

ROAD'S END FARM

HORSEMANSHIP CAMP

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The Participants



No matter how impressive a camp's guiding principles, activities, and facilities may be, they are all for naught without the right combination of young people to make them meaningful and memorable. At Road's End Farm every effort is made to recruit an excellent staff and to appeal to campers who will appreciate the camp's lovely farm environment and low-key program. Ever mindful that the diversity of a well-rounded group of girls maximizes each girl's opportunity to broaden her horizons, every effort is also made to attract campers from far and wide. Not surprisingly, the fruits of these efforts are readily apparent in the thriving friendships and good-natured quality of life that abound at the camp each summer no matter the amount of rainfall or number of sunny days.

The Directors

As the camp's director, Tom Woodman blends enthusiasm with experience to enrich the lives of the campers, one and all. He enjoys a fine rapport with the girls and the staff stemming from his informal manner and familiarity with their many expectations. Born in 1948 and having lived at Road's End Farm for all but ten of his years, Tom is versed in all aspects of the camp's operation, except for the cooking. His years away from the farm were spent earning two engineering degrees, a baccalaureate from Syracuse University and a master's from Clemson University, as well as fulfilling his military obligation as a lieutenant in the Coast Guard.



Since becoming the director in 1976, Tom has steadfastly maintained the camp's family ambience while expanding the Farm's potential as an inviting place for recreation and renewal during each of the four seasons. Like his folks before him, he relies upon his knowledge of the Farm and genuine concern for young people to make the camp a lighthearted learning experience for the campers and counselors alike.



In the role of program director since 1988, Alicia Eitzman brings to the camp energy to spare, an athletic nature, and an unwavering compassion for children, animals, and the environment. Aside from providing hands-on oversight of the camp's daily activities, Alicia is tireless and intuitive in seeing to the physical and emotional well-being of every camper and each counselor. Before coming to the Farm, Alicia received a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Michigan State University and a Master's of Education from Antioch New England, and then worked with at-risk students in the Brattleboro, Vermont school system.

'Twas just by happenstance that one day she came to the end of Jackson Hill Road in search of wildflowers and, as fate would have it, stayed on as one in the eyes of the girls, the staff, and most of all, Tom. Always in bloom, Alicia adds immeasurably to everyone's stay at Road's End Farm, especially those who get a taste of her cooking and her sense of humor.

The Instructors

Any camp worthy of aspiring equestriennes must offer tutelage capable of furthering their youthful ambitions. Road's End Farm discharges this obligation with two even-tempered and soft-spoken women who know a thing or two about horses and how to teach others to ride them well. In Susan Lawson-Kelleher and Lesley TanCreti, who have been associated with the camp program since 1996 and 2000 respectively, the campers have dedicated and readily approachable mentors who truly have practiced what they now unpretentiously preach.

Growing up on her family's sizeable dairy farm alongside the Connecticut River, Susan started riding when she was ten years old and soon after became the proud owner of the first of her many horses over the years. Already successfully showing cows at that young age, she soon broadened her participation in the 4H organization to include horse shows and related activities. Not surprisingly, Susan went on to complete with distinction a baccalaureate curriculum in animal science at the University of New Hampshire that included hands-on coursework instructing riders. Throughout the years she has remained actively involved with the 4H by serving in a number of leadership roles at both the county and state levels. From coaching New Hampshire's Quiz Bowl teams from 2002 to 2008 to judging 4H and junior horse shows in NH, NY, and VT, she brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the camp's equestrian program. Living nearby, Susan spends her summertime mornings at the Farm generously imparting her expertise on all things equine and so much more to inquisitive girls.



A Green Mountain girl at heart, Lesley grew up riding across meadows and along country lanes in view of nearby Mount Ascutney where later in life she would spend her winters teaching skiing. Riding from the age of four and owning several horses over the years, she worked her way up to grooming and then competing on the Hunter/Jumper A-circuit. Becoming disillusioned with the toll the quest to win at that level takes on many horses and some riders, Lesley stepped away from showing after a few years and began teaching riding with an eye to making the experience pleasurable for both the rider and the horse. Her remarkable work ethic and willingness to share her considerable know-how, learned the hard way from the bottom up, easily earn Lesley the respect of the campers and counselors alike. Lesley works full-time at the Farm and during the off-season is responsible for the well-being and continuing education of the horses and ponies, some of whom are not exemplary scholars.

The Staff

As a camp program is only as effective as the people who implement it, considerable thought goes into the choice of the resident camp staff at Road's End Farm. Prerequisites for selection to the staff include competence, a sincere desire to work with children, and the ability to serve as an admirable role model. Once chosen, staff members are often reminded of the virtues of kindness, teamwork, and leadership by good example. Ten counselors, two cooks, and a registered nurse who is on-call and stops by regularly, assist Alicia and Tom in providing positive camp experiences for everyone. Deserving seventeen-year-olds, who have been campers at the Farm and know which end is up, also lend helping hands as counselors-in-training.



The senior counselors, each well-qualified in one or more facets of the camp program, help one another in conducting the various camp activities. Aiding them are counselors new to the camp, who are also generally skilled riders with Red Cross certification in lifeguarding or advanced first aid. Aside from instructional duties, each counselor has responsibility for one dormitory room as well as a fair share of the dining room tasks. As most counselors selected for the staff have interests and talents well beyond the activities that the camp offers, they are encouraged to share them with the campers as much as possible. With few exceptions, the counselors at Road's End Farm fall between 19 and 23 years of age and most either attend or have recently finished college.



The Campers

Inasmuch as children are children regardless of race or religion, a girl needs only to desire a leisurely, fun-filled camp experience and be willing to freely contribute to that end to be welcomed and respected at Road's End Farm. The girls who find the Farm most appealing share a love for horses and the outdoors as well as a wish to be treated as responsible individuals. Naturally, many of them return year in and year out to nourish old friendships and make new ones and some eventually become counselors—just as it should be.





The campers at Road's End Farm hail from diverse backgrounds and far-reaching areas of the United States and, increasingly, the world. While some girls arrive with fine abilities around horses, it is neither unusual nor a drawback for a girl to come to camp with no prior exposure to horses. Campers range in age from 8 to 16, with at least three or four girls of each age normally in every camp session. The ratio of returning campers to first-timers varies somewhat from summer to summer, but averages about two to one. Newcomers acclimate quickly in response to the friendliness of understanding campers and counselors, who were once neophytes at the Farm themselves.

The Horses

In the hearts and the minds of the campers, little can compare with the horses that grace the pastures along Jackson Hill Road. The Farm's herd numbers about [sixty animals](#) with roughly two thirds of them registered Morgans and the other third comprised of Arabians, Quarterhorses, Standardbreds, Hackneys, and a fair share of lovely grade animals. Their sizes range from several ponies of 13.2 hands up to a few horses of 16.0 hands with the vast majority falling in the 14.1 to 15.2 hand range, which is ideal for most camp-age girls. Aside from being suitably trained for riders of different abilities, the horses and ponies in the herd have been selected for their dispositions, manners around children, and soundness.



Footloose and fancy free, the horses relish being the center of attention each summer. Once chosen for the herd or born into it, an animal spends its entire life at Road's End Farm, thereby lending continuity to the riding program and peace of mind to everyone regarding its well-being in life and resting place afterwards. Although owned by the Woodmans, the horses and ponies really do belong to the girls who come back year after year to ride and care for them and, most of all, to love them as only young girls can.