

The Black Stallion Literacy Project is growing by leaps and bounds and Region 9 is leading the way. With new locations being added annually, the Project will serve a combined total of over 80,000 1st and 4th graders throughout the country, encouraging them to discover the love of reading and exposing them to the beauty of the Arabian Horse.

In Arkansas alone, over 5,000 students are already signed up and new venues have been added. In addition to Little Rock's Barton Coliseum, children in the Jonesboro and Bentonville area will now be offered this amazing literacy project. A long time supporter, the statewide Arkansas Arabian Horse Club, is being joined by the Arabian Horse Community Association and the ARAB of Northwest Arkansas to help raise money and provide volunteers for this outstanding way to help our communities and promote our horses at the same time.

In Texas, the Star of Texas Arabian Horse Club near Beeville, lead by Virginia Cherry, plans to double the amount of children that they are hosting for the 1st grade project, and continue to work towards bringing the 4th grade project to children in the greater San Antonio area.

In the Dallas/Fort Worth area, a grant from the Hillcrest Foundation has made it possible for 2,500 4th graders at the lowest performing schools in the Dallas Independent School District to participate. We are now working to include 2,500 low performing students from the Fort Worth Independent School District by partnering with Imagination Celebration. To make this possible, we are looking for a Farm or Club in the area who can help underwrite a small portion of the project. Volunteers will also be needed for the May 20th performance by Arabian Nights at Will Rogers Coliseum.

The Lone Star Arabian Horse Club, spearheaded by Lynda McCarthy and Linda Anderson, has taken on the BSLP as a Community Project. Through a benefit horse show, Lynda's donation of her announcing fees from two shows, and local donations, they have raised enough money to sponsor 375 children in the 1st grade project! These lucky children from Terrell, TX will be visited by "Little Black, a Pony" and "Big Red" as the characters of Walter Farley's books comes to life. A few weeks later, on a spring morning, the children will visit Dearing Farms in Terrell to learn all about horse care: grooming, feeding, tack and shoeing. Andy Dearing has graciously offered the use of his facilities to share the beauty of the Arabian Horse with these youngsters. During this event, children have the opportunity to read to a horse, the highlight of their field trip.

Lynda McCarthy said with their successful fundraising for the entire Terrell 1st grade complete, they now intend to actively pursue raising money to sponsor the 4th graders as well. Plans include putting Adoption Trees in area feed stores where individuals can pay the \$8 per child to sponsor them in the project.

News of the BSLP events within Region 9 are spreading nationally. In a recent letter in the Modern Arabian Horse, AHA's Gary Zimmerman mentioned his visit to Region 9 and the BSLP's activities. Laura Graves, the Arkansas Coordinator, has been tapped to help the project go into Denver, CO; and after a recent press release from Arabians, Ltd the BSLP was featured in TIMES SQUARE

Arabians, LTD has eagerly pledged their support of this project in their area, after being the first farm in Texas to participate, hosting 130 students in the spring of 2007.

John Neyer said they look forward to the spring when they can share their horses with the excited and enthusiastic 1st graders.

If you would like to find out how you can get the Black Stallion Literacy Project started in your schools, no matter how small they are, please contact

Cathy Christiansen:

870-692-1562 or cathy010@centurytel.net.