

# Horses for courses

**Having successfully set up her own equestrian centre, wild horses couldn't drag Rostrevor woman Sonya Murphy away from being her own boss.**

The 24 year-old has been passionate about horses since she was a child and had always dreamed of starting her own equestrian business. And now with the help of Invest Northern Ireland's Go for it programme she has transformed her dream into a reality. Sonya is now relishing the opportunity to do things her way after many years experience working in various equestrian centres, but

admits she is forever grateful for the priceless advice she received while completing the Go for it programme.

"I know a great deal about horses but I knew absolutely nothing about business before I enrolled on the Go for it programme," said Sonya.

"I didn't know how to register a business and the legalities of it all were foreign to me. I found the marketing and accounts aspect of the programme particularly helpful and informative, as they are important aspects of any business.

"The people who delivered the programme were approachable and no question was ever too silly. They were always there to help with

any query or problem and I still seek their advice on business matters," she added.

The Rostrevor Equestrian Centre opened earlier this year and Sonya, to her own surprise has been run off her feet ever since.

The centre now boasts its own indoor and outdoor arenas and Sonya recently ran a three day pony trekking camp which was attended by over 50 children. She also holds a show jumping competition for local children every Friday evening.

The business provides dressage and horse riding lessons for all ages and abilities. Students can learn to ride on the beautiful local beach or in 32 acres of stunning Co Down forest. Sonya also holds classes for children with disabilities and special needs and is in the process of recruiting more volunteers to help out with this.

The young mum of one said she is extremely proud of what she achieved and described it as a childhood dream come true.

"It is hard work and takes up a lot of my time but it is really worth it. Being my own boss gives me a freedom and sense of pride I never had working for someone else. I guess I am lucky to have achieved so much at such a young age. In the future I would like to expand further by hiring more staff," said the business woman.



Sonya Murphy, 10W22N132



## Stone resolve to beat recession

Alastair Hamilton, Invest NI Chief Executive, visited Mourne Granite in Killybeggs to discuss business development initiatives which have helped the company sustain growth despite the economic downturn. Mourne Granite supplies a range of granite and marble products including: hand crafted granite work floor tiles; hard landscaping; memorials and general building products to the UK and ROI markets. To maintain its competitiveness, the company successfully increased its focus on bespoke manufacture and the use of engineered stone - an innovative composite material used primarily in kit worktops. Pictured, left, is Andrew Russell of Mourne Granite with Alastair Hamilton, Invest NI. 10W21N143

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