



HHLA NEWSLETTER 2011 CAMPS

The mission of Horses in the Hood, Los Angeles (HHLA) is to introduce the Watts and adjoining communities to the joy of caring for and riding horses. This experience, and the participants' accomplishments, can open minds to pursue never before imagined possibilities. With your generous donations, HHLA organized and funded six camps this year at Mill Creek Equestrian Center in Topanga. Participating organizations for 2011 include: 92nd Street Elementary School (Watts), Bradley Milken Family Source Center (Watts), Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School (Watts), Maryvale (Rosemead), A Place Called Home (Los Angeles), St. John's United Methodist Church (Watts).

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A Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary Student.

HHLA Builds Confidence in Kids from Challenging Environments

By Daniel Santa Cruz, Healthy Start Coordinator for Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School & 92nd Street Elementary School

It's hard to believe that it's been over 10 years that our Healthy Start Program here in Watts has been sending children to the Horses in the Hood camp. This has truly been a great partnership for us as we have seen many children benefit from their week at HHLA horse camp. For many of our children this experience is the first time they have ventured out of the Watts area. I really enjoy seeing their eyes open wide as they turn the corner of the 10

Freeway and see the ocean for the first time.

The inner city of Watts, California has been filled with many hardships for the families and children who live there. Our children are faced with the constant challenges of a low socio-economic area filled with poverty, crime, random acts of violence, racial tension and the malaise of large numbers of people who are unemployed or under-employed. Survival is the name of the game. The children we work with have seen and experienced more than many adults will see in a lifetime. It is not unusual that most of our children have family members who are incarcerated or who have lost a loved one through a violent sudden death. The sound of gunshots ringing out in the night is an all too frequent occurrence in the hood. Children suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder are being seen by our counselors on a daily basis. Grief and bereavement groups are also part of the regular menu of services for the children on our caseloads.



92nd Street students receive their Graduation Certificates, while family and friends take photos.

Our children from Florence Griffith Joyner & 92nd Street Elementary Schools are really fortunate to attend Horses in the Hood. Many of them come from the Jordan Downs Housing Project—one of the most notorious in the city, where fear is an all too common theme for the children. It is wonderful that for their one week at camp, the children can be in a beautiful, peaceful, natural environment learning how to work with these big, beautiful animals. I enjoy watching the process of growth in the children as the week progresses. A fearful, timid child becomes so much more confident and capable as they proudly show off the skill to their families that they have learned during the course of the week. The benefit of this experience is immeasurable. On behalf of Healthy Start, I would like to express my great appreciation to Kathy and all the good people who support Horses in the Hood. You are making a world of difference in the lives of many beautiful children.

Horses in the Hood is a non-profit, public benefit corporation. You may obtain copies of this newsletter from our Website:
<http://www.hhla.org>.

St. John's United Methodist Church had a Special Guest!

We had an open space in the camp and Rafael, the grandfather of two of the campers (Micah and Royce), was happy to step in. Kathy says, "He was a Joy!"



Rafael "jumps" Pete over a cross-rail.



Grandson, Micah & grandfather, Rafael await instructions.



Micah jumps the same fence with Lucky.

More "Healthy Start" Program Camp Photos

92nd Street Elementary School



Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School



Horses in the Hood: A Magical Gateway

Jewel Delegall, Coordinator for A Place Called Home (APCH)

Where our kids walk to school, concrete and graffiti are the landscape. Where our kids play, violence and gangs are something to avoid - but are a part of daily life. A Place Called Home is a safe haven in South Central, LA where underserved youth are empowered to take direction of their lives through programs in education, arts, and well-being.

HHLA and APCH share this belief system and through our partnership over the past 5 years we have mutually helped children broaden their horizons and given them life changing experiences that they will never forget. Kathy Kusner and the HHLA/Mill Creek staff have shown our kids that horses are a gateway to a magical experience.

First, the scenic drive down PCH was part of each day - with the Pacific Ocean, what a change of scenery! The beautiful road through Topanga was exciting, but the real impression was made once the van dropped the kids off at Mill Creek Stable. Greeted by a warm and friendly staff, the kids were eager to meet their new friends - horses who would be not only be their partners, but their teachers as well. We are convinced that life long memories will remain close to these children's hearts! The bonds they develop with the animals and nature is a powerful and transformative experience that we have witnessed year every year. Children who were often afraid to make eye contact with a stranger, were now opening themselves to new people, and also to the horses. You could see how some of the kids learned to have their own dialogue with the animals - and with each other! A week at the HHLA camp was a constant exchange of learning between the children, the horses and the stable staff who showed gentle guidance and strong encouragement. The kids talked about their horses on the way home from each trip and ran to the stables to greet them in the morning. There was encouragement between the kids, and by the end of the week, they were helping each other groom their horses, socializing with their instructors and sharing with each other, when at the outset some of them didn't know each other's names.

