

IN FLIGHT

EAGLE MOUNT-GREAT FALLS

Eagle Mount is a non-profit organization providing therapeutic & recreational activities for children and adults with physical, developmental, mental and/or behavioral challenges, striving to improve the quality of life for them and their families.



EAGLE MOUNT INFLIGHT

Spring Newsletter

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2009

Equestrian News

Written by

Michelle Boyle, Senior at CMR

Welcome To Our Herd BLONDIE



Blondie is a mechanical pony originally designed to rehabilitate injured jockeys. It was soon discovered that the "Equipony" was also a very important addition to hippotherapy programs. It helps with balance, strength, and an introduction to the real equines.

Blondie is a gift to us by the Great Falls Safari Club International. She has already become an incredible asset to our equestrian program with an added benefit of "easy keeper" with no mucking. Thank you Great Falls Safari Club for your incredible donation.

Adopt A Horse

Our herd of 15 is absolutely wonderful, but since they are donated horses they often have some health issues. We are looking for horse sponsors to help us cope with the horses' needs. Horse sponsor forms can be downloaded from the Eagle Mount website at www.eaglemount.net/support or call 454-1449 or 771-4829.



Eagle Mount Hippotherapy

Hippotherapy is defined as the use of a horse to assist with physical, occupational, and speech therapy. Walking through the doors of the Eagle Mount riding center, one finds that this classical definition of hippotherapy does not even begin to cover the therapy that every child receives.

At every class, we find Elizabeth Hansen, an occupational therapist. Elizabeth instructs these children during their sessions. Not only do the children work on strengthening their bodies by riding forward, sideways, and backwards, but they also work on their powers of speech. Elizabeth tries to teach every child how to tell the horse to stop and go or to use their voice in other ways, such as singing or reading. Hippotherapy is not all hard work; there are fun and games also. Many children enjoy helping take care of their horse by leading him around the arena and brushing him. One parent expressed that when she saw her son "having the opportunity to lead the horse, I almost cried." They also enjoy playing with rings, flags, and various other items from the collection of toys. All these activities work to strengthen the children's bodies and promote their confidence and self esteem.

Now, all this fits the classical definition of hippotherapy, but what is just as important is the emotional side of it. The bond between the horses and children is something nearly impossible to believe. For many of the children, their hippotherapy class is one of the most exciting times of the week, even though they have to work hard. All of the children have become attached and feel connections to the horses they work with. One parent tells us that her daughter "talks about him [Mouse] incessantly." Whether it is attempting to say the horses' names, or "screaming, yahoing, and hollering all the way" to Eagle Mount, the children think about their times spent at hippotherapy long after they have left the riding center.

A better definition of hippotherapy would constitute that the bond between horse and rider be placed within it. The friendship and companionship, along with Elizabeth's therapy, makes the experiences gained at Eagle Mount so much more than just therapy.

Children's Programs



Our Children's Programs have been going strong since the beginning of the school year. Our enrollment in Tippy Toes and Gymnastics has been increasing with lots of new faces.

Tippy Toes has been using some techniques of Movement Based Learning from Cece Koester who came here last March for a workshop. The goal has been to teach how to use targeted movement activities within a structure in which children may grow and learn. Tippy Toes has also been a traveling show for the community, traveling to Head Start and Young Parents Educations Center. Hopefully, bringing the children and their parents some movement, music, and play to enhance their learning.

We want to give a huge thank you to the Hassen Grotto for awesome gifts Eagle Mount and Tippy Toes have received.

Gymnastics - our gymnastics programs have been going great and we are working with lots of age groups from 18 months to 20 years of age. Our classes are special because we work with developmental age, not chronological. Right now the toddlers are learning about following directions, balance, and having fun with others, thanks to Jumpers Gymnastics.

Our older gymnastics have been working on the balance beams, the trampoline, and obstacle courses; we even have some participants working on their special routines for Special Olympics. This is all being done at and thanks to the Great Falls Gymnastics

EAGLE MOUNT INFLIGHT

Adaptive Ski



MONTANA
SCHOOL for the
Deaf & Blind
Giving kids the building blocks to life

March 19, 2009

Ms. Heather Martin
Coordinator of Operations
Eagle Mount
P.O. Box 2866
Great Falls, MT 59403

Dear Heather,

On behalf of the students and staff of MSDB, I want to thank you and all the Eagle Mount volunteers who helped to make our PF ski days at Showdown both possible and such a great success. Charlene and Bob did a terrific job of organizing the other volunteers and seeing that all of the kids had the support needed to get them out on the hill and both learning to ski and enjoying the experience. Our sit-ski kids got lots of rides and our stand-up kids all progressed to the point that they rode the chairlift!

Without the Eagle Mount program, your efforts, and the skill, talent and generosity of the program volunteers, our deaf and blind students with additional challenges would not have been able to participate with the other students in this tremendous recreational opportunity. Thank you again for all you've done for our students.

Sincerely,

Steve Gettel
Steve Gettel
Superintendent

The ski program was a success thanks to Showdown and many exceptional volunteers!



Summer Programs - MUST PRE-REGISTER 454-1449

Horsemanship (ages 4 and up)

By Appointment (771-4829)

Bowling (ages 10 and up)

Wednesdays * June 10 - Aug 26 * 4:30-6:00pm

Karate (ages 8 and up)

Mondays * June 1 - Aug 31 * 6:30-7:15pm

Fishing (ages 6 and up)

Fridays * June 5 - August 28 * 10:00am-12 noon

Tippy Toes / Play Group (ages 6wks - 5 yrs)

Tues, Wed, Thurs * June 8 - Aug 14 * 10-10:45am

Theme Summer Fun Days (ages 6 and up)

June 9 - August 13

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

(Weekly Activity Schedules Available)



EAGLE MOUNT

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EAGLE MOUNT INFLIGHT

Volunteer Michelle Boyle

This newsletter was prepared by Michelle Boyle, a senior at CMR, as her Senior Project. Michelle has been volunteering for Eagle Mount and interviewed the staff to help her with her articles. Thank you Michelle for your efforts with our newsletter and for being an exceptional volunteer!



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Volunteering ... *“Walking into any new experience, one feels so lost and out of place, whether we will admit it or not. The key is to drive past these feelings and become the best you can possibly be. This is so shown by the experience gained from volunteering with Eagle Mount. Coming into this, many people have no understanding of the children or what it takes to be an Eagle Mount volunteer. It is one of the most rewarding experiences that many people could ever gain.*

There is so much to be learned and gained from these children and their hard work. Coming into this with absolutely no experience with handicapped children, I have found a special place in my heart for them. Once you have been around these children, you learn how to be around them, and they teach you so much about having to work for what you desire.” Michelle Boyle