

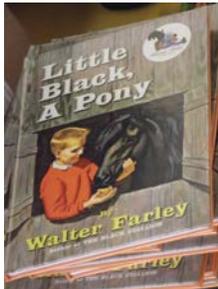
Horse Tales Literacy Program

The magic of live horses, touching the lives of children,
inspiring the love of reading!



Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center - A Springfield-Greene County Park

Goal – To develop a child’s desire to read by using their natural fascination and excitement for meeting live horses as the motivator and reward.



- The Horse Tales Literacy Program was created in 1999 and has brought the joy of reading to more than 600,000 first and fourth grade children in over 12 states.
- It has received recognition as a “Daily Point of Light” by President George H.W. Bush.
- ABC Nightly News featured the program as the “best motivational reading program” for school aged kids.
- The Heart of Florida United Way recognized the program as a major influence upon Florida’s children and literacy.
- Recently recognized locally in Springfield News-Leader and KOLR TV news for introducing the literacy program to Campbell Elementary first graders.



About the Program

Horse Tales Literacy Program introduces first graders in local schools to the joy and excitement of learning to read through the wonderful books of Walter Farley, “Little Black, A Pony,” and “Little Black Goes to the Circus”. The beautifully illustrated books highlight multiple themes throughout that are universal and timeless. For example:

- Responsibility to those smaller/weaker than ourselves.
- Even though someone may be small, they still have value.
- Responsible persons may scold at someone smaller but they really care about one’s safety and well being, etc.

The Visit to the School

The Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center staff take horses that represent the characters of these books to the schools. The first graders are introduced to the book “Little Black, A Pony” and a portion of the book is read to the class. At a natural cliff-



hanger, the kids are introduced to the idea that they will each receive a “forever” book of their very own. The children must make a promise that they will study and work hard so they are prepared to read their favorite part of the book to the horses on their field trip to the farm. The class then learns basic safety around horses and kids get to go outside and meet the main horse characters “Little Black and Big Red”. Prior to leaving the horses, each child will receive a hard bound book of their very own to take home and practice reading. Teachers will have a 6-8 week time span to use the upcoming visit to Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center as a reward to keep morale high in the classroom.



For more information and funding options, please contact
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The Field Trip to the Equestrian Center

The second portion of the program is a field trip to Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center. Students are organized into small groups and rotate through six learning stations. They will learn about grooming, saddles and tack, horseshoeing, nutrition, “make a wish on a horse” and of course, reading to a horse. Making a wish on a horse consists of kids picking a water soluble paint color, placing their thumb in it and pressing it on a horse while making a wish. At the end of the field trip, students are given an additional forever book “Little Black Goes to the Circus”.

Cost

The hard cost for this program is \$10 per child which covers both books and ability for teachers to access accompanying curricula via internet. Transportation cost for the field trip to Valley Water Mill Equestrian Center is generally covered through school funds. Currently the program is funded through donations from local businesses and churches.

Local Testimonials

Raylene Graves, First Grade Teacher - Campbell Elementary School

“The children have never been so excited to read and practice. It has had a direct positive effect on the time spent at home reading each night. For the first time, nearly all of the children are making their goal of 15 reading minutes a night because they have age appropriate material of their very own.”

Joellyn Travis, Principal, Pleasant Hope Elementary

“After petting the ponies, the teachers pointed out another glowing moment: Pleasant Hope first graders were sitting on the sidewalk with their noses in a book! They were reading with such excitement! The books you brought are treasured by the students and some who had no interest in reading are turning pages with a smile. We are very excited for our day at the farm. Thank you for this opportunity!”

Why does this program work so well?

Learning is also an emotional experience, therefore the emotional state of the learner must be taken into account. Dr. David Kolb addresses this in his research of the experiential learning cycle. He says, “Indeed it appears that feelings and emotions have primacy in determining whether and what we learn. Negative emotions such as fear and anxiety can block learning, while positive feelings of attraction and interest may be essential for learning.”

Simply stated, “To learn something that one is not interested in is extremely difficult.”

-Marcus Van, *Movement in Learning*:

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