

Hello BBS Alums!

The Alumni Highlight is a monthly newsletter that aims to highlight the philanthropic, academic, entrepreneurial and professional achievements made by our thriving BBS Alumni community.

Fajer AlSabah graduated from BBS in 2006 and went on to complete an undergraduate degree in Social and Behavioral Sciences with a Concentration in Psychology from the American University of Kuwait. In 2012, she received her Masters in Business Administration from the Gulf University for Science and Technology. In 2003, Fajer first starting taking horseback riding lessons.

What started as a small pastime soon turned into a lifestyle. Fajer rode in her first showjumping competition in 2006 and was hooked ever since. She most recently established the KRC's Little Wings Riding program back in May 2013. The first of its kind in Kuwait, this riding club provides recreational riding lessons for children with special needs.



**How did the idea of establishing the Little Wings Riding Club come about?**

While working at Hope School for Special Needs, I met many families whose biggest struggle was finding a place to take their children after-school. They looked for places that accepted their kid's differences, tolerated their behavior, and accepted them for who they are. With very limited options, I thought to myself "why not take them to Kuwait Riding Center with me? I know they will love it!" And sure enough, the students in A6's classroom came to visit me at the stables and were over the moon happy to be there. Parents couldn't stop talking about the fun their children had and asked if this could be their weekend routine. At that point, I knew the riding club would be a hit with other families and KRC's Little Wings, along with the support of Kuwait Riding Center, was born!



**How do you help children cope with encountering a horse for the first time?**

Horses by nature are calm creatures. They are gentle to the touch, they warm your heart up, and give you a sense of power once in the saddle. The trick with children is showing them they are in control. Once empowered, it is amazing how evident the transformation becomes. Children who come in shy and withdrawn completely blossom in front of our eyes. Parents do not recognize their children while in the saddle. A child who stands small compared to the big world he is in suddenly becomes grand on a horse. Sitting upright in the saddle, a child's perspective immediately changes and he looks down on a once very big world. It's a rush that cannot be compared to anything else in this world!

**Did you expect parents to be hesitant about this new initiative or embrace it?**

With no prior experience, I knew I was taking on more than I could handle. Something about it felt right though, I could just sense it. During our first month, I enrolled 6 riders and worked with them on a weekly basis. Soon, more of their friends came and signed up. By our 3rd month, the riding club over 15 registered riders and attracted a group of volunteers from the community. This was the first step at promoting acceptance, tolerance, and inclusion where our riders finally became part of society.

**Did you require a different skill set in order to handle children with special needs?**

By nature, I consider myself a very patient and relaxed person. I take each day one step at a time without worrying about what is to come. By living in the moment, I feel like each experience is maximized and enjoyed. When working with children with special needs, patience is key. All children are capable of learning. They are all capable of making great gains and accomplishments as long as you embrace their special needs and work at their pace. Every little accomplishment is an enormous celebration in my heart!

**Where do you hope to see the Little Wings Riding Club in the near future?**

In the past year, we have grown so much. We now have 3 official instructors including myself, a group of 10 consistent volunteers from the community, an affiliation with Kuwait University's Occupational Therapy Department, and more than 75 registered riders. I would love to see my Little Wings continue to grow, prosper, and soar into success. I also hope to get certification and offer therapeutic riding sessions too instead of incorporating therapeutic activities into our lessons.



To get in touch with Fajer and find out more about KRC's Little Wings Riding Club, check out the Instagram page @krclsittlewings, or email them at: media@kuwaitrc.com

**We're on social media, tag along!**

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