

In August of this year our family (Ryan: 7 years old and Drew: 4 years old) relocated to Colorado. One of our most amazing discoveries and favorite amenities has been your horseback riding program at the YMCA of the Rockies. Ryan was diagnosed with Skraban-Deardorff syndrome a couple of years ago, a very rare genetic disorder that has delayed his development, speech, cognitive ability and makes him very anxious in new environments.

Over the course of the summer, we made several trips to the YMCA of the Rockies so that Ryan could get exposure to the Therapeutic Horseback Riding. He fell in love with it and established such an affinity for Kelly Fowler that we came to Winter Park this winter to teach Ryan how to ski. Ryan was incredibly nervous during his first horseback riding lesson but after just a few sessions he gained confidence, had a smile on his face and was improving his speech by telling his horse Tupelo “whoa” and “walk on”. Ryan was visibly proud of his accomplishment and told his grandparents how much fun it was to ride a horse and made huge improvements in body control and balance.

Ryan isn't likely to have the same opportunities other more typically developing children through sports and so the individual nature of horseback riding, which lacks competition, allow him to “win” every time he is out there. It makes him incredibly happy.

Thank you for supporting and executing such a terrific program for our son.