

## Kelly Kunde- AmeriCorps Summer 2002 Hoover/Community Y Camp

My first position was at Hoover elementary school. Working mainly with first through third graders, my patience and creativity were tested everyday. English as a Second Language (ESL) was a new experience for me. I mentored children from all grades, as well as countries. We were even able to take a trip to my farm. Many had not interacted with animals such as cows or horses, so it was amazing to see the wonder in their eyes as they asked all sorts of questions. This was probably one of my favorite groups because I was able to get to know each child on an individual basis and really connected with them.



The ESL group at my farm. Everyone really enjoyed seeing the farm animals.

My summer was spent at the Y-Camp as a horse instructor. This was a wonderful position for me because I was able to use my talents to benefit so many others. I worked with many different types of children over the summer, ranging from aggressive ones, to very shy ones. