

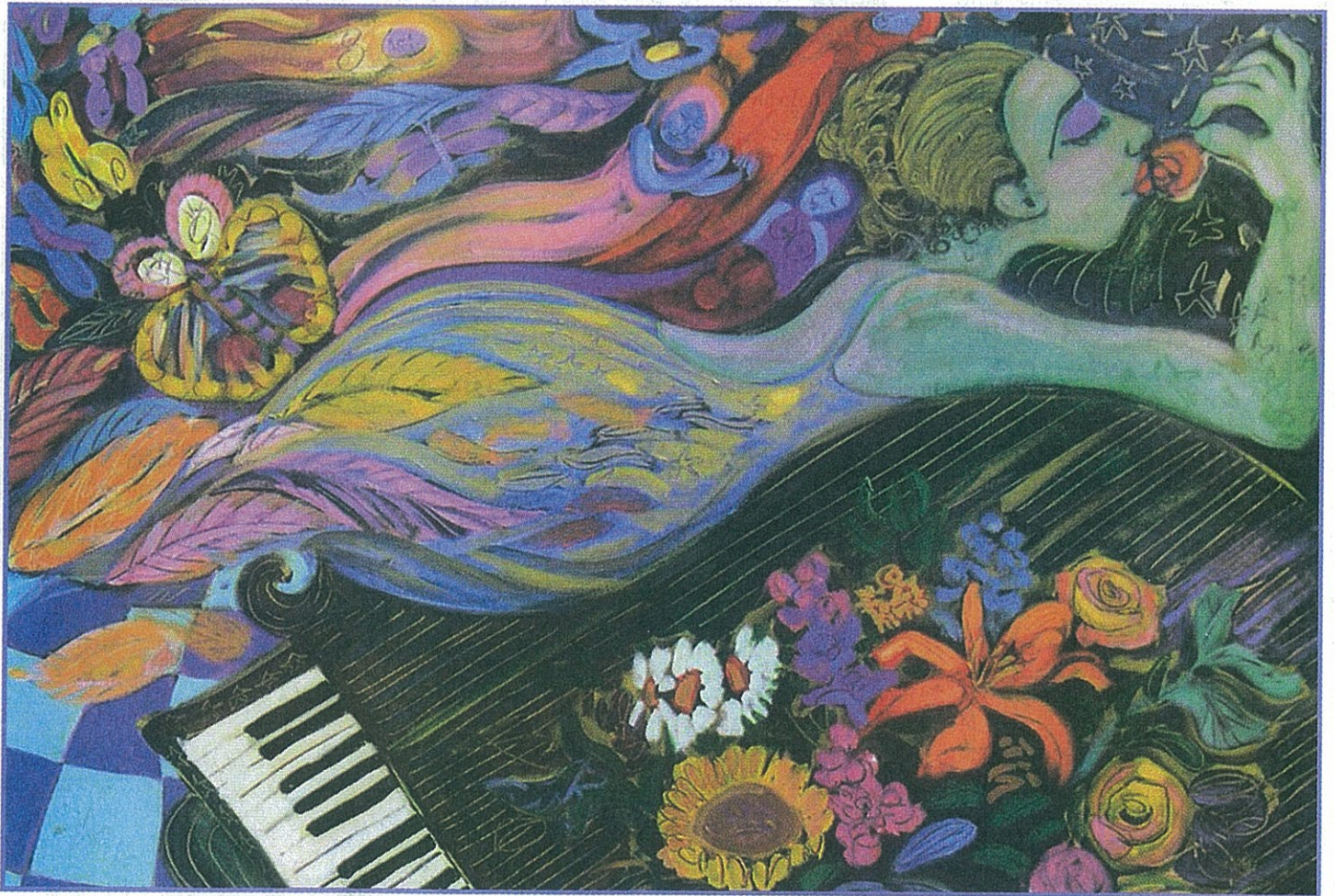
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HEALTHY LIVING

