

Asheville Academy for Girls Utilizes Animal Therapy to Help Students Heal

Students learn to self-regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors through their relationships with animals.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Asheville](#)

[Academy for Girls](#) is a therapeutic boarding school for teenage girls and AFABs, located in Black Mountain, North Carolina, that has filled its campus with many animals including horses, goats, chickens, bunnies, as

well as a pot-bellied pig named Ruby Sue. The Asheville Academy [clinical team](#) believes that working with animals helps students learn and play. It also provides tools that help students better understand themselves while learning to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and actions.



Animal Therapy at Asheville Academy for Girls

"Many students find the opportunity to interact with horses and other therapy animals to be the most fun and rewarding component of their time at Asheville Academy. Each of these animals adds something unique and special to the animal therapy program, and is loved by our students", says Asheville Academy's Director of Business Development, Laura Storey.

Animals also offer a way to engage students in learning more about their anxieties and relationships. Oftentimes, students at Asheville Academy, through observing animal behavior, become aware of the factors that trigger their own stressors. "Working with animals really encourages our students to work on self-awareness," says Julie Kirshner, EMLS, ESMHL, Asheville Academy's Equine Specialist. "If a student is anxious, the animals will sense it. By working on calming themselves down and self-regulating their emotions, students are able to build relationships with the animals. This is something that they can then recreate in their personal relationships as well."

[Equine therapy](#), specifically, provides powerful emotional feedback to the Asheville Academy students. Horses are very responsive to the posture and emotional state of humans, which can cause students to open up about their troubles by viewing them through the lens of the horse's

response. There have been many benefits of equine therapy for Asheville Academy students, including trust and relationship building, empathy, confidence, responsibility, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and relaxation.

Overall, incorporating animals into therapy provides a unique way for students to address their struggles and explore the reasons behind their negative behaviors. It also teaches students about relationship building. It is safe to say that the animal barn at Asheville Academy has become a safe environment for students to grow and work towards their healing.

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