

Le château de la chanson d'esprit

Le château de la chanson d'esprit, currently under construction, is expected to be operational by the Summer of 2009. Also known as Spirit Song Riding Academy, it will offer a comprehensive horsemanship program promoting character and confidence building in young people by educating participants on the benefits of partnership with the horse through the methods of natural horsemanship and balanced riding.

Spirit Song is a place where the spirit of a horse touches the spirit of a person, allowing each individual spirit to grow."

Our goals are as follows:

1. To build a partnership between horse and rider through the use of "natural" horsemanship techniques in accordance to the instincts of the horse.
2. To develop confidence in the rider through establishing a balanced seat of "centered" riding.
3. To increase character in the individual through the instruction of horsemanship skills, to include horse and barn management education,

We strive to achieve these goals by the following strategy objectives:

1. Round Pen training in the techniques of Natural horsemanship by educating participants in the ways of the horse.
2. Mounted instruction in Centered Riding through the understanding the mechanics of the human body as it relates to the mechanics of the horse's confirmation and movement.
3. Education of Horsemanship skills - Instruction in horse health and care requirements, organization and safety of stable and pasture areas; ground training of the horse to achieve maximum fitness and performance.

Spirit Song equestrian center of Anna, Texas is located on 22 acres in the Blackland Prairies of North Texas, just 50 miles northeast of the Dallas/Ft Worth International Airport. Facilities include a 7,800 square foot conference center with dormitory style housing for program participants, a large modern stable with 20 horse stalls, 2 wash racks, 2 tack rooms as well as offices and a client lounge. A large outside jumping arena will be operational upon opening, along with 2 training round pens and open land for trail riding. It is projected by the summer of 2009 that a covered arena will house a regulation large standard dressage arena as well as an observation deck, classroom and additional restrooms.

Groups are limited to 20 participants or less, to allow instruction and training of horse and rider teams on an individual basis as needed. The venue of training will be in the form of mounted equestrian drill teams - riding patterns choreographed to music. Each drill team will consist of 10 horse and rider combinations. Each team will develop their own choreographed pattern performed to music of the team's choosing.

Starr McAlexander, owner of Spirit Song, is program director and lead instructor of the Le château à la chanson d'esprit program. She began riding ponies at the age of 5 years old. Her innate love and natural aptitude for riding has continued for 50 plus years, developing horse management skills and experience, through her own horse ownership and training of horses, from foals to seniors. In each session she adjusts riding and training styles to meet the needs of each individual horse. This philosophy has carried over to her instruction of beginner riders through the intermediate level.

Ms. McAlexander's equestrian education began with membership in local 4-H Horse and Pony Clubs in Pennsylvania and continued with riding instruction in centered riding and jumper Houston, Texas. Her experience grew in Singapore when for two years she was an exercise rider at a saddle club on the island of Sentosa.

Upon returning to the USA in 1984, Ms. McAlexander was show groom for her then 16 year old son, while he was in training under a 1988 silver individual and team Olympic medalist. In 1997, Starr founded Two Point

Meadows Riding Academy, devoting her time to teaching students involved in the U.S. Pony Club. From the years 2000 to 2004, she was a horse management judge for the Dressage, Eventing and Show Jumping US Pony Club regional rallies.

Since 2004, she has provided a family oriented riding atmosphere for young people in which parents are encouraged to be involved. She takes pride in each student's achievement and growth, whether they progress to a university's equestrian team or remain at the riding academy, instructing other students at the academy's summer camps. Every instructor is taught the methods of instruction, tailored to the student's unique learning style.