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Whether riding horses for Australia in the Special Olympics, or meeting her idol Professor Temple Grandin, Daisy Brown dreams big.

The 13-year-old from Fairfield has already had one of her dreams come true after meeting the American autism advocate in July, with the help of her support worker funded through the NDIS.

Daisy, who has autism, had her family and support worker on-hand to help meet her idol.

“When I met Temple I was really excited and nervous, but she was funny and very kind and clever. I get scared leaving the house; my support worker Aimee helps me feel safe and knows the things that I do and don’t like. She helps me to remember things. It was fun to have her there,” Daisy said.

During the meeting they spoke about their mutual love of animals, school and how to get a job with horses.

“She signed my favourite book ‘Animals in Translation.’ When mum read it to me it sounded exactly like me, but it was about Temple.”

Daisy’s mum, Gillian, said Temple had plenty of practical advice for her daughter.

“She told Daisy to make herself good at something that other people want and will appreciate and respect her for. Daisy was left with no doubt that autism was no barrier for her achieving meaningful and rewarding employment with horses,” Gillian said.

Daisy’s love of horses began three years ago when she began equine therapy.

“We had never seen Daisy so relaxed outside the home. Within the first couple of weeks we knew we were onto something special. Daisy really connected with the horses and the affects were noticeable not just to us, but to those outside the family.

“We saw improvements in fine and gross motor skills, balance, concentration, willingness to connect with others, and a reduction in anxiety on the days she was in contact with horses. Most importantly though, she was happy.”

Daisy began to compete in horse riding state and national championships through Special Olympics Australia, and is now training to complete in the Special Olympics Junior Nationals next year.

“With low muscle tone, Daisy is working hard at improving her balance and strength by riding bareback and working on general fitness. This positively impacts all other areas of Daisy’s life including increased school attendance, reduced anxiety and improved confidence.”

Gillian said Daisy’s ultimate dreams is to one day represent Australia in Special Olympics Equestrian and to get a job working with horses.

Gillian said the ability to access a support worker through the NDIS has been life changing.

“Accessing a support worker has been a huge break through for us. Daisy loves having peer support and Aimee is wonderful in supporting Daisy in the home and in the community. Aimee supports Daisy in leaving the house to walk her dog Sachsa, to go cycling, and for ice cream.”

She said their experiences with Carers Queensland and her Local Area Coordinator, has also been fantastic.

“Our LAC supported us through the entire NDIS process. Her experience and knowledge has helped us navigate what, at times, seems overwhelming challenges.”

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