



CASA Candy Kuhn takes her foster child horseback riding at the Joyful Footsteps event at Blue Apple Ranch on Sept. 27.

RUN BY POWAY-BASED CHARITY

Blue Apple Ranch hosts foster kids

Youngsters in San Diego County foster care and their Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) recently spent the day experiencing ranch activities at Blue Apple Ranch, a 277-acre full-functioning ranch in Ramona focused on inspiring underserved youth to be compassionate, healthy and responsible through its innovative programs with animals and nature.

“We are thrilled to have provided these deserving kids and their CASA with a back-to-basics, outdoor experience,” said Adrienne Holmes, executive director of the Poway-based Toby Wells Foundation, the organization that operates the ranch. “The kids spent time interacting with and riding horses, playing outdoor games and just getting to be kids, finishing with an outdoor picnic with their CASAs.”

Participants spent a fun-filled “Joyful Footsteps” day at the ranch with volunteers from the Toby Wells Foundation hosting the many activities. At this state-of-the-art facility specializing in bringing underserved youth and animals together, the kids and their CASAs enjoyed carnival games, miniature horses, rock climb-

ing, caricature artist drawings, face painting and many other exciting festivities. A barbecue lunch was also served.

“Joyful Footsteps is one of our favorite programs for both the kids and their CASAs,” said Sabrina Goosby, vice president of training and volunteers for Voices for Children. “This is also an event where many of our kids get to spend the day with siblings who they have been separated from.”

Joyful Footsteps is just one component of the community outreach activities at the ranch. The Blue Apple Ranch internship programs with San Pasqual Academy offer foster youth a place to grow and gain confidence while “test driving” the field of horsemanship, and with their newfound skills, graduating interns have the opportunity to apply for summer jobs at the ranch. The ranch offers a number of opportunities for community service projects with Promises 2 Kids Guardian Scholars and scout troops. Additionally, Boys to Men, a local middle-school mentoring program for at-risk boys, is also developing programs at Blue Apple Ranch.