



AUSTIN CHILDREN'S SHELTER
25 YEARS OF SERVICE

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Minis and Friends
P.O. Box 91704
Austin, TX 78709

Dear Sally,

It was a true delight to meet you and the "minis" today here at Austin Children's Shelter. The horses were so very well-behaved and I think it was truly a valuable educational experience for our kids. As I came back into the house I still heard some of them talking about the time with the horses. I think it was valuable also that the kids were allowed to "care for", brush, and lead the horses if they wanted to. That was something I'm sure they haven't done.

But by far, the most valuable thing for these children was the opportunity to interact with such gentle animals. You mentioned that the horses are animals of prey and therefore somewhat cautious of new situations. Well, there isn't a lot of difference between them and the kids in that way. The children we see have also been prey. They've been abused, belittled, and perhaps worst of all, neglected in a way children should not be neglected. You and the volunteers with Minis and Friends showed the kids something very different, that is, that they deserve to be treated well and to receive pleasant surprises like your visit.

There was, indeed, a certain magnetism to the event, Sally. There was one young man sitting on the picnic table, telling me how he wasn't going to spend the time to go over to see the little horses (he didn't say anything about fear, but knowing him, there could well be some there). I said that it was fine for him to be wherever he wanted. Of course, before you knew it, he was over by the horses himself, taking it all in, enjoying every moment. That only comes from gentle, non-threatening experiences that entice the kids to open up. Your being here certainly did that.

So I say thank you, Sally for this valuable event for our kids. We would love to have you come back on weekends (that sometimes get long for the kids) on a regular basis(monthly?). I look at this as a beginning of a wonderful relationship for years to come.

Sincerely,

Armin Steege
Deputy Director of Residential Programs
Austin Children's Shelter

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