



Italian Home
for Children



Foster kids, horses form lasting bonds

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Mel Lambert, founder of Mel's Pony Pals and owner of Club Ex Fitness, joined Boston Herald Radio's "Morning Meeting" show yesterday to talk about her horses, her work with foster children and ways listeners can help out.

Q: How did your family get involved with foster children?

A: My family and I and a couple of my friends that volunteer their time and effort became visiting resources to children who are in group homes. We bring our horses and we travel to the group homes and visit the children who ride our Clydesdale and American Warmblood. We put reins on their halters when they ride and it empowers them and it's a spiritual connection with the children and the horses. It brings a lot of healing. We also do toy drives and gift drives for the Department of Children and Families in Brockton, St. Vincent's and the Cranwood Italian Home for Children.

Q: Is there a way to describe how interacting with the horses helps the children?

A: The kids remember us because we do this all year long. They remember us, the ponies' names. They pat them and braid them. It's an amazing experience and we really love the work.

Q: Can you talk about the giving tree set up to help these children?

A: We at Club Ex in East Bridgewater for years have been doing a Giving Tree. Kids ask for gloves and mittens and coats. Our friends bring in coats and gifts and there are so many more that just don't know how to help. Gifts can be dropped off at 649 Oak St., East Bridgewater, and a location at 838 Crescent St., Brockton. We have an email that they can contact, Careforkidsgifts@gmail.com or they can visit my Facebook page, Mel's Pony Pals.

Q: There's a book about the kids and the ponies, "Reggie." It looks like a blast.

A: I wrote a book and named it "Reggie" and all of the actual ponies and horses that the kids ride are in the book. The book is dedicated to children in foster care because they are amazing kids with courage and kindness and compassion and so much that the general public doesn't know about. The thing about horses is there's a connection. They really connect with the kids and the kids attach to the horses and trust them and then they trust us. It helps with the attachment with people. The kids bond with us and we give them a pocket pony to hold on to the memory they had with our horses. It's very healing and to be honest we get more out of it than the kids do.

Q: When do you need to collect the gifts by?

A: Dec. 20 would be good. The more people that are involved and that know and give — the gifts actually make a child's Christmas come true.