

## Severe Anxiety Can Become Debilitating if Left Untreated



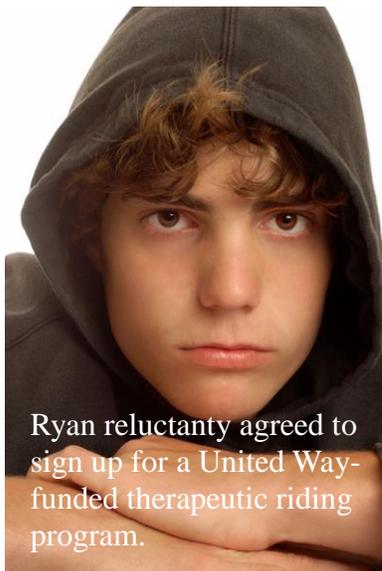
**United Way**  
Central and Northern  
Vancouver Island

### Teen with Severe Anxiety Transforms Thanks to Riding Program Funded by United Way Donors

**While many teens thrive from being around others, 17-year-old Ryan shuns company. Ryan suffers from severe anxiety that makes even stepping out the door extremely difficult, let alone go to school and be in the company of others.**

*Ryan suffers from severe anxiety; even stepping out the door is extremely difficult.*

Ryan's grandmother, who is also his guardian, heard that therapeutic riding programs have good success rates with children and teens with anxiety and suggested that he sign up. Ryan was not crazy about the idea but he reluctantly agreed just to make his grandmother happy.



Ryan reluctantly agreed to sign up for a United Way-funded therapeutic riding program.

Not long after he started the therapeutic riding program, the staff were amazed to see Ryan transform before their eyes. He began arriving showered and in clean clothes. Then, he started making eye contact and talking with other people. Best of all, he started to smile.

Staff were so impressed with Ryan's progress that, once his eight-week program was over, they arranged for him to continue with private lessons. Ryan was hardworking and loved to be with the horses; he volunteered at the barn, mucking out the stalls and caring for the horses.

*"He is a different young man," his grandmother shared.*

"He still struggles with anxiety and prefers to be alone, but at least now he is able to focus on his home schooling and he talks about the future job he would like."

Ryan continues to take good care of himself and rides the bus on his own. He has quit smoking and is exercising to stay in shape.

Today, this once sullen young man always has a smile on his face.

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