

Fun at Caledon Equestrian School and Cedar Glen

Summer is a great time for horsing around, and that's just what a couple of groups of young people have been doing the last couple of weeks.

Caledon Equestrian School, on Airport Road in Caledon, and YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Centre in King Township are in their third year of partnership bringing the equine experience to young folks.

The program started three years ago with small full-day registration. This year, the partnership provided 37 campers with a wonderful and fun horse experience.

The kids were bused in the new Cedar Glen bus for a half day morning or afternoon session. They spent portions of their day doing horse chores, learning horse care and best of all, learning to ride under the watchful eyes of the Caledon Equestrian School coaches. Each rider had a leader and there were usually at least two coaches in the arena at a time.

Friday was show day. The kids were always excited to demonstrate to their families what they had been working on all week. They played a grooming and tacking up race, rode and showed off their new skills and finished with the golf ball and spoon race.

There's always lots of concentration during the show and big smiles when the ribbons are handed out at the end. It is so satisfying to the coaches and counsellors to share their passion for horses. And both the YMCA and Caledon Equestrian School are especially thrilled to give so many kids from the vast area of the GTA the opportunity to learn about horses. The confidence they acquire, and the joy they feel are qualities both programs aspire to create in youngsters.

?'It's really exploded,?' remarked Susan Fripp, owner of the equestrian school.

She said they've been attracting kids from all over the Greater Toronto Area for the two one-week programs in partnership with Cedar Glen. She added they're hoping to offer the program for more weeks next year.

Fripp also observed the coaches helping her all started by attending camp at the school.

?'It's really nice that they had that potential with employment,?' she remarked.

The program is mainly for youngsters aged seven to 14. Some have had a few riding lessons.

?'They start off basically nervous,?' she observed. ?'By the end of the week, they're really barn hands.?'

?'They learn a lot,?' she added. ?'The amazing thing is the confidence. They're really comfortable with them.?'

Fripp added the youngster really develop a rapport with the horses and the environment.

?'It's really magical,?' she said.

Summer camps continue at both locations. YMCA Cedar Glen Outdoor Centre is open all year and offers a wide variety of summer day camps from environmental science, hiking, biking, swimming lessons, farm camp and many more. But if its horses one is interested in, come join the horses at Caledon Equestrian School for a fun week of horse camp for the remainder of this summer.

For further information check out caledonequestrian.com or ymcagta.org



Horses and young riders were being put through their paces at Caledon Equestrian School recently.



Nicole Miasik, 12, of Etobicoke, was getting assistance mounting Mira from counsellor Martin Nash and coach Cameron Scheffler.