



Founder and Executive Program Director: Matthew Doward

*High View Farms
128 N. Wilmarth Road
Pittsford, New York 14534*

About a Horse's Friend:

A Horse's Friend is an outreach program started in early 2006 to serve primarily at-risk children and youth ages 7-19 living in the inner city of Rochester and surrounding suburbs and counties. It operates under the auspices of CONEA as a non-profit.

Purpose/Goals of the Program:

Mission - A Horse's Friend is a unique program promoting positive values, increasing social competencies and teaching children and youth respect for themselves and each other through the use of horses and horseback riding. It is an unusual alternative to street activities that may lead to truancy, violence and drug use. In the natural environment of a horse farm and trails, children and youth learn about horses and how to care for them. In addition they learn how to care about themselves and others and to have fun in the process. We provide the experience of nature to urban youth who would not otherwise have the opportunity to bond with a horse in a natural setting.

Role - A Horse's Friend has provided over 2000 children and youth the chance to achieve success, support others and develop special bonds with their peers, the horses, and adult role models. The function we serve is to expose children to a supportive environment of positive values. Values such as self-respect, self-confidence, respect for others, resilience, appreciation of nature, responsibility, restraint, a sense of belonging, and honesty to name a few. Moreover, this environment tends to have a positive impact in settings outside the farm such as school, home, and peer relationships. High standards are set for personal behavior (language, following directions, safety, doing one's share), positive relationships with others and proper care of the horses. While meeting those standards the youth work directly with adult role models watching how the values come to life. National studies show that children who are connected to others, have positive role models, and learn to set goals are more likely to be ready to take on the challenges associated with growing up. A byproduct of the maturing process is being able to plan for the future making college a more desirable alternative.

The Model:

This is an after school (Saturday) program which is conducted in 6 weekly sessions, 4 hours per week and can handle up to 30 students per session. In addition, the horses are taken into the city periodically to introduce urban youth to horses and this program. We also offer customized programs to individual agencies upon request (ex: Hillside Work Scholarship and Villa of Hope).

'A Horse's Friend' Inc.

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Rochester, NY 14692
585-749-9885

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Web: www.ahorsesfriend.org

Results :

A Horses' Friend has served over 2000 children since its inception. In past year program years, we served 240 a year, with an average attendance rate of 96.75% (over 4 session = 6 months). This level of involvement is especially notable given the scheduling of the program, transportation issues and low attendance rate history within the population of students we serve.



Informal assessment of horsemanship skills indicate a 98% success rate within the population of children enrolled and that stayed committed to the program. Social skill assessment indicates a rise from 40 to 80 % in things like teamwork, respect, and desire to interact and learn.

Anecdotal Example: "If I was not part of A Horse's Friend I would be hanging out on Garson Avenue, probably in trouble, or doing things I wasn't supposed to." (Jordan Jones, Age 14, School #36 / East High School – 3 year participant). Jordan now has his own horse named Misty, a mustang that he trained. He has a 100% attendance rate in school and in the program. Academically he is able to maintain a B average, many are AP courses. The program provides the structure that helps him succeed in all parts of his life. Since graduation, Jordan is now 21 and continues as a valued Volunteer with AHF in his spare time from full-time work. He is a Horse Trainer, Teacher and friend to all our students who come through our doors. .

Previous collaborations:

We believe that collaboration with local organizations serves to strengthen this program.

We are a developed program with a number of agencies/organizations in the Monroe County area: Rochester City School District Schools – Children Zone (2006-2207 & 2007-2008 schools years), Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Hillside Work Scholarship Day Camp Program, "Right" on Charter School Day Camp, Villa of Hope, Boces Alternative High School (Fairport). Conducted programs at: Baden Street, Monroe County Youth Development Center, Industry Juvenile Unit in Rush, Quad A for Kids and Rochester Parks and Recreation. We are also a Monroe County Community Service outlet. In recent years, we collaborated with PIRI (Partners in Restorative Initiatives) and Monroe High School for a two week camp.

Awards:

- * Phi Delta Kappa - Award for Service to the Community, May 2008
- * Monroe County Legislature - Recognition Award for Commitment to the Youth of Rochester and Monroe County, July 2008

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