



Children often feel so safe with their horse that they are able to open up and share their pain.

“Teddy taught me how to love him and love other people. Just like Teddy, people are going to be stubborn. You have to compromise with them. You gotta give in a little bit and take a little back. I’ve learned so much from Teddy”

Horses help Ranch kids move past the hurt.

When kids have been traumatized by abuse, neglect, or abandonment, horse therapy can help them open their hearts again.

Past hurt—like rejection, neglect, or abandonment—can live with kids for years, only to be triggered by a new negative experience. One way horse therapy promotes healing is by providing a trusted friend who helps kids feel better about themselves.

At Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, we offer two types of equine therapies, Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP) and Therapeutic Riding.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch’s Horse Program is funded entirely through the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations. You can give a child hope through horse therapy.

Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy

Most Ranch children are here because they have been wounded by someone who was supposed to care for them and love them. To protect themselves, they shun physical and emotional closeness with other people. Because horses offer

a pure, nonjudgmental relationship, our kids can often accept physical and emotional closeness from a horse. With their horse, they don’t have to worry about rejection or criticism. Developing a relationship with a horse gives kids a chance to understand how trusting and opening their hearts can change their lives. When it works, it’s magic!

Many kids bond with a specific horse. Bonding with their horse requires them to exercise patience, understanding, attention, forgiveness, and consistency; abilities they will find useful throughout their lives. They practice these things on their horse, which makes the transition into healthy relationships less threatening.

Connecting with the horse can also reduce a child’s reluctance to talk about their thoughts and feelings. By walking alongside the horse and child, our therapists connect with children and talk about issues they are unable or unwilling to discuss in any other setting. A special relationship with their horse helps children open up to the other help they need.

Therapeutic Riding

In Therapeutic Riding, the recreational aspect of horseback riding and the basic care for horses is used to encourage physical, psychological, social, and educational benefits for children with and without disabilities. Riding a horse provides a unique, and often profound, experience. A child who learns how to build a relationship with a horse can extend this to others and form meaningful relationships with people. The trust and the loyalty of a horse demonstrate to children how important they are—they learn there is a direct correlation between action and reaction. Riding empowers kids and helps them connect on a personal level, sometimes for the first time. The unpredictable nature of a horse also creates a real-life environment in which children are able to confront their fears and make adjustments to situations beyond their control.



Patches waits patiently for her turn to spend time with a Ranch child.

Through your support of our Horse Program, you can bring hope, healing, and peace to a hurting child.



**To learn more or support the Horse Program
at Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, call 1-800-344-0957.
www.DakotaRanch.org**

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch helps kids and their families experience genuine transformation.