



*A Message for our Supporters:*

Through their heartfelt testimonials, the parents of our riders often best express the depth of our gratitude for your support.

Your donations, sponsorships, grants, and legacy gifts enable Dream Catchers to offer life-changing programs for children and adults with special needs.

One rider at a time, one family at a time, we continue to change lives because of your generosity!

Cora and Aaron's Mom would like to share their story with you.

*My son Aaron was diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum when he was 3, and he is now 15 years old. He also has Generalized Anxiety, Learning Disabilities and ADHD. Due to Aaron's Anxiety and Autism, he is prone to having verbally and physically aggressive meltdowns. Over the past 5 years he's had 3 extended stays in Residential Treatment Centers to help curb his aggressive behaviors. On the eve of Aaron's discharge each time, one of his biggest concerns was when would he be able to start riding at Dream Catchers again. Sometimes I thought he looked forward to returning to Dream Catchers more than to returning home. I remember the first time I had to tell Aaron's instructor that he would be going into a RTC for an extended stay and he would be missing lessons - she was shocked. Aaron had always been polite, compliant, and eager to please while at Dream Catchers. Dream Catchers has always been a safe haven for Aaron. It is a place of complete positivity where he feels wholly at home and safe. His anxiety melts away. The Dream Catchers Family accepts Aaron as he is and he feels it to his core.*

*One day a few months ago, Aaron was having a meltdown while with his therapist in Colonial Williamsburg. He was screaming and saying that he wanted to run away and into traffic. His therapist had to call the police to find him and help keep him safe. This happened on a Saturday morning, about an hour before we needed to leave the house to go to Dream Catchers. After trying to call Aaron on his phone a few times and he wouldn't answer, he did finally answer. He said he could see the police and he was scared. I told him that he needed to calm down, so he could come home and we could go to Dream Catchers because Melody and Miss Sommer would be waiting for him. His therapist said she and the police officer could see a calm come over him when I mentioned Dream Catchers. I cannot put into words the magic that Dream Catchers is for Aaron.*

*Not only does Aaron ride at Dream Catchers, but our daughter Cora rides now too. She is also on the Autism Spectrum and has Generalized Anxiety and ADHD. A lot of her anxiety can be attributed to the fact that she lives with a big brother, who is prone to aggressive behavior. Before Cora started riding at Dream Catchers, she was a very quiet girl who rarely spoke and was very jumpy. Since she has been riding Lark, she has grown into a confident young lady. She has said that she feels powerful because she can ride and control a horse.*

*Dream Catchers is a magical place where children with special needs can be themselves. They are welcomed with open arms, loved and accepted. Not only does Dream Catchers offer a safe haven for the children/riders, but I feel a peace there that I seldom feel elsewhere. I am in a place where the other parents/families just “get” each other. The other parents understand the stresses of raising children with special needs. We can laugh with each other, and let our guard down in a way that we may not feel comfortable in other places. The Dream Catchers Family is there for all of us, making us all feel comfortable, welcome, and loved. I can’t count the number of times that a staff member will say, “Good Morning, how are you today?” Only to be answered with my tears and a story about how Aaron was aggressive the night before and we had to call the police. I have never felt judged. They always take the time to listen to me and give me a hug. I almost feel as though they are there for me as much as they are for my children!*

*I cannot put into words how grateful we are for Dream Catchers and the Dream Catchers Family. I don’t know where we would be without it. Dream Catchers will forever have a special place in our hearts as somewhere that magic happens. It’s like there is a bubble around the property and the real world just stops for a while.*

*With two children riding at Dream Catchers, we have been given scholarships for both of our children. There is no way we could afford the program without the help of the scholarships. We are so thankful to all of the generous donors and supporters who help make this program available to the community.*

*Thank you for believing in the power and positive impact of our programs!  
We can’t do it without YOU!*

