

Jackie West

I began riding at the age of six. I spent most of my childhood taking lessons and having fun at local horse shows. I was also a member of 4-H, finding any way I could to be around horses.

In my teen years I worked in the summers at various farms in Monmouth County. I was even a hot walker at the track doing anything I could just to be next to horses.

In my 20's I finally got my first horse. He was a retired race horse. Getting him from race mode to pleasure horse was a fun and rewarding experience. A few years later I got my second horse who took me on the journey of horse shows and hunter paces. These two horses (Double or Nothing and Goldie) taught me so much.

Getting married to my husband Nick and having three beautiful children Melissa, Nicholas, and Timothy soon took over my life. Raising three children is my greatest accomplishment and although I was so busy with my family I missed my passion and dreamed of finding my way back to horses.

I found my way to the SPUR program in the spring of 2008 and began volunteering. As each child flew the nest I began spending more and more time at the barn. Before I knew it I was volunteering five days a week soaking in the amazing environment at Sunnyside and witnessing the miracles of therapeutic riding. The valuable knowledge of natural horsemanship shared by Cindy Ross and Liz Haenchen had me hooked.

In 2011 I achieved my certification to be an instructor with the mentorship of Liz. Her guidance made the transition a positive one. I am so grateful to be part of the amazing team at Sunnyside. I absolutely love teaching and helping our students discover the beauty of these amazing animals. Seeing the smiles on the rider's faces has become one of the best parts of my life.

