

"Liz Tompkins you are such a wonderful person and amazing healer. Nathan loves being with you and the horses. He left camp yesterday with big smiles saying he loves being at the farm. During snuggles and conversation time before bed the last thing he told me was he volunteered to help clean the boys stables. He was so proud that he scooped the poop! Working with you and Zander has been the best therapy for him. He has come leaps and bounds in just the few months he has been with you. I can't thank you enough."

Wendy Koolstra-Hache

About Kindred Farm Rescue

Kindred Farm Rescue is located 30 minutes outside of Ottawa proper in North Gower. The mandate of the farm is to provide sanctuary and refuge for equines destined for slaughter and/or who have experienced abuse or neglect. As owner Tanya Boyd states, "The horses have been through pretty serious trauma." The goal is to rehabilitate the horses and help them to find forever homes. Liz Tompkins is the farm manager who has decades of horse experience. She has an intuitive ability to read a horse's mood at a glance. As such, she is able to help horses and humans develop mutually rewarding and healing relationships.



Healing Horses,
Healing Hearts
Equine Assisted Learning



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Development Coach**

"Around the world people are noticing the healing power of developing a relationship with an animal. While we have not yet figured out exactly why it works, making a friend of a sentient being that does not speak produces remarkable results for children and adults with physical or psychological issues. So, imagine the potential for troubled youth to have the opportunity to build a special bond with a horse which as been "rescued"! This is happening in an amazing program at Kindred Farm.

Liz Tompkins, a true "horse whisperer" has been using her amazing "horse sense" to give young people the thrilling experience of building a bond with a horse. Liz lets the youth set the pace and helps them understand how the horse may view the world and them.

Over several sessions, they experience the thrill of working with the horse, learning how to communicate with and care for this large animal and to have fun interacting with the horse. Imagine the excitement they feel when their horse recognizes them and shows them affection and respect. If they can do this with an animal that weighs a thousand pounds, their confidence and sense of self takes a big step up the ladder. This special experience can play a big part in helping them deal with an uncertain and changing world. I wish every troubled youth could have the opportunity to work with Liz and a horse!"

Bruce Ferguson, Psychologist, Ph.D.

Why Horses?

Horses are prey animals and, like people who have been through trauma, they rely on their heightened senses for survival. They react to and mirror emotions directly; without words. They respond to emotions with no ulterior motives. Horses possess "herd dynamics." In the process of learning about these dynamics, people can learn about themselves and their own dynamics, and begin to heal. Horses are especially helpful in the healing process because of their acute sensitivity to human behavior. Even subtle signs of stress, like tense body language or a racing heart, are detected by horses. Horses are sympathetic to these signals of stress and can mirror the psychological state of those around them. They offer a trusting bond to those who are willing to trust them in return. In this way, a meaningful relationship between horse and human can begin to calm the traumatized brain and the potential for healing occurs.



Emotional Healing

Through equine assisted activities individuals will have the opportunity to gain the skills and tools necessary for emotional healing.

Confidence:

The learning and mastery of a new skill (horsemanship), enhances individual's confidence in their ability to tackle new projects, such as recovery, and leads to improved self-esteem.

Self-Efficacy:

Learning to communicate and achieve harmony with a large animal promotes renewed feelings of efficacy. A motivated, "I can do it!" replaces feelings of helplessness and de-motivation by empowering the individuals to take on new challenges in other areas of recovery.

Trust:

Learning to trust an animal such as a horse also aids in the development, or restoration, of trust for those whose ability to trust has been violated.

Anxiety Reduction:

Many studies of human-animal interaction indicate that contact with animals significantly reduces physiological anxiety levels.

Boundaries:

Many people have been traumatized by past events. Healing takes place as people discover that the relationship with a horse occurs within the context of a respectful relationship between a person and a horse and that, although physically powerful, horses operate within the boundaries of this mutually respectful relationship.

Impulse Control:

The need to communicate with a horse calmly and non-reactively promotes the skill of emotional awareness, emotion regulation, self-control, and impulse modulation.

Other benefits of equine assisted therapy include: creative freedom, self-acceptance, improved perspective, self-awareness, communication, social skills, assertiveness and decreased isolation.

What is Involved?

Sessions include both mounted and un-mounted activities; however all participants begin with un-mounted sessions regardless of experience or comfort level. Emphasis is placed on building a relationship and participants will progress at an individual pace through activities such as handling, grooming, saddlery, horse care, learning herd dynamics, etc. No participant is required to mount a horse unless it is their goal to do so.

Safety is the number one priority at Kindred; all participants are instructed on how to remain safe around a horse; including how to read a horse's body language. Helmets are provided and must be worn at all times while around the horses. Appropriate footwear will be provided for those who do not have them.

Sessions are approximately 1 hour long and there is no requirement for how many sessions are purchased.