



## **Program Description**

A Horse's Friend, is a unique program promoting positive values, increasing social competencies and teaching children respect through the use of horses and horseback riding. Since its founding in 2006, A Horse's Friend program has served over 2000 urban children and youth. (see website – [www.ahorsesfriend.org](http://www.ahorsesfriend.org))

Matt Doward, founding director, models and expects respectful and kind behavior among peers and adults and for the horses. He stresses the importance of taking proper care of the horses which of course includes mucking stalls, tacking, grooming as well as proper riding. And this is hard work! This program challenges children and youth to take risks, to function in a totally foreign environment and to learn new skills. They come to love their horses, to learn the value of listening and cooperation, to enjoy each other's company and the pleasure in being able to ride a thousand pound plus animal!

A Horse's Friend can provide an alternative to street activities that may lead to truancy, violence and drug use. In addition, A Horse's Friend adds a new dimension of experiences and life choices not commonly provided at inner city facilities. The entire program provides an environment in which all riders can achieve success, support each other and develop special bonds with other children and animals, all while helping develop their full potential and becoming more productive citizens in their community.

There are several types of horse related Services and Programs:

- 6 Session Saturday Program (year-round)
- After School Program (seasonal)
- Summer Camp Program (seasonal)

Organizations being served include: Villa of Hope, Hillside Work Scholarship, Rochester City School District - #20 and #58, Quad A for Kids - # 34, #4, Camp Good Days – Project TIPS, City of Rochester Parks and Recreation After School Program. Children served in 2016 – approx. 300. A new aspect of the 2017 program is to provide transportation to and from the farm.

After a six-week session, an exciting leadership training opportunity exists for some students who may be asked to return to assist with and to be mentors to the next group. There is no additional cost for the returning students, but they must follow the same guidelines as the new students.

A Horse's Friend is able to sustain its work only through the passion, determination and sacrifice of its founder, Matt Doward, and the generosity of volunteers and friends.

### ***'A Horse's Friend' Inc.***

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