

April 27, 2018

To Whom It Concerns,

As an alternative education teacher with The Crossing-Kokomo Campus I am blessed to be able to take our highly at risk youth to The Narrow Gate Horse Ranch outside of Kokomo. I honestly do not know where to begin. For starters, we see our best attendance with our students on "Ranch" day. We see far fewer behavior issues with our students on "Ranch" day and on and on. Our students look forward to working with the horses. They are building relationships with these understanding animals. Our students are "clicking" and feeling as if "someone/something" gets them.

I have personally witnessed some of our roughest, toughest, hardest to reach students soften while working on the horses. Many years ago I was able to have a classroom dog. Our dog could reach students I couldn't some days. The horses are doing just that....reaching the kiddos that are a true challenge.

I highly recommend The Narrow Gate Horse Ranch that was founded by Mrs. Susan Zody. She has a passion for "at-risk" youth in our community and is blessing our children with this ranch. We have students wanting to volunteer and help in addition to their classroom experience.

While our students get to experience grooming and walking the horses, they are also expected to do a chore. This past week we learned to "muck" the stalls....scoop the poop. Our kids never even complained. They happily help so they can build on their relationships with the horses.

Most of our kiddos have "trust" issues. Working with the horses helps them learn trust in a whole new realm. Before our students leave and head back to campus, Susan has the students journal something they learned from their horse. Once again, getting our kids to write is not always easy, but our kids happily pick up their pens and write in their journals.

We are so blessed to be a part of this ministry.

Sincerely,

Donita Walters

The Crossing-Teacher