

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

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These amazing women have been featured in the cover story of Fayette Woman magazine.

Flying Change heals with horses

October 8, 2009 by Kristin Girard

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Filed under Good Stories

"There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man." – Winston Churchill

Lissa Corcoran has brought new life to this old saying with the creation of Flying Change, a non-profit organization she founded in 1996. The program provides Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) to children, teens and adults. EAP is an exciting, innovative and growing specialty based on the premise that human relationships with horses can physically demonstrate and reveal the issues that inhibit personal fulfillment and mental well-being. Pairing horses with specially trained equine therapy treatment teams can lead to new insights, learning, recovery and healing.



Most people wonder – why horses? Horses are very similar to humans in their full range of emotions. "Just like us, horses feel fear, anger, grief, relaxation, happiness, and affection. They play, fight, and communicate in relationships which share many of the same dynamics of our own, including trust, respect, boundaries, mutual support, and affection," suggests Jennifer Hauffaker, a therapist at Flying Change. "Just like us, horses are motivated to seek relief from pain, fear, and emotional pressure. They seek creative solutions to get their needs met, and like us, if they cannot find successful solutions they will express that pain outwardly."

EAP is a form of therapy in which activities and experiences with horses are custom-designed for each client, in order to elicit their emotional and behavioral problems. "EAP is a valid and highly effective form of therapy," states Lissa Corcoran. "Our treatment teams set up each experience, exposing the client to situations with the horses that bring their personal dynamics to the surface. These experiences also provide the opportunity to work through issues with the support of the treatment team. For example, these exercises can often reveal relationship problems, but also allow the client to choose how to change the way they relate to others. EAP allows the client to project onto the horse, which can give us insight on how the client views things, deals with boundaries, expresses emotions or approaches conflicts. It opens a dialogue and lets you see things in a very visual, graphic way that often has a profound impact and leads to faster progress in therapy. Experiences with the horses enable people to see things they might not otherwise see about themselves."



Powerful, intense and highly creative, EAP can provide breakthroughs for clients who feel "stuck" or for those for whom traditional counseling lacks appeal. Jenny M. found that EAP at Flying Change gave her the courage and motivation to seek recovery from an eating disorder. "I have come away with countless lessons about setting boundaries, adapting to situations and trusting relationships. Though I'd had no previous exposure to horses, I wanted to try working with the graceful, beautiful creatures. When I started, I found the idea of boundaries terrifying. I believed that if I set limits on anything or said no to anyone, I would have no friends. However, I learned how to be safe around the horses and to make myself visible when Leo, my horse, was running around. I had to practice moving out of the way and spreading my arms so he would notice me. I learned about boundaries in a way I can never forget. The horses at Flying Change helped me heal."

Flying Change was one of the first EAP programs in the nation and has gained national recognition as a prototype. Founded in 1996, it began with a single facility, but the program has been so successful that it has expanded to three locations around metro Atlanta. Another way that Flying Change's mission expanded began in 2002, when the program began adopting rescue horses. "We created an environment where the clients were no longer just healing themselves, they were healing the horses as well," explains Corcoran. In 2004, Flying Change adopted eight 5-month-old foals who would have been slaughtered, and began a new dimension of Flying Change, which she calls HopeFoal of Georgia.

Flying Change's newest facility, called Fruition Farm, is located in Fairburn. The 15-acre horse farm offers individual counseling for children, teens and adults, plus group, family and couples counseling, and corporate team building programs. Fruition Farm also offers a variety of traditional horsemanship programs including horse boarding, riding lessons, personal retreats, and children's horse camps. Learn more at www.flyingchange.org or www.fruitionfarm.com.

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LIKE SHE SAID

"I don't remember anybody's name. How do you think the "dahling" thing got started?"

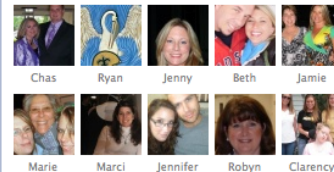
— Zsa Zsa Gabor

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