**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND TOURS POLICY**

**Program Goals:**

* Providing opportunities to people who might not have had contact with farm animals learning and hands on experience.
* Offering learning programs for children and teens, helping them to connect and build emotional and mental well-being through the human- animal bond.
* Providing enhancement of lifelong skills through horsemanship, based on PATH and CHA guidelines.
* A future goal to work with mental health providers and their patients, through equine assisted activities and therapies.

**Educational Philosophy:**

There have been many advancements in the care and wellbeing for our farm animals friends, as evidenced in Veterinary science. Additionally, animal and human bonding have become a recognized way to help people to heal, whether physically or emotionally. Combine these two “opportunities” with farm animals that have been discarded by society and you create a win-win situation.

 Traditionally, when an animal has out-lived its usefulness, but continues to have a good quality of life, it is the responsibility of society in general to provide it with a comfortable retirement. Many owners and others realize this.

A growing number of people, feeling the stress of social or financial factors, are less thoughtful about the final fate of animals in their possession. Thurston County has a high incidence of animal neglect and abuse due to these very issues.

The educational task before Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary is to raise awareness in the general public to the problems faced by farm animals that are no longer of use and or unable to perform its assigned tasks and has become a burden to its owner. When animals are mistreated, whether due to lack of proper understanding of their needs, or due to outright neglect or cruelty, it becomes a societal problem.

 Older and infirm animal can thrive if given special care and attention. We have found by encouraging the human-animal bond, that healing begins to take place between both. It is the task of Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary to make these management procedures known to owners and show that elder and infirmed animals (like people) are still able to be productive members in society.

**PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

**Education Directed at general Public**

Raising awareness to the plight of the difficulties faced by the geriatric and infirm animals is an important mission of Sanctuary Xs. Rescue and rehabilitation take a great amount of financial resources, knowledge and patience. Events held at the farm provide an opportunity for audience members to see and learn about this mission. We have our annual “Farmily Fun Day”, where the public gets to see and observe the animals while hearing their stories and what farm animals face in commercial farming, animal neglect and abuse.

People also get to hear about the stories of rehabilitation and hope that these animals have and what they give back to people in terms of the human-animal bond. We have various groups that book events here at the farm to share our story and mission with people.

Often people express interest in knowing more about the farm and its animals and private tours are scheduled. This must be accomplished under the direction of the Executive Director and follow all the parameters of the Educational Guidelines listed below.

We also encourage people who wish to gain a deeper insight to become volunteers, so they can learn and carry our message.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PLAN

**Equine Facilitated Learning** offers opportunity for our children and teens to learn about themselves though the interaction and relationship with people, horses and the barn environment. This learning can happen in a stall, in a pasture, on the trail or as the child grooms a pony, leads a miniature horse,  or participates in feeding chores. All students participate in the equine program, with extra time for those who have a special affinity for the horses. As an animal sanctuary there are many opportunities to experience human-animal bonding.

Barn Management teaches children horse barn duties such as cleaning stalls. Children also are involved in equine recordkeeping, helping to make financial and management and learning every aspect of operating an equine center. This vocational training builds and enhances organizational skills and allows children and Veterans to recognize their potential in the workplace. For some children the barn management experience motivates them to strive even harder academically, while for others it may pave the way for a career in the equine industry .

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapies Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.) is the non-profit credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists. PATH Intl. Certified Instructors use these equine-assisted activities and therapies to help tens of thousands of individuals each year with physical, mental and behavioral challenges gain strength and independence through the power of the horse. Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies (EAAT) helps people from all backgrounds and all walks of life in a variety of ways, including increasing strength and flexibility, improving motor skills, promoting speech and cognitive reasoning, and building relationships and social skills.

The individuals served by PATH Intl. members may face any number of challenges, including paralysis, multiple sclerosis, autism, Down syndrome, substance abuse, traumatic brain injury or amputation – but all benefit from the power of the horse . (Excerpt taken from PATH International  <https://www.pathintl.org/what-is> ) .

# SANCTUARY X READERS We are utilizing a wonderful reading curriculum  through [Red Rover Readers](https://redrover.org/readers/) . This is an innovative reading program that teaches kids the three steps to empathy: recognize emotional states, share emotional states and regulate emotions to make better decisions about how to treat people and animals.

# These reading sessions will explore values like kindness, compassion, respect and responsibility. We will be reading books from a pre-identified list and follow a research-based teaching methodology that combines listening, discussion and reflection. There is the perfect opportunity to provide supplemental enrichment activities through meeting some of the rescue animals at the sanctuary.

# CLASSESS Lil Spuds Grade PreK-2 ( with parent or caretaker) The perfect summer program for our youngest animals enthusiast’s ; Lil Spuds is designed to introduce your child to new interests and making friends in a fun atmosphere. From arts & crafts to learning about farm animals, Lil Spuds enjoy quintessential summer camp customs while making discoveries about them­selves and the world around them!

