Reading Aloud to Horses – Now Why Do That??

Photo of Giovanni, Anastasia (volunteer) and Ortega by Nancy Koren

If you are a youngster grades K through 6, and you have trouble when you have to read aloud in class, reading isn't much fun, is it?

How about coming out to Heaven Can Wait Horse Sanctuary in San Miguel one day a week and sitting down with a new four-legged friend, a horse that you can read aloud to from any book you want, for almost half an hour. Your horse friend won't correct your pronunciation, or laugh if you miss a word. He doesn't care how slow or fast you read, or what level you read at.

Your horse friend likes hearing your voice and having you read to him. If you want, you can reach out any time and give his soft nose a pat. You relax because you know your friend is enjoying just having your company.

Parents, we invite you to try this free program designed to make reading fun rather than fearful. A volunteer will be with your child, handling the horse at all times while he or she reads, because safety is our first concern.

If your child wants help with a word, the volunteer is there to support and encourage. If not, the child is free to continue working words out for him or herself.

This program has been perfected using dogs to read to in libraries and schools in many cities, such as Pleasanton, CA where "Paws to Read" inspired this "Word Herd" variation. The horses at Heaven Can Wait range from tiny miniatures to enormous Thoroughbreds but all in the program are gentle, quiet and affectionate. One of the secrets to The Word Herd is that no parents or teachers, no human

audience except the volunteer is present while a child reads. The horses are entirely non-judgmental, and the child knows this. Another integral concept is that a child has a reading session once a week at the same day and time, something he or she will look forward to with joy. We hope once you and your child have experienced The Word Herd, you will commit to a 6-week once-per-week group of sessions. Donations are gratefully accepted but not required.

Parents have their own areas to relax, watch the horses and donkeys, read or work while a session is in progress. Each child receives a little memento of each session, too.

Horses are beautiful and noble creatures, much beloved of many children. We extend an invitation to parents to take advantage of a uniquely effective reading improvement program. So simple, yet such great results.

Call Susan at 805/368-5702 to set up a date and time for a 25 minute reading session with a horse for your child. One child, one horse, one caring volunteer, one love of reading.

Heaven Can Wait is a registered non-profit equine rescue and sanctuary accredited since 2008 by the American Sanctuary Association and located at 6275 Cerros Pioneros Way in San Miguel, CA. See our website at www.heavencanwait.us, too.