

## **Horsin' Around at Governor Dodge State Park**

By Sandy Rogers, Event Coordinator for Governor Dodge Equestrians

While most kids were anticipating the start of a new school year, about a dozen boys and girls were lucky to be in a "classroom" geared solely for horse lovers! Hosted by the Governor Dodge Equestrians, the event took place on August 28, at Governor Dodge State Park. The "classroom" was the Trails End picnic shelter which adjoins the horse camp. Young horse lovers learned about different horse breeds, their colors and markings, and basic horse anatomy. They then had the opportunity to put what they learned to practice as they met the eight real live horses at camp. The children also learned about communicating with horses, as well as grooming and safe handling of horses.



**Decorating Horseshoes: Instructor Ann Pikalek helping William Fristch**

There were plenty of hands-on opportunities such as leading Tilly, the mustang mare, and Rosey, the Paint mare, as well as grooming Cody, the quarter horse gelding. The kids even learned how to tie a quick release knot!



**Grooming Cody: Samantha Bailey (Prairie DuSac) grooming horse with William Fritsch (Monfort) and Azalea Verhulst (Dubuque, IA) waiting their turn. Adults: Donnan Meyer, Ann Pikalek**

The books that the kids used in this classroom were folders packed with basic information about horses. To illustrate the concepts, instructors made use of colorful pictures, Breyer horse models, a puppet named Charlie, and even an inflatable horse! Participants learned how to measure a horse in hands when a friendly unicorn popped in for a visit. The kids laughed when Horace, the horse, came to show off his stockings and face markings.

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**Horse Anatomy: Left to right participant Brooke Strand (Menomonee Falls) Helper Sandy Robers, Instructor Sandy Rogers**

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**Leading Tilly: Morgan Ellefson (Spring Green)**

At Horsin' Around school there was also time for games. Participants walked, trotted and cantered in relay races, while riding inflatable stick horses. The apples they grabbed in the relay activity were later fed to the real horses. Molly, the palomino, and Picasso, the appaloosa mule, loved all the attention and treats! And speaking of treats, after the games the kids enjoyed a break with juice and a healthy snack.



**Leading Tilly 2: Morgan Ellefson (Spring Green) and Instructor Cindy Anderson**

Horsin' Around school ended with a craft project. Children chose from a huge selection of colorful beads to decorate painted horse shoes. They took pride in what they created and learned how they could display the shoes to "catch" good luck.



**Measuring Unicorn: Azalea Verhulst (Dubuque, IA) with Instructors Cindy Anderson and Ann Pikalek**

What a great way to nurture the love for horses and gear up for a great school year ahead!

For more information about Governor Dodge Equestrians, look us up on Facebook and visit us at [www.govdodgeequestrians.com](http://www.govdodgeequestrians.com).



**Quick Release Knot: Left to right kids Megan Fargen (Lone Rock) Morgan Ellefson (Spring Green), Zoey Dampf (Dodgeville)**



**Rosey and kids: Instructor Penny Fanning with group of kids**



**Socks and Starts: Instructor Sandy Rogers points out Unicorn's socks as Ann Pikalek leads Unicorn (Rob Pikalek)**