

## PROGRAM REPORT: 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL ECHO HILL RANCH FAMILY CAMP- July 27-30, 2012

### OVERVIEW AND GOALS

#### THE 2<sup>ND</sup> Annual FAMILY CAMP AT ECHO HILL RANCH

In the summer of 2012, Echo Hill Ranch in partnership with the Harris County Children's Protective Services Special Fund conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Family Camp for families participating in the Region VI DFPS Kinship Care Program.

Kinship Care supports children who because of abuse or neglect must live outside of their own home, either temporarily or permanently with their relatives--- caregivers may be an adult brother, sister or cousin, or uncle, aunt or grandparent. The Family Camp is the only overnight camp in the nation that includes the entire Kinship Care family.

Family Camp goals are to create positive experiences that bring families closer together, build self-confidence and trust in all the children, and provide much needed support and relaxation for the adult caregivers.



**2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL FAMILY CAMP BY THE NUMBERS:** 8 families, 11 adult caregivers, 25 children (ages 4-14), 2 Kinship Care staff, 20 Counselors, 4 days, 3 nights, countless memories.

**PROGRAM COSTS & FUNDING:** \$18,500 has been contributed by 48 Echo Hill Alumni and friends to the Family Camp Fund at the 501(c) 3 Harris County Children's Protective Services Special Fund. This covered actual 2012 expenses of \$15,000 with \$3,500 left for the Family Camp in 2013.



#### WHAT FAMILY CAMP PARTICIPANTS HAVE TO SAY:

**Kristina Belcher, Kinship Care Program Director:** "...Family Camp has proven to be an innovative opportunity to provide valuable family connections to Kinship Caregivers and the children residing in their homes...I was very impressed with how quickly families made Echo Hill their second...home... The beautiful relaxing scenery and the accommodating, generous, exciting Echo Hill staff swiftly eased the families' burdens. The non-traditional family became one as they participated in activities... Having our meals as a group created a sense of unity...camp songs brought smiles ...I am confident our collaboration, DFPS and Echo Hill, will continue to result in a meaningful and educational experience for Kinship Caregivers raising their relatives. This experience will truly not be forgotten."

**Mrs. Linda Hicks, Caregiver:** "The most valuable parts of the Family Camp were meeting people, making new friends and doing positive things together as a family...and the love that we felt from all of the counselors. All of this we'll carry with us forever."

**Ms. Yolanda Garza & Mr. Mario Valdez, Caregivers:** "Doing things we don't normally do together was the most valuable part like swimming, horseback riding, archery and the BURGERS! Memories of doing these things as a first together will have a lasting positive effect on our family."

**Mrs. Nolton LaFleur & Ms. Debra LeFleur, Caregivers:** "The family time without phones, TVs or any other things from the outside was the best part. We now realize we need more family time. We loved all the activities and we miss it already!"

**Mrs. Amy Boehm, Caregiver:** "The time we spent together in circle and giving kudos to everyone...the kids thought that was great...it's hard for us to speak in public and I think that was an example for our family that we as parents don't do enough. Spending time just with the family and counselors and getting away from the city and electronics was like a new beginning for us."

**Ms. Debbie Mendez & Ms. Elizabeth Cruz, Caregivers:** "To be able to experience things of nature without the outside world will be an everlasting memory. Brianna conquered a lot of fears, main one is that she can trust others. Carlos who is typically shy could not stop talking. I still can't believe how brave they were...I am building good memories for Brianna...The kids' confidence has reached a higher level of expectation."

**Comments from Echo Hill Family Camp Counselors:** "Family camp re-inspired me to teach children." - "I really appreciated caregivers and the great act of love they do for the world." - "The kids and caregivers are so amazing and so positive...it gives me faith in the human race!" - "I noticed new strengths that I have and realized I'd like to minor or double major in social work."

**TO MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE PAYPAL DONATION FOR THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL FAMILY CAMP IN 2013 OR TO GET MORE INFO: Go to [www.echohill.org](http://www.echohill.org) or contact Dr. Roger Friedman, Camp Director at [ehbranch@aol.com](mailto:ehbranch@aol.com) or 301-588-4442.**