

SHADOW WING RANCH FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Equine Assisted Learning?

- Equine Assisted Learning is an opportunity for participants to partner with horses to facilitate the learning and growth process. Whether or not we are ready to hear it, horses reflect back to us exactly what we need to improve as leaders, communicators and team members. All horse related activities happen through ground work and does not involve horseback riding.

Why use horses as a modality for learning?

- As prey animals, horses are constantly attuned to their environment. Their perception of their surroundings is an immediate and honest expression communicated through body language. This can be less offensive than being told by a human being because it is learned through self-discovery in interacting with an equine partner. Horses naturally test for leadership in order to ensure their leader is capable of guaranteeing their safety. Leaders are just, assertive, trustworthy, clear communicators, and preserve the dignity of their herd.

How does equine assisted learning translate into human relationships?

- Equine assisted learning is directly transferable to humans because participants learn and practice skills. The skills learned are relational skills because life happens in relationship, whether those relationships are boss/employee, teacher/student, leader/group. It does not affect the value of the skill if it is initially learned from and practiced with horse partners and it is often easier to risk more of ourselves when we are not faced with the judgment of others.

Who can benefit from participating in the SHADOW WING Program?

- Children and students with behavioral problems, disengaged learners, individuals in danger of dropping out of school, and students that have special learning styles benefit from the unique experiential learning opportunity by building skills revolving around life skills and academics.

What is the format for each curriculum based class?

- A lesson plan is prepared by the instructor incorporating predetermined goals and objectives for each curriculum component.
- The class begins with each student greeting instructors and volunteers. Students then recap what was learned in the previous class and how they implemented their new skills/behaviors. A “word of the day” is introduced and instructions relating to the horse activity are reviewed to ensure clarity and safety.
- An unmounted horse activity takes place. This activity includes observation skills as well as participation.

- Students, volunteers and instructors discuss the outcomes of the exercise. What did they observe? How did their activity and observations relate to the “word of the day”. How can they apply what they have learned?

Who can benefit from participating in the SHADOW WING Program?

- Able-bodied children/students who need social-emotional support, those needing validation and acceptance for who they are, and students that have special learning styles benefit from the unique experiential learning with horses.