

Jewell.

In 1989, the ranch passed out of Sue Pruitt's hands to Kirk Bryson and was leased by Day-Star, an Arabian horse equestrian company, for a short time. Bryson, who gave it the name "Sweet Lorane Ranch," sold it in 1990 to Dr. Kathrina Cernozubov-Digman who brought a new dimension to it as the Unicorn Spring Ranch. The focus of the Unicorn Spring Ranch is related in the following excerpts of a article that Pat Edwards wrote on August 15, 1994, for her local newsletter, *The Lorane Historian*.

"Finding the pot of gold called self-esteem at the end of life's rainbow is difficult enough for those of us who only have to be concerned about what kind of makeup to wear, whether or not we can afford to eat a second piece of cake or what our credit limit is on our Visa card. But for those among us who are faced with serious emotional, mental or physical obstacles, that rainbow can seem alien and unapproachable, and its pot of gold out of reach.

"Children and adults alike are gradually attaining what must seem to them to be an impossible and, to many, an unrealistic goal. Children, especially, are being introduced to animal-facilitated therapy at Unicorn Spring Ranch, a nominee for the 1993 President's Volunteer Action Award, located in our small rural community of Lorane, Oregon.

"In 1990, with the help of a former graduate student, Dr. Hilary Cash, Dr. Katarina Cernozubov-Digman moved her ranch to Lorane from Hawaii where they had discovered that their emotionally-disabled patients responded better in the natural setting of a ranch. They found that, particularly for children, the cold, sterile environment of a medical office does not promote the relaxed kind of setting in which trust can



A "Little Unicorn"



A blue ribbon for a blue ribbon kid!

be established. In addition, they found that their patients were sometimes more easily able to establish that trust first in an animal. Many of the emotionally unstable soon discovered that by learning to control the behavior of a large animal, they began to gain control of their own behavior, as well.

"... Unicorn Spring Ranch is operated on a smaller scale than some other facilities, but the difference it makes to those who participate in its program is far from small. At least fifteen children and a few adults come to the ranch 2-3 times per week where they learn to care for and ride the sweet-natured, gentle horses that are made available to them. Most are able to form a bond with the horse or pony assigned them. They soon find that they are offered unconditional affection from the animals – something that some of the children have never experienced in troubled home environments. Their mutual experiences with riding, cleaning tack and feeding opens a door of communication with not only each other, but with the therapists, as well. They soon learn how to make a friend, albeit a four-legged one, but frequently the lesson is eventually transferred to people, too. If the process works, the pot of gold begins to seem closer and, for some, even attainable. If at first the horses are too intimidating to some of the children, they usually find friends among the ducks, chickens, ferrets, cats and dogs that are also available to them at the ranch.

The therapeutic program is run by donations only. Everyone but the accountant is a volunteer, including Katarina.

"...In the words of one little boy, 'Horse therapy is horse riding, happiness and feelings.'"

The activities at the ranch have earned prestigious awards and honors and have been featured on numerous television reports and newspaper articles.

Since Katarina obtained the ranch, she and her crew have planted more than 1,500 trees, shrubs, and flowers in trying to recreate a more natural and inviting place for what Katarina refers to as her "little Unicorns." They