

## Dear Everyone,

Greetings from a cloudy, humid San Francisco. It's one of those periods when the floor is slippery with condensation and the washing never dries. But we have two bank holidays this week and we are enjoying the alarm clock not going off at 6.30, even if the sun has also decided not to make an appearance.



A couple of people have asked us to write about horse riding with people with disabilities, what it's about, and why it is beneficial, so we are devoting this newsletter to this activity. Here goes...

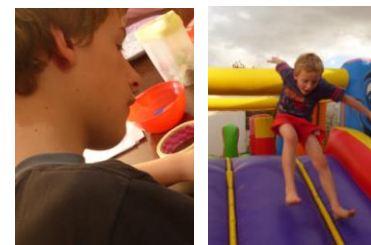
At "La Rural" in San Francisco we are working with people across all ages, with a range of physical and/or intellectual impairments. Some have individual sessions and others in pairs or groups. Monday mornings we have two groups of adults from a local day centre for people with learning disabilities, which is full on with Hazel, Martin and Pamela (full time teacher) taking a horse each. The rest of the week is mostly Hazel with Pamela and mostly working with individuals or pairs. For some people their main focus is on their riding skills; we have a lady with Downs Syndrome who wants to learn to jump, so Monday afternoons at the moment find Hazel chasing her round the paddock trying to get a consistent trot. Before coming to us, she was suffering from depression, and in riding she has found an activity that she enjoys, where she can set goals, see progress, and be pleased with her achievements. For other people, riding provides an experience of movement, a way of enjoying being outdoors and can also be a great context to work on wider aims. Someone might have physical goals to strengthen core stability, posture, range of movement and control. For another student, we might be working on skills of understanding and following instructions. On Friday mornings we have two young lads who like to play horse-back basketball, which gives us a fun environment to practise turn-taking, fair-play, and winning or losing graciously. Many of our students come with a reinforced image of themselves as non-achievers who have little control over very much in their lives, and in riding we can challenge that with the confidence-building experience of being in charge of a real 500 kg animal which responds to their command (sometimes at least; horses are dynamic beings too!)

*"The horse, with beauty unsurpassed, strength immeasurable and grace unlike any other, still remains humble enough to carry a man upon his back."*

~ Amber Senti

I finally managed to update the blog a couple of weeks ago, and I might even do it again in the next few days. You can find it at [www.frostmartinhazel.org](http://www.frostmartinhazel.org) You can also email us or find us on Facebook. Thank you all for your prayers and support.

Love From  
Hazel Martin  
X



Joni & Daniel

Latin Link 

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