

WORLD AUTISM DAY - FIERACAVALLI LAUNCHES "A HORSE FOR A FRIEND", A CROWD-FUNDING CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF HORSE THERAPY AS A TREATMENT FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM SYNDROME

Fieracavalli continues its commitment to social matters by launching a fund-raising event for the experimental Riding the Blue project. The aim is to achieve recognition for horse therapy by the National Health Service as a part of the treatment protocol for Autism Spectrum Disorder in children. On the World Autism Awareness Day, it will be possible to make a donation through the Rete del Dono platform to help achieve the goal of 30,000 euros raised by May 28, when the closing ceremony will be held for the 89th Piazza di Siena event.

The World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April saw Fieracavalli launch the crowd-funding campaign "Riding the Blue - A Horse for a Friend" on www.retedel dono.it to support one of the event's flagship projects - the efforts dedicated to horse therapy in the treatment of children suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The purpose of the campaign - which will end on Saturday 28 May with a closing ceremony scheduled during the 89th edition of the Piazza di Siena event in Rome - is to raise funds to finance an inter-regional project involving several Italian equestrian centres - selected thanks to the support of the Italian Federation of Equestrian Sports - and 60 young people with ASD followed up by a regional multidisciplinary team. The activities implemented with the support of the National Association of Parents for People with Autism and the EY Foundation will be based on the method emerging from the Riding the Blue study, an experimental project coordinated by Prof. Leonardo Zoccante and promoted by Fieracavalli with the aim of highlighting the benefits of Assisted Interventions with Horses for children with autism. The entire proceeds of the charity initiative will be donated to Angsa, thereby enabling 60 selected youngsters to access treatment without charge.

Furthermore, thanks to the results of this broader experimentation, it will be possible to confirm the clinical value of research conducted so far, with the ambitious aim of having horse therapy recognized by the National Health Service not merely as a supplementary intervention but as an effective practice in promoting the development persons with autism.

Everyone can actively contribute to this project destined to change the treatment destiny of thousands of children suffering from autism by making a minimum donation of €10. Donors contributing to this fund-raising project with higher sums will have the chance to win a series of prizes depending on the amount donated: the first 150 people making donations of over €50 (equivalent to two horse therapy sessions) will have the chance to receive 150 tickets to attend Fieracavalli, scheduled in Verona 3-6 November 2022.

For donations of more than €300, the first 56 donors will receive two entrance tickets for Fieracavalli and one NFT (Non Fungible Token) "Riding the Blue Cap", genuine digital 3D caps tracked by the blockchain and developed by EY, Digital Innovation, a partner of Fieracavalli.

Lastly, for donations of more than €1,000 the first 8, in addition to the NFT, will also receive a real riding cap designed by Kep Italy, one-of-a-kind items customized with the author's graphics by Architect Federica Crestani and a special invitation to attend the 89th Piazza di Siena event.

All the details about the crowd-funding project and campaign are available on:

[Riding the Blue - A Horse for a Friend | Rete del Dono](http://www.retedel dono.it)



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"RIDING THE BLUE" PROJECT

Riding the Blue was founded in 2019 in response to a full-scale health and social emergency: it is estimated that 1 child out of 77 (aged 7-9 years) in Italy is affected by autism, a disorder that requires early diagnostic intervention and targeted treatment. This was the context behind the study coordinated by child neuro-psychiatrist **Leonardo Zocantè** which gave rise to unique research. The results - published in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* - have shown how the relationship with horses significantly improves the **adaptive skills** and **motor behaviour** of children with ASD, as well as emotional, sensory, affective, cognitive and social benefits. This research project - the result of collaboration between **Veronafiere**, the **University Hospital of Verona** and the **Ulss 9 Scaligera Local Health Authority** - culminated a protocol with guidelines that define a **method that can be easily repeated** in all riding centres throughout Italy where horse therapy is already practiced, and achieve recognition of the value of this complementary treatment by the NHS.