#### **Sprouts Grades 3-5 ( with parent or caretaker)** As our farmers grow, so too does their experience! Activities for Sprouts include horticultural projects, building projects, art projects, interpretive trail, animal education and interaction. Sprouts not only enhance their activity-oriented and physical skills, they gain valuable interpersonal skills to help them become more responsible and independent!

#### **Budding Farmers Grade 6-9**

Our Budding Farmers are the leaders of tomorrow! Budding Farmers enjoy the core camp program while enjoying additional activities that speak to their age and interests, including off-site day trips to other farms, advanced outdoor exploration and team-building experiences. The Budding Farmers program excels in the fun and skill-building departments counselors ensure the teens stay on track as curious, energetic young people!

**Farmers In Training (FIT)** **Grade 9-12** Our six-week program is designed for responsible teenagers who are interested in eventually working as farm counselors and docents. The summer will be filled with leadership training, learning about working with children and having fun! FITs must be entering 9th or 10th grade in September 2019. Application and interview will be required to determine acceptance into program.

**Horticulture Education**

Practical lessons in the garden enhance and reinforce theoretical learning in the classroom. Students gain respect for nature, manual work, individuals, and the community and have opportunities to grow plants, harvest vegetables, and prepare meals using produce out of the garden. An organic garden provides the grounds for learning. A Professional organic farmer and a licensed Horticulturalist will visit the gardens and offer insight and career opportunities’ in their respective fields. The farm provides vocational training and therapeutic activities for BDFS students while maintaining sustainable agricultural practices.

Advantages of participating in purposeful, supervised gardening activities:
•    Enhance self-esteem
•    Alleviate depression
•    Improve motor skills
•    Provide opportunities in problem solving
•    Encourage work adjustment
•    Improve social interaction and communication

**Equine Education**

It is Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuaries' goal to operate a superior Equine Education and Intervention program comprised of equine-facilitated learning,  vocational training in the barn. In the program, children and teens learn how to care for horses, donkeys and ponies, and to manage their own behavior and emotions to benefit their relationship with the animals.

Program activities also involve Professional Instructors who give carefully guided interactions, helping students to develop ground skills and stable management knowledge that enhance social, emotional, physical and academic growth beyond the horse barn.

Barn Management teaches children horse barn duties such as cleaning stalls. Children also are involved in equine recordkeeping, helping to make financial and management and learning every aspect of operating an equine center. This vocational training builds and enhances organizational skills and allows children and Veterans to recognize their potential in the workplace. For some children the barn management experience motivates them to strive even harder academically, while for others it may pave the way for a career in the equine industry.

**FUTURE PLANS**

 **Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy** is provided by credentialed mental health professionals who also are trained to work with horses. Strategic treatment goals for equine interactions can address self-awareness, maladaptive behavior, feelings and attitudes, peer and adult relationships, and mood.  The equine becomes an active partner in this interaction, eliciting responses, feelings and behaviors from the child and adult that are observed, evaluated and processed by the therapist.

**Guidelines**

**Animal Involvement**

Above all, any exposure to the public of the Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary animals will be done in a humane and respectful fashion.

**At The Sanctuary**

Workshops held at the farm often involve the use of a horse. Horses at the Sanctuary are never asked to be ridden or worked in any way. Horses are used only in passive ways appropriate for the abilities of the group, the type of lesson being taught and most importantly, to the abilities of the horse on that particular day. For example, a horse that is uncomfortable standing still for a length of time would not be appropriate for a lengthy talk on confirmation. Seeing, touching, grooming horses are often an integral part of the lesson. The human-equine contact is not taken lightly. All precautions are well planned out and taken seriously to protect equine and human alike.

 At functions, volunteers are assigned to be present at any equine contact with the public. Volunteers are chosen for their knowledge of the individual needs of each horse as well as what is appropriate contact. Any horse who would suffer stress from such contact will not be exposed to it.

**Off Premises**

 It is a policy of Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary that animals are not taken from the farm. Therefore any off premises workshops do not involve animals, but may include video or still photos of them.

**Leadership**

 Workshops will be held under the direction of the Executive Director only. If not run by Executive Director personally, it will be led by a qualified person chosen by same.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation forms at the end of every workshop can be used to help evaluated the success of the program. Once yearly, the Board of Directors will formally evaluate the Educational program for successes and ways to improve.

**Outreach Policy and Community Relations**

Whenever and wherever possible, it is a policy of Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary to communicate and collaborate with other rescue organizations and other equine related non-profit organizations. Currently we work with the Thurston County Sherriff’s Department, Hooved Animal Rescue of Thurston County, South Puget Sound Community Colleges’ Environmental Science Program and a number of local rescues.

**Community Relations**

Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary as an important member of the local, national and global society values its reputation and mission. Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary will be heard, its mission carried out. It is also important that Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary is not associated with causes which might be deemed as detrimental to the mission. Care will be given by all associated with Sanctuary X Farm and Sanctuary to protect this image.