

A Message From Grace 😊

This summer, I had the honor of directing the Lead from the Heart Program. This program served late middle and early high school kids, helping them practice important leadership skills. Our goal was to encourage these kids to grow into kind, understanding, and confident members of the community. I went into this program unsure of what it would look like, but it became better than any of us imagined.

Six young women participated in Lead from the Heart this summer, all being nominated by someone to be part of the program. As we worked with the horses, we focused on different aspects of leadership and how we can apply them. They practiced patience by training the horses to do something new. Desensitizing the horses taught them to be empathetic and meet someone where they're at. Another exercise with the horses taught them to set and enforce boundaries. Each week, their experience with the horses helped them build these skills, creating the confidence needed to be a leader.

On the last day of the program, the girls had the opportunity to show everything they had learned. They created a tri-fold presentation and added projects they had worked on each week. These projects represented activities with the horses, and what they had learned from each of them. During the showcase, members of the community and local leaders came to see the result of Lead from the Heart. It was so special and inspiring to hear each of the girls who participated explain everything they had learned. They spoke with confidence and pride, especially when introducing the horses to their friends and family.

For myself, the best part of the showcase was hearing how much these girls had loved the program. When every one of them asked to come back as a volunteer, I knew we must have done something right. I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to direct this program and to have had the privilege of watching them learn and grow.

To my Lead from the Heart girls- THANK YOU for making this program so amazing and for letting me be a part of your journey. I am so proud of all of you!

To Emi- Thank you for being my co-pilot and go-to person this summer. I couldn't have done it without you!