

July 6, 2011

Re: The Horse Connection Inc.

Dear Sir or Madame:

Our division, Pembina Trails School Division, has been the benefactor of The Horse Connection program since its inception in 2002 and I am writing this letter of support for this exceptional program.

The program operates as an Alternative Learning and Life Skills program that provides an educational horseback riding program together with the public schools, which empowers students to stay connected with their education.

The programming is currently offered within all middle years schools in Pembina Trails with a ten week fall and spring session. The program is delivered through two part-time staff positions and many additional volunteers.

Pembina Trails School Division has been very fortunate to have Horse Connection throughout our schools. We have observed our young people develop responsibility, begin to initiate and take initiative through all aspects of their educational program, as well as work cooperatively.

Through this program our students have developed a deeper appreciation and increased knowledge of animals and nature through the association of handling and riding horses. They have developed an awareness of emotional well-being, self-confidence and trust in one's self and others through the process of learning to handle and ride a horse.

From the program content, dedicated staff and committed volunteers, Horse Connection has become an invaluable support to students who require alternatives to regular classroom programming.

In a recent document from Manitoba Education Executive Summary, it described the Role of Schools as "It is important that school materials and curricula are suited to the modern interests of school children. This includes developing new areas of applied learning and skills training".

We have found the Horse Connection not only supports this directive but actually ensures student engagement, that leads to higher attendance rates and connecting in a

meaningful way to school. It empowers our youth to foster and promote altruistic values that become part of their lifelong learning.

As a division, we would highly support Horse Connection as a valued resource for students in our school division. The staff, as well as the many volunteers, has made a tremendous impact on our students and their families. The students have also developed a deep, meaningful appreciation for these animals and their care.

If you require any further information regarding the Horse Connection Program and the impact it has had on our students, please do not hesitate to call.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Friesen
Director of Clinical & Extended Services

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- c. L. Lussier, Superintendent, Pembina Trails School Division
- W. MacDonald, Activity Leaders Horse Connection
- B. Godin, Activity Leaders Horse Connection