Atlanta Edition

September 2006



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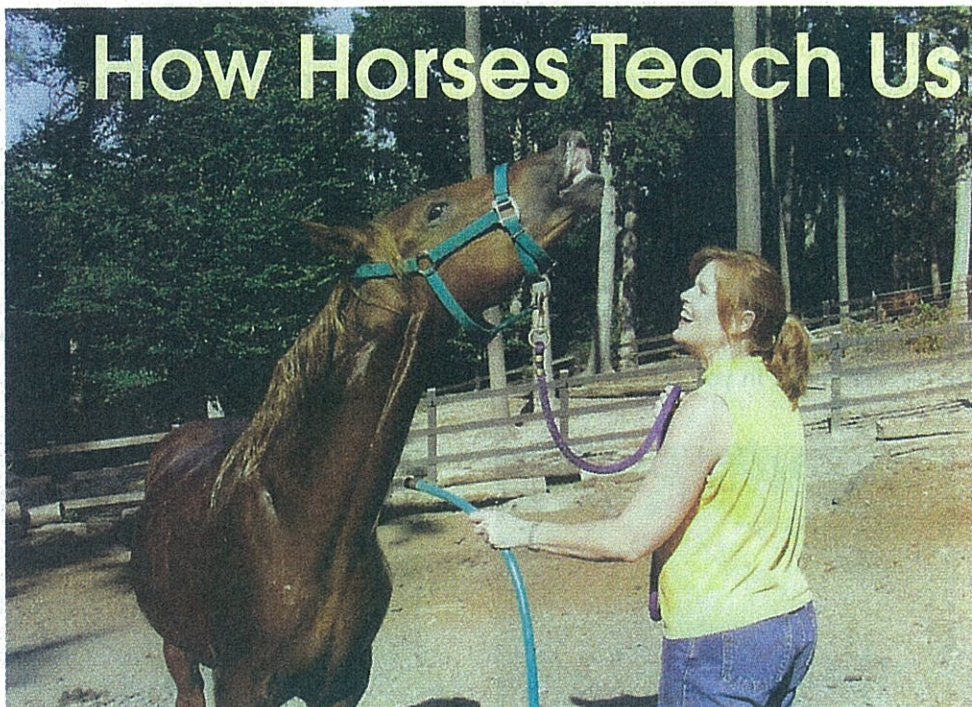
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In an age of technology, it's easy to overlook the power of horses. But I'm a believer. In the decade since I began work with Equine Assisted Growth, I have seen horses save marriages. I have watched a herd show families how to communicate in a crisis. I have seen how helping to raise newborn foals teaches abused teens to be loving parents. I've even seen horses transform corporations. It's amazing what horses and humans, together, can do.

Flying Change is an Atlanta-area Equine Assisted Growth and Learning program that partners horses with people in an effective laboratory of personal development. In programs like ours, specially trained professionals use interactive experiences with horses to foster people's emotional, social, spiritual and psychological growth. Through first-hand experiences, children, adults, families and company employees discover new skills and gain the confidence to apply these skills in their lives.

Unlike therapeutic riding for people with physical disabilities, Equine Assisted Growth and Learning is a relatively young discipline that's become more widely recognized in the last 10 years. Until recently Equine Assisted Growth was offered primarily by destination spas and residential treatment centers serving celebrities. Now it's gaining momentum in progressive human development and therapeutic communities.



# How Horses Teach Us

## LOCAL EQUINE ASSISTED GROWTH & LEARNING PROGRAM by Lissa Corcoran

*Flying Change is an Atlanta-area Equine Assisted Growth and Learning program that partners horses with people in an effective laboratory of personal development.*

The spectrum of services that's emerged includes therapeutic riding for emotional growth, leadership training and corporate teambuilding. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) is on the rise. And Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) incorporates relationships with horses in education programs. In this article, we've focused on Equine Assisted Growth (EAG) programs for personal growth.

### INTERACTION KEY

Equine Assisted Growth clients learn about themselves through taking part in activities. Sessions involve equine grooming, feeding,

*Horses are excellent sensors of human emotions.*

riding and ground training. It can include games, journaling, and art. Afterward, clients are invited to discuss their feelings, behaviors and perceived patterns.

Whether or not clients accomplish any given task is not the issue. How they approach a task and how they feel about the process and themselves as they participate is our focus. For example, how does a mother who can't get her son to dress for school in the morning react when her horse refuses to step over an obstacle she has been assigned to lead him over? How does that relate to what she does at home? The experience of finding a way to get the horse over the obstacle often will reveal tools she can apply with her son.

Interaction between humans and horses provides opportunities for us to become more self-aware through understanding the metaphor of how a horse relates to us, its herd and its environment as well as how we relate to the horse. Almost anything found in