

## What is Equine Assisted Learning?

Equine Assisted Learning incorporates horses experientially for personal growth and learning. It is a collaborative effort between the Educator, Behaviour Coach (CYW) and the Horse Professional working with the students and horses to address the student's challenges as a team.

The focus of Equine Assisted Learning involves setting up ground activities and interacting with the horses which will encourage the student to develop certain skills. Non-verbal communication, assertiveness, creative thinking and problem-solving, leadership, work, taking responsibility, teamwork and relationships, confidence and attitude are several examples of the tools utilized and developed by this programme.

This type of learning is experiential in nature. This means that students learn about themselves and others by participating in activities with the horses, and then processing (or discussing) feelings, behaviours, and patterns. Equine Assisted Learning is a powerful and effective approach to self-awareness that has an incredible impact on the youth as individuals, their families, and their interaction with their peers.

### INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP EQUINE LEARNING FOR:

- Building relationships & connecting with others
- Understanding trust & respect
- Roles & responsibilities
- Character building
- Verbal & non-verbal communications
- learning boundaries
- Dealing with anger issues
- Developing leadership & team skills



## Benefits of Horsemanship

*Additional benefits include:*

**A sense of normalcy:** *Many children have not previously been in situations where extra-curricular activities were encouraged. Regularly visiting with a horse helps them bond, and build trust and relationship which carries over into all aspects of their lives.*

**A way to learn about ourselves:** *The emotional and social systems of horses are very much like those of humans. However, unlike humans, a horse is always honest and frequently mirrors the human's reaction in similar situations.*

**Increased self-confidence:** *The ability to take care of and control a horse is a great confidence builder. Positive reinforcement from volunteers and staff makes the child feel worthwhile.*

**A chance to escape:** *Exercise is a great stress reliever, along with being in the fresh air away from the worries of their lives. The ranch is a happy place where the troubles of daily life can be forgotten.*

**An opportunity to feel special:** *Not everyone has opportunity to be around horses, although almost all students are interested in them. Plus, being the center of attention during a session makes children feel loved.*

**An opportunity to develop patience:** *A horse does have a mind of its own, so learning to deal with frustration in a patient, calm way provides benefits outside of the ranch as well.*

**An opportunity to practice emotional self-control:** *An out-of-control youth means an out-of-control horse. Teens learn to control their emotions and appropriately express them.*

**An opportunity to learn control:** *Many times students are out-of-control of their own lives and the decisions that affect them. Learning to control a horse and make choices about what the horse does gives them an opportunity to think about consequences and results of their actions.*

*Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.*

*- Mark 9:37*

