


MUSKOKA Auto Detail




Rhino Linings
THE SPRAYED-ON LINER™

WORLD-CLASS PROTECTION FOR ALL TRUCK BEDS

**NOTHING BEATS
A REAL RHINO**

Gift Certificates Available



Rhino
VEHICLE PROTECTION™
A Division of Rhino Linings Corporation

**SPECIAL
SAVE \$100
on Raider
Truck Caps**

DRESS UP YOUR VEHICLE
with

- Raider Truck Caps • Running Boards
- Vent Visors • Bug Deflectors • Mud Flaps
- Lift Kits • Folding/Fiberglass Tonneau Covers
- Back Racks & Much More

CALL US ABOUT VEHICLE DETAILING TOO!

For more information please contact us at 705-646-9070
or visit us at 54 E.P. Lee Drive, Bracebridge

www.muskokaautodetail.ca



Photograph: Corey Wilkinson

Erin Edwards is offering a program with her horse Shandon. Jacquelyn Gilchrist, Erin's mom Jane Edwards and Walker Camick visit with Shandon.

Pairing special kids with therapy horses

By Melissa Kosowan

Horse trainer Erin Edwards is bringing the healing powers of equine therapy to her Kilworthy farm through a new riding program for children with special needs.

Encouraged by her aunt, who works for Community Living South Muskoka, Edwards applied for funding through a parent respite initiative fund managed by the Muskoka Parry Sound & Nipissing District Respite Planning Network.

"It's a way to encourage parents to get their kids out and get them involved in not only sports, but socialization and getting them around other kids," says Edwards.

To date, six participants have expressed interest in visiting Muskoka Trails Riding Academy to take part in the program. There they will have the opportunity to meet and ride Arabian horses, a breed known for its spirited yet gentle demeanour.

Although the program is just out of the gate, Edwards has already seen the magic of horses at work. One of her most recent visitors, a four-year-old girl, wandered around shyly with her head down when she first arrived. By the end of her visit, however, her attitude completely changed.

"She was holding my hand and climbing up on the fence to pet the horses. She went home and was super excited," Edwards recalls. "She wants to come back. It's nice to see something so simple. That's the easiest lesson I've ever given in my life, but the kid went home so happy

and so fulfilled and all we did was wander around and she got to see the horses and touch them."

Edwards, a decorated show rider with national wins to her credit, has seen firsthand the power of horses. When she worked as a trainer in the United States she was in charge of the horses used in a therapeutic riding program operating out of the stable where she worked. She recalls one boy who spoke to his horse, giving it commands and offering words of praise. The significance of the boy's words was lost on Edwards until she learned he didn't speak in his day-to-day life.

"He never said anything to anybody and yet he was speaking to the horse, giving him commands, telling him to walk and whoa," Edwards says, explaining how she didn't find out about his progress until someone from the program told her. "She kind of pulled me aside and said, 'You don't know how big a deal that is because this kid really says nothing.'"

While some participants of the program may prefer to just visit the horses, Edwards will design specialized riding programs for those who want to climb in the saddle. One young participant is particularly good with numbers, so Edwards will use number cards around the arena to cater to his unique interests and learning style.

"I hope they all take something away from it," says Edwards. "Whether it's physically or mentally or both."