

Sisters saddle up



Robin Snow (left), 8, riding Gigi, and her sister Rebecca (bottom right), 9, riding Bosco, with their parents Maggie (in orange), and Rob pose for a photo with Blue the pony before taking part in Sunday afternoon's BINA riding therapy program at Dana Hall Riding Center in Wellesley. PHOTO BY SEAN BROWNE.

By Teddy Applebaum
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Hampered by cerebral palsy, Robin Snow used to be a weaker and less confident child.

Then she found horses.

"When she started riding she would be exhausted when she got off the horse," said her mother Maggie. "Now she's able to get off the

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horse and walk steady. It's just improved her overall functioning."

Robin, 8, and her older sister Rebecca, 9, are members of the BINA Farm, a nonprofit horse-riding program that pairs those with disabilities with those who don't have such issues.

"We feel our mission is to teach this next generation how they can live and grow in a population where a lot of children have special needs," said the organization's founder, Coryn Bina. "It allows them to coexist."

comes her legs.

when she rides the horse because she often unsteadily but

erwise. Off the horse, Robins allow the girl to interact in a way they couldn't have otherwise.

Over time, riding together has some trouble communicating."

Now she stands up for people with other children as well.

Maggie has seen a change in the way Rebecca interacts with other children as well.

"Previous to horse riding she wasn't really confident talking to her peers or people she didn't know," she said.

"But when she talks about the horse riding she's very confident even though she has some trouble communicating."

"There are not a lot of other activities that, because of her legs, they could do together to the same level,"

Maggie said. "It has been really good for their relationship."

The riding has also improved Robins' confidence, she said.

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who are picked on, Maggie

"She kind of mentors the other kids about how having a relationship with other kids is important," she said.

"It's kind of amazing that a 9-year-old speaks like that to her peers."

On May 16, Robin and Rebecca rode together in a horse show at the Dana Hall School Riding Center in Wellesley.

showing off all the skills they've learned together. It was a moving moment for Maggie and her husband Rob.

"It was very exciting to see the kids ride and how much progress that they've made,"

Maggie said. "To see how excited Robin is riding with her sister."

Magie and her husband Rob.

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