

DAILY NEWS

INSIDE
YOUR FREE
BOROUGH PAPER

50¢

2.5 MILLION READERS EVERY DAY

NYDailyNews.com

MSI 10

THE HAPPIEST TRAILS



Little Isabel Mogollon, 2, who suffered a stroke at birth, waves as she rides her favorite horse as part of the Seaside Therapeutic Riding program at the Jamaica Bay Riding Academy. Below, program volunteer Marie Varvaro plants a kiss on Babaloo.

Therapeutic riding program helps kids with disabilities & gives perspective to volunteers

BY DENISE ROMANO

THESE KIDS are riding high.

Every Sunday, several disabled children get a chance to ride horses as part of the Seaside Therapeutic Riding program at the Jamaica Bay Riding Academy.

Dozens of volunteers — including Tilden High School students — help the young ones sit on the horses and walk them around a corral.

While they ride, the kids have to reach for hoops and do other activities that improve their motor skills.

But it isn't just the young equestrians who get joy out of the weekly outing.

The Tilden teens — working through the mentoring program Academics in Motion — also benefit.

"It changes perspective for them and really gives them an attitude shift," said AIM founder Jim Presbrey. "I see students evolve right before my eyes."

The merging of the two programs began after Tilden basketball coach Rock Eisenberg started taking his 5-year-old autistic twins to the Seaside riding program, and thought his high school stu-

dents would enjoy helping out.

"The students feel like it makes them grow," Eisenberg said.

"I like it a lot," said Chris Windsor, 17, a Tilden senior from Canarsie. "It makes me aware that others have it worse off than me."

Duryel Lindo, 16, a junior from Flatbush, agreed: "It gives me an opportunity to help someone else out."

Steven Goldstein's daughter, Naomi, has a genetic disease so rare that it doesn't have a name. She has been coming to the Jamaica Bay Riding Academy for a year and half. "She loves it and this is the only therapy you can see a lot of improvement with," he said. "It really straightened out her torso."

Cindy Joseph's son, Taj, has benefited from the therapy, too. "He enjoys it," she said, "and it really helps his behavioral problems."

Seaside Therapeutic Riding needs volunteers. For more info, contact Dan Cutler at (718) 832-8466 or (718) 531-8949.

Photos by DEBBIE EGAN-CHIN



DAILY NEWS

★
INSIDE
YOUR FREE
BOROUGH PAPER

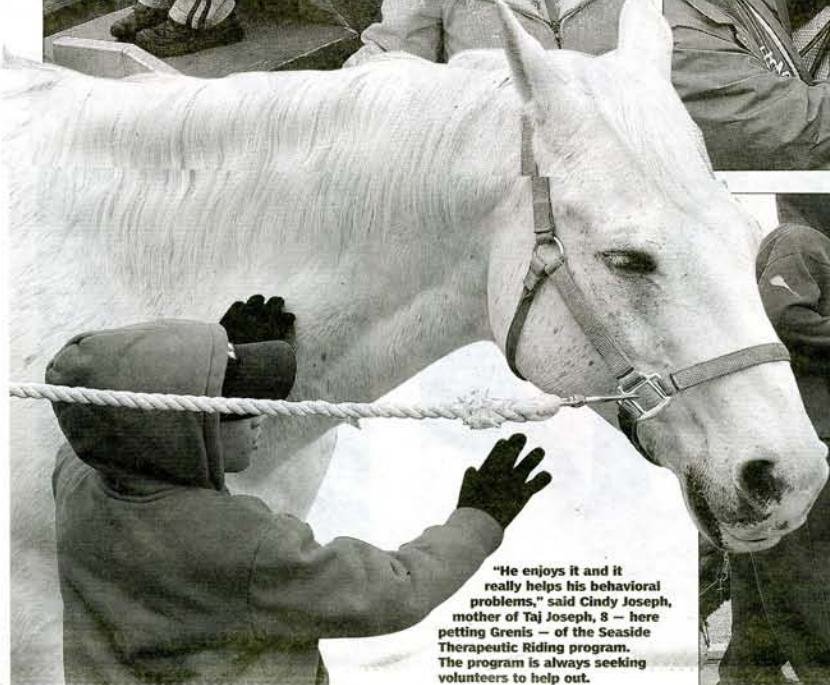
50¢

2.5 MILLION READERS EVERY DAY

NYDailyNews.com



Griffin Eisenberg, 5, gets a kiss from dad, Rock, before going for a ride, as his sister, Gabby, waits her turn. Above, volunteers help Andrew Wudowsky, 11, get in the saddle.



"He enjoys it and it really helps his behavioral problems," said Cindy Joseph, mother of Taj Joseph, 8 — here petting Grenis — of the Seaside Therapeutic Riding program. The program is always seeking volunteers to help out.



A.J. Graham, 17, gets a hand from his dad and a volunteer after a ride. Above, Olivia Ferre, 5, clearly was enjoying herself. Top, Jonathan gets some help from volunteers during his ride.