



HARDWORK, HORSES, AND SMILES

CONTRIBUTED BY ELIZABETH COCHRAN, YMCA CAMP ERNST
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CAMP ERNST

Recently at camp, I saw a camper filling up her palms with apple cores. I gave her a bowl for them and asked what her plan was. Her face exploded into a proud smile. "I'm going to feed them to my horse!"

At YMCA Camp Ernst, kids in our horse programs smile a lot. Those smiles reflect hard work cleaning stalls and combing manes, the satisfaction of controlling a 1,000-pound animal through a barrel course or rugged trail, and the confidence gained from friendships built not just with animals but with fellow horse-lovers.

I can say this from personal experience: as a twelve year old, I was a participant in the Camp Ernst Ranch program! I distinctly remember being proud to know how to tighten a cinch on a saddle, and the thrill of crossing a creek on horseback. During the school year, my friends and I would reminisce about "our" camp horses (Sunbar, Runner, Cookies) and look forward to riding them again the following year.

Now, more than 25 years later, I have seen our Rockin' E Ranch grow, and thousands of kids grow in skill and confidence along with it.

In the new Equine Adventure Camp (ages 10-14) and Advanced Riders Camp (ages 12-15), participants will spend the whole week devoted to



horses. They'll stay in cabins with the other ranch campers and learn the ins and outs of horse care and riding. They'll do arena lessons, trail rides, and ground training. The week (Sunday through Saturday) costs \$690 which includes all activities, riding lessons, food, lodging, and supervision.

The Rockin' E Ranch at YMCA Camp Ernst has something for all levels of horse interest and experience.

Contact Ranch Program Director, Natalie Hamilton (nhamilton@myy.org) or register online www.myYcamp.org

or by phone 859-586-6181.

An Open House (with opportunities to meet the horses and also the human staff) to be held Sunday May 31 from 1-4pm, held at YMCA Camp Ernst: 7615 Camp Ernst Rd; Burlington, KY 41005.

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