an incredible feeling of control that the rest of her life lacks.”