

Young girl seriously injured in fall from horse with violent history

SDSBS attorneys **Jack Scarola** and **Mara Hatfield** concluded a litigation brought on behalf of a young girl, 14-year-old Sally Jones (not her real name) who was thrown off a horse named Luke at Pine Creek Sporting Club, a private recreational center located in central Florida. Through discovery, the attorneys learned that Pine Creek was aware of Luke's dangerous propensities, including that Luke had thrown Pine Creek's trainers in the past. Prior to Sally's injuries, one trainer had informed the ranch manager that the horse was unsuitable for the ranch because of his dangerous past behavior.

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On February 14, 2010, Sally and three other children were provided horses for an unaccompanied trail ride. Because Sally was an experienced rider, the decision was made that she should ride Luke because the other horse that Sally customarily rode was better suited for her friend who had not ridden before. Neither Sally nor her friend were aware of Luke's violent past behavior. Despite the ranch manager's knowledge of the horse's behavioral issues, and the difficulties his trainers had controlling him, Sally was



provided Luke for the trail ride. The riders, all children, were otherwise unsupervised and allowed to roam the vast terrain of the ranch including un-gated areas where horses were known to take off galloping. As the horses took off running, Luke reared uncontrollably, throwing Sally to the ground.

Upon her return, the facility largely ignored her injuries. Later that evening, she was rushed to the emergency room where she was diagnosed with a lacerated spleen and an injured kidney, which she eventually lost within the next week. The case, which included claims brought by the victim and her mother, settled October 2014 for a total recovery of \$800,000. ♦

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