

2015 BUSINESS RECOGNITION

HOSTED BY
Orem SBDC
Utah Valley University



BUSINESS
Animal Riders

OWNERS
Mark Stevenson
Stacey Stevenson

NATURE OF BUSINESS
Animal-shaped Cart Rental

CITY
Orem

COUNTY
Utah

PHONE
801-900-3049

WEBSITE
www.animalriders.com

BUSINESS STRUCTURE
LLC

DATE FOUNDED
February 2014

EMPLOYEES
43

SBDC BUSINESS ADVISOR
Camille Pendleton



Mark Stevenson's wife, Stacey, had a great idea for a business. After a year, Mark reluctantly agreed to give it a try, and now he thanks his wife every day. Animal Riders rents electric scooters, shaped like animals such as monkeys, elephants and tigers for children to ride around the mall. The Stevenson's first Animal Riders kiosk location was in the Provo Towne Centre Mall. Mark and Stacey started with 15 scooters, and they took turns staffing the kiosk. Mark kept his other job and used the extra money to fuel the company's growth. He said a steady paycheck "was a huge security blanket while I figured out cash flow."

Local and social media helped to get the word out to the public about Animal Riders. They were featured on local TV, and people loved to post pictures on social media of their children riding the scooters. Besides mall rentals, Animal Riders can also be rented for parties and events. In fact, the Provo 4th of July parade was one of their first events. Mark's friends and family rode the entire parade route waving and passing out coupons.

As Animal Riders started to expand, Mark negotiated contracts with different malls in Utah and in other states. It still takes convincing to allow children on scooters to roam a mall, but within a few weeks it becomes clear that Animal Riders is a favorite activity at any mall. Animal Riders continues to face challenges as it grows, "but with any challenge in life, it's a matter of being persistence," Mark says. Now, Animal Riders can be found in three malls in Utah and several others throughout the country with more opening soon.

Secret to Success

"I talk to as many people as I can. People who have 'been there, done that' and understand what it takes to be successful. Like the SBDC."

—Mark Stevenson

"With any challenge in life, it's a matter of being persistent."

—Mark Stevenson

Mark had been to the Orem Small Business Development Center (SBDC) with other business ideas in the past. So he knew where to go when he was ready to move forward with the Animal Riders business. Mark and Stacey discussed their plans with SBDC advisor, Camille Pendleton. Mark said, "I love having the SBDC as a resource.... The benefit of having them in my back pocket and in making decisions has been invaluable."

The Stevenson's continue to get advice and assistance from the SBDC. One of the things Mark feels has helped him be successful is seeking advice from others. "People who have 'been there, done that,' and understand what it takes to be successful. Like the SBDC."