

Be A Star for A Child

The Story of Carpe Diem Farm's Annual Benefit

The children had an idea! That idea sparked *Children Helping Children*, which sparked adults helping children. With the help of the community, that spark ignited into a reality. The first annual **BE A STAR FOR A CHILD** benefit was held in June 2003 at Carpe Diem Farms.



It all came about with the children who had participated in Gar's Kids Camps that summer. They had an idea...to create artwork to reflect their camp experiences. They thought that if their art could be sold, it could provide scholarships money for other kids to come to camp.

Where do you go with an idea like that? You act on it! The first Be A Star committee was formed. The committee took the children's idea and created a benefit dinner and auction. In addition to the children's art, the first auction included works by local artists.

Over the past four years, the annual event has expanded and evolved, while still remaining true to the spirit of the children's idea. We now offer live entertainment, tours of the farm, a meet-and-greet with the horses, dancing, a gourmet meal as well as an expanded auction with donated items (this year's auction included a diamond Rolex watch, Mad River canoe, and limited edition serigraph by LeRoy Neiman). Our fourth annual **Be A Star for a Child** benefit this August was one of the most successful events in Carpe Diem history. Thanks to our generous and committed supporters, we raised over \$20,000, covering one-eighth of our annual budget!

With support from caring community members, we can continue to make the magic of Carpe Diem Farms a reality for all children.

Carpe Diem Farm's History since September, 1992 ...

- Incorporated in North Carolina, September, 1992
- Carpe Diem Farms achieved 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization, designation from the IRS, January, 1993
- Equine program begins at Cold Springs, Spring 1993
- Purchased 44 acres off Buck Creek Road in Highlands, NC (site of a former asphalt plant) and restored it to its pristine and natural conditions, August 1997
- Designated an Audubon Sanctuary in 1999.
- Installed the infrastructure to accommodate daily and overnight visitors.
- Built barns, paddocks and riding rings.
- Acquired and trained additional horses to serve as the “equine staff.”
- Began Women Over 50 Riding Camp, which evolved into our *In the Company of Horses...Learning their Language* program for adults.
- In the spring of 2001, the equestrian program became the “Gar’s Kids Experiential Adventure” therapeutic equestrian, art and nature program, which has served more than 1,200 children since its inception.
- Established the “Boot Camp” volunteer program. Since the start of the program, volunteers have painted the Farm buildings, completed interior and exterior renovations of Dead Eye’s Barn, and added a new guest wing to the Lodge.
- Began an ambitious physical plant development plan with the renovation of *Dead Eye’s Barn* into a conference center and dining hall and commercial kitchen. Completed June 2003.
- June 2003, First annual Be A Star for A Child benefit to support the after school and summer camp programs.
- April 2004, Received \$100,000 kick-off grant from Janirve Foundation for the construction of indoor experiential riding arena.
- Hosted numerous conferences, workshops, classes and programs,featuring local and nationally known presenters and facilitators.
- Renovated the Lodge with the help of volunteers. The space can now accommodate up to twelve guests in beautifully appointed rooms.
- May 8, 2006 began construction of the 8,000 square foot riding arena.
- Experiential Riding Arena ribbon cutting ceremony held on August 19, 2006 as part of Be A Star for A Child, our annual benefit.

Carpe Diem Farm's One-of-a-Kind Programming

Who do we Serve?

The concept for CDF began in the mind, heart and soul of an 8 year old battered child who had a hero, a best friend, a confidant and a soulmate....a horse she named "High Hopes." The idea, which would lay dormant for 30 years manifested for that woman with a new soul mate, confidant and best friend, a horse named "Delta" her "Precious Promise." Knowing how horses empowered her life, Sue Blair began a program for children in 1993 to teach the magic and miracles of the horse. One child at a time, she and Delta taught children life skills: communication, responsibility, overcoming fears (both real and imagined), trust, boundaries, teamwork, appreciation for others and so much more. Children's lives were changed significantly --- their school work improved as did their social skills. By 1996, Blair discovered that there were other programs across the country doing similar things with horses. Psychologists, therapists, social workers were using horses and having tremendous results as well. She expanded the program and began to work with battered women. In 1998 the program moved to its permanent home at CDF. More horses were added for a total of five. Delta died in the spring of 1999. Though sadness shrouded the farm at losing this powerful friend and teacher, her legacy, the experiential adventure of the horse program has grown, developed, and expanded to become a vital stepping stone for "at risk" kids.

In November 2000, Blair's brother, Gary, her ardent supporter and "#1 Volunteer" was killed in an auto accident. He was a champion for kids. Out of his death, through the generous financial gifts from family and friends the Gar's Kids Experiential Adventure began in the spring of 2001. Twenty-five children ages 8-12 participated the first year.

Our audience is children in Macon County who are "at risk/high risk" ages 7-17. The statistical data is staggering.

Target Audience 3,699 Children: (1999 US Census Data)

- .. 3,632 are Medicaid eligible (their families earn on average \$14-18,000/year)
- .. 381 are on NC Choice (not Medicaid eligible, earn less than \$25,000/year)
- .. 642 are in the poverty population
- .. 546 live in single mother household
- .. 551 abuse cases have been reported
- .. 2,197 of our target group are on the subsidized meal program
- .. 18 are in foster care
- .. 13 are in DSS custody
- .. 25 in detention centers
- .. 467 are learning disabled
- .. 6 reported pregnancies ages 10-14 and 496 ages 15-19

The statistics represent a multitude of issues which impact our children such as low self-esteem, low self-confidence, poor interactions with peers, teachers and others, depression, lack of boundaries, irresponsibility, lack of motivation, sadness, sometimes antisocial behaviors, lack of positive role models and confidants.

These are only the statistics that are reported. Statistics don't show the tears, the outbursts of anger or the feeling of hopelessness lodged in the very hearts of many of these children. At Carpe Diem Farms, we get to know the names, faces, personalities and stories behind the statistics. The horses of CDF see each child, his or her issues and problems, without judgement, prejudice, or preconceived notions. Today the horses that participate in the healing work of Carpe Diem become the confidants and soul mates for these at-risk kids, empowering individuals just as High Hopes and Delta once did.

About Carpe Diem Farms Programs...

The program offerings at Carpe Diem Farms are many and varied. Participants of all ages enjoy the opportunity to be in the splendor of nature while learning valuable life enhancing skills. Local and nationally known educators, facilitators and leaders provide workshops and seminars throughout the year. A sampling...

For youth and at risk/high risk children

Life skills development through structured camps and after school programs.

Sample offerings include:

- ◆ Arts and crafts/Art Therapy
- ◆ Horse care and maintenance
- ◆ Bonding with the herd
- ◆ Beginning riding in a round pen
- ◆ Environmental Studies
- ◆ Orienteering
- ◆ Native American Studies
- ◆ Horticulture
- ◆ Native tree and plant identification
- ◆ Life Transition Camps



For adults facing/seeking life changes and personal growth

- ◆ Women and Art
- ◆ Women over 50 experiential camps
- ◆ Personal growth and development through book studies
- ◆ Journaling
- ◆ Yoga, breathery, meditation
- ◆ Corporate leadership development
- ◆ Grief and loss workshops
- ◆ Life changes series
- ◆ Adventures in Awareness
- ◆ TTouch/TTeam
- ◆ In the Company of Horses...Learning Their Language