Life in South Central for a child can be challenging, but as the week went by, hearts opened and smiles got brighter. When I asked the kids if they missed their horses, they all said yes and talked about how they wanted to come back.

"I liked putting the saddle on my horse and trotting. It was really fun. Next year, I'm going to bring my mom too!" Zacara Moseley, age 9.

The pizza party and graduation ceremony at the end of the week was an unexpected and wonderful ending to their camp. When back at APCH, they showed their friends the horse shoes they received after their lesson on horse shoeing. They were able to teach horse camp prospects how the shoes are applied, the different types of horses and what it's like to be at a horse stable.

When asked what was the best part of the summer, Michelle Aguilar, 16, said the following. "Horses in the Hood was the best trip all Summer." APCH offers over 70 trips during the summer - proof of how important this camp is and the impact it makes!

HHLA campers are given a disposable camera and the book *Happy Horsemanship* on their first day of camp and a blue ribbon and certificate on the last day of camp.

Horses in the Hood is a wonderful and NECESSARY experience for our kids; they are no different than any other children, but would not have the resources to do this with their own families. A Place Called Home is so grateful to Horses in the Hood for making this possible for our children and we look forward to many more camps in the years to come.



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- \$3984 Sponsors a complete five-day horse camp, including books and cameras, for 12 participants.
- \$332 Sponsors one horse camp participant for five days, buys a disposable camera & the book *Happy Horsemanship*.
- \$20 Buys a disposable camera and pays film developing costs for one horse camp participant.
- \$12 Buys the book *Happy Horsemanship* for one horse camp participant.
- \$_____ Choose your own donation toward sending children to horse camps.
- \$_____ Here is my gift in honor of/in memory of (circle one) _____
- \$_____ Wear your support for HHLA. *Please specify quantity of each size or color:*
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Make checks payable to Horses in the Hood and mail to:
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Donations may also be made by credit card
by going to our website: www.hhla.org and
clicking on the "To Give Donations" link

Confirmation of your donation will be mailed to you. All donations are tax-deductible as provided by law. Tax ID: 95-4628198

HHLA FOUNDER'S MESSAGE:



In 2011, as always, our camps were attended by totally wonderful people. (We are also helped at each camp by "too good to be true volunteers;" terrific kids who are regular riders at Mill Creek!) It's the 12th year that groups have come to Horses in the Hood. We have held 78 camps and 1036 children have participated. The mission of HHLA is "to teach and bring joy." With your help, we were able to pursue our goals with 6 camps this year.

Every dollar donation is used to send children to horse camp. Amy Landes, our Administrative Director who receives \$1,000 a month, is the only person paid by HHLA. Mill Creek Equestrian Center provides the facility where we have our camps. This includes school horses, tack, and teachers, and a wonderful ring to use for our riding lessons. Mill Creek is paid \$4,000 for each full camp. At a cost of \$2000 for the week, HHLA pays for a bus to bring a group to camp if they do not have or cannot get transportation. It costs

approximately \$3300 to produce the annual newsletter. The only other major expense is excellent, comprehensive insurance which costs \$6670 a year. Horses in the Hood supplies the paddock shoes and protective helmets for the riders. At the beginning of every camp, each rider is given a disposable camera and a wonderful book called "Happy Horsemanship". HHLA provides the Graduation Picnic that is held on the last day for campers, their friends and families, and friends of Horses in the Hood. All other work for HHLA is happily done pro bono!

All funding for Horses in the Hood comes from donors - thank you so very much! Please visit our website for a list of our future camps. We would love for any friend of HHLA to come to see any horse camp at any time, on any day.

Kathy Kuerer

WHO?

Horses in the Hood, Los Angeles (HHLA) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation that has been working with organizations and institutions in the low-income, largely African-American and Latino, community of Watts and adjacent areas since 1999. As of the October 2011, HHLA has sent 1036 at-risk youths to 78 horse camps.

WHAT?

Our primary goal is to continue to provide five-day horse day camps, which are made possible by our donors. HHLA believes that children learn by doing and that education should be rewarding and fun. Working with horses is conducive to forming emotional bonds. Shared experience promotes personal growth. HHLA hopes to teach the students new skills, which will help build their self-esteem and confidence.

WHY?

Watts is infamous for the riots of 1965 and 1992, but HHLA has been enriched by the experience with wonderful people in Watts, Compton and neighboring areas who work hard to improve their lives and their community.

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