

Who's DANN?

August 2007

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Connecting People and Communities
Differently
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News
Network, Inc.

Horse Sense of the Carolinas Therapy and Learning Programs

Provide Real Help, Real Healing and Real Results for Clients

by Jonna Rae Bartges



Photo by Dianna Dauer

The young girl is nervous. She's never been near a horse before, and she's standing in front of a huge speckled gelding, holding a halter in her trembling hands. The horse regards her thoughtfully, then cooperatively lowers his massive head. Gingerly, the girl slips the ropes over the horse's face and neck and turns, triumphant, to lead the gentle beast towards two Stetson-topped "cowgirls" watching from the arena fence.

"So what just happened here?" one of the cowgirl therapists asks.

"I did it!" the young girl chirps, grinning from ear to ear. "I really did it!" Buoyed by a new sense of confidence, she stands up straighter and beams at the horse. "He didn't scare me! I was in charge!"

This is just one of the small victories played out daily at Horse Sense of the Carolinas, Inc., a 90-acre ranch spread out over the rolling hills of Marshall, Madison County in Western North Carolina.

"At Horse Sense, we have rescued horses rescuing people," explains owner and President Shannon Knapp. A therapy horse, a licensed mental health therapist and a certified equine specialist team up to work with clients ranging from at-risk youth to girls with eating disorders to families

seeking better communication to corporations wanting to strengthen employees' leadership skills.

"It's different because in traditional therapy, you have to establish rapport with your therapist, which can take weeks, before you can get to what's blocking you. Here at Horse Sense, in a matter of minutes, the horse will show you when your insides and outsides don't match, and can help you shift your behavior to a more positive place."

"We can understand something in our head, but we don't truly understand it until we learn it in our bones and in our heart. Working with horses

and doing the tasks our therapists assign to you, you can really feel it and own it, because you actually did it."

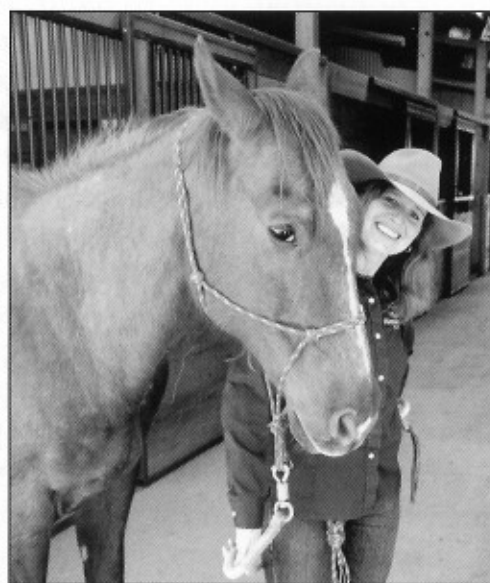


Photo by Max Poppers

"The power of the horses," Shannon explains, "is they are non-biased and agenda-free. Horses don't care what you look like, how smart you are, or what you can do physically. They only tune in to who you really ARE. Horses are real, in the moment, present. That's why horses are so perfect for helping a wide range of people dealing with many different issues."

One family traveled from the northeast to spend an entire weekend working with a Horse Sense team. The trip was a huge success. Both parents and the daughter learned how to effectively communicate what they think and need, how to really listen to each other, and how to have respectful boundaries while still working together closely.

Young people learn confidence, self-esteem, how to stand up for themselves and resist peer pressure, and how to express their emotions in a positive way.

"I recently had a group of mental health therapists in here for a day participating in a continuing education class," Shannon says. "One of the therapists said she learned more in fifteen minutes about a person working with a horse than she would have learned in weeks of traditional counseling."

Clients can schedule individual or group therapy or learning sessions. Some insurance providers cover all or part of the costs involved.

With a flourishing equine assisted therapy and learning center, and her first book, "Horse Sense, Business Sense" in demand around the globe, Shannon is emerging as an international leader in the fast-growing field.

"My book gives entrepreneurs a step-by-step guide for how to create their own equine assisted therapy and learning center," says Shannon. "I feel it's important to work together to set the bar for this new industry, and establish the highest standards of professionalism, safety and humane treatment for all the participants, two footed and four footed alike!"

To find out more about how Horse Sense can work for you, and to see a video of Horse Sense in action, please visit: www.HorseSenseOtc.com. Readers and their families are also invited to visit Horse Sense in Marshall during our free tour dates August 4 and 18, and September 1 and 15 from 10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. Call 828-683-7304 to reserve a space.

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