

# The Barn



## Harmony Adoptions & Equine Assisted Psychotherapy

The Barn, a program of Harmony Adoptions, is dedicated to strengthening children and families through the use of Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP). EAP is an experiential therapy that integrates horses into the counseling process. We serve children who have experienced physical and emotional trauma and/or neglect and have been removed from their birth families. A child's reaction to stress can result in behaviors that present problems for foster and adoptive parents and can become barriers to success. The Barn offers EAP to children and youth in foster care or in adoptive families. When referred, most clients are in crisis and many are at-risk of being removed from the home.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy is especially effective in treating adolescents. The Barn helps children and youth as they work to resolve a wide variety of problems that affect the healthy development of attachment and their family relationships.

Using horses as a tool to promote emotional growth is gaining national recognition. Whether a complete equine novice or an expert rider, EAP offers a unique, challenging, and often fun form of therapy that significantly impacts the family as a whole. The children and youth learn about themselves and others by participating in structured activities with the horses, then processing their feelings and behaviors with our professionally trained clinicians. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy essentially reveals insights through analogy and metaphor. By relating their experiences with the horses to other people and issues in their lives, our clients begin to examine their negative behaviors and understand how to make positive changes.

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy offers the following benefits:

- Introduces the horse as a non-judgmental, honest friend
- Challenges students in a non-threatening manner
- Breaks down defensive behaviors
- Creates a motivating learning environment
- Builds the therapeutic relationship between the horse, child, and staff
- Fosters a child's ability to attach securely
- Teaches empathy
- Enhances a child's problem-solving and communication skills
- Provides immediate cause-and-effect situations
- Decreases feelings of hopelessness
- Stimulates creativity
- Encourages responsibility
- Captivates and holds attention
- Empowers and gives a sense of control over self
- Develops social skills
- Promotes both teamwork and individual leadership



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