

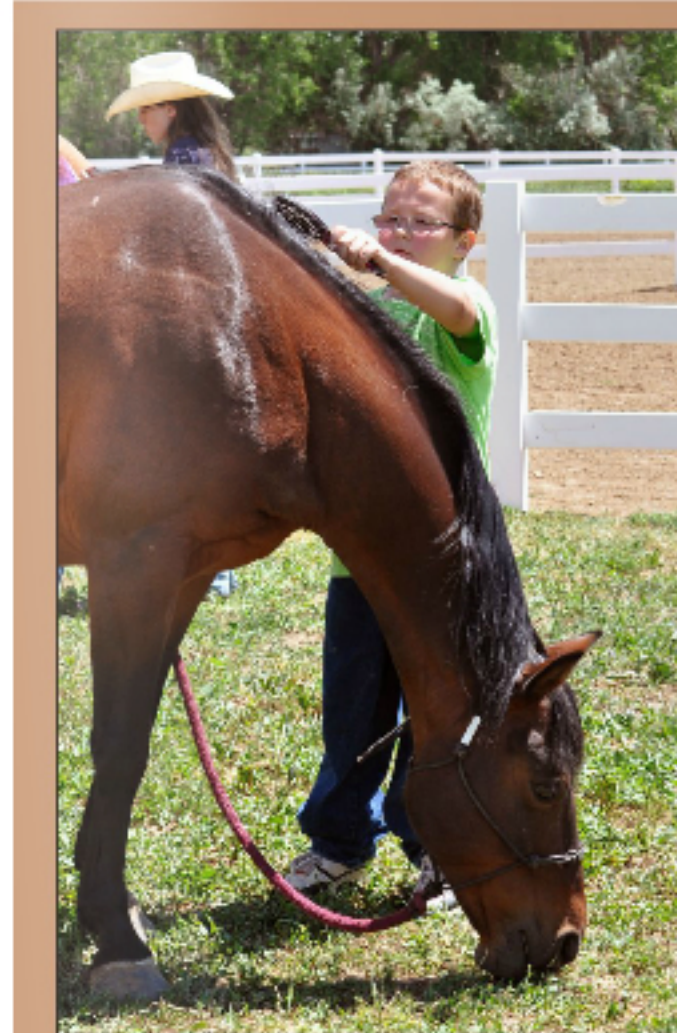


Many children today suffer from a lack of direction in their lives, low self-esteem, and poor decision-making skills. All too often these attributes lead them down a path of poor performance in school or a detachment from society. Imagine how all that could be avoided if they had a life changing experience that would show them how strong they really are and how their actions directly affect those around them. Having increased access and interaction with horses is a huge benefit to help these kids get back on a positive life path. Working with horses offers positive psychological benefits mainly because of their uncanny ability to offer immediate feedback through mirroring the actions and feelings of those around them. Horses follow leaders and if they sense a leader, they will do what you want them to do. The catch is that the leader must lead through confidence and respect, not force or aggression. When a child has the opportunity to work and control such a large animal, it helps build confidence and trust, which leads to higher self-esteem, better decision-making, and increased respect for oneself as well as respect for others. Creating these opportunities is the driving force behind Happiness Through Horses.

Happiness Through Horses is a program designed to provide children with the resources and access to horses to help enrich their lives. When you think about working with horses, most people will immediately think of riding, but there is so much more that goes into the care of horses before you ever saddle up. Happiness Through Horses knows how powerful taking care of a horse can be on the psyche. Working directly with horses in any capacity, be it riding, grooming, mucking stalls, learning how the horses move, and how to communicate with them,

has the ability to build self-respect and self-esteem. Learning what it means to take care of a horse, to get inside the mind of a horse, makes actually getting to ride a horse that much more of a meaningful experience.

Last summer, while her daughter, Emma, was attending a horse camp at the ranch where her horse was boarded, Happiness Through Horses co-founder Kim Swaney saw first-hand the positive effects working with the horses was having on her. It was then that she thought back to her own childhood, when she first became spellbound by her



neighbor's horse. Her neighbor took notice of Kim's interest and offered to let Kim help take care of, and even ride, her horse. "That was the best summer of my life," Kim has said. She wanted to give other, less fortunate, kids that same experience so they could have the best summer of their lives! She had a great idea to sell T-Shirts in order to raise money to be able to offer scholarships to the horse camp. During the summer of 2013, she raised enough money to send five kids to the horse camp. Seeing the transformation in these scholarship kids made Kim realize that she was on the right track and she



knew she had found her purpose. When the summer ended, Kim took her big idea with her with the desire to expand the concept and form Happiness Through Horses.

As Kim put together her ideas for Happiness Through Horses, she knew she wanted to be surrounded by others who have been directly influenced by horses or have experienced major life changes through their interaction with horses. When she was in the seventh grade, Happiness Through Horses co-founder Shauna White experienced bullying in school to the point where she began avoiding school, sports, and other students. One day she visited a horse rescue ranch and immediately felt at home. "Here were all these horses who needed rescue, and they were in the same spot I was because I needed rescue." Shauna began volunteering every morning and on the weekends. "The horses didn't make fun of me or judge me." They knew, instinctively, that she was there to help them. It didn't matter to her whether she was filling water troughs, mucking stalls, or grooming, the horse rescue gave her a place to be-





long. Though she was only there for six months, it changed her life by giving her confidence back and building respect for herself and others. Shauna has gone from skipping school to now attending college and working to give children this same opportunity.

Though raising money for under-served kids to attend summer horse camps was the catalyst for the forming her nonprofit organization, Kim wanted to create a foundation that also offers kids an opportunity to go to any horse ranch for anything related to horses, not just the camps. She wanted to ensure that kids wanting to work with horses in any capacity have the financial resources and support to do so. Happiness Through Horses is a program where kids can come to say, "I want to be around horses, but I don't know where to go, can you help me?" or "I know where I want to go, I just cannot afford it, can you help me?" or "I'm in 4H and I don't have horse, so I need to lease one for my practical, can you help me?" If a child has a strong desire to be around horses, but doesn't know where to start or how to pay for it, she will find a way for make that happen. For the 4H student who needs to lease a horse in order to fulfill their practical, Happiness Through Horses will help connect them with horse owners who would love to participate and have their horse looked after. She also wants to build funding through tack shops for saddles, bridles, or other equipment. These are just a few of

the scenarios Happiness Through Horses will be facilitating on behalf of those who reach out to them for help.

Candidacy for assistance is partially based on income, but each candidate is evaluated on a case by case basis depending on the needs and wants of the child. Yes, some kids need help paying for camp or lessons, but there are those kids who just want to go to a barn and groom horses, or feed them, anything to make a connection with these magnificent animals. During the application process, kids can choose a specific program or Happiness

Through Horses will help find the right program and facility to meet their needs.

On May 3rd, Happiness Through Horses is holding its first fundraising event to be able to fulfill all the needs of their candidates and send kids to camp this summer. In staying with the "happiness" theme of the organization, Kim created an event to make attendees feel good. The event will feature motivational comedian, Karyn Ruth White to keep the audience smiling! There will also be a silent auction during the evening.

For ticket information, or to contact Happiness Through Horses about their programs, visit their website www.happinesshorses.org



www.happinesshorses.org

**"SIT LIGHT
IN THE
SADDLE"**

The First Annual Comedy Show and Silent Auction Fundraiser
Featuring Motivational Comedian Karyn Ruth White!

Saturday, May 3rd

**4:00pm to 7:00pm at Dickens Opera House
300 Main Street | Longmont, CO**



~Tickets only \$50~



eLONGMONT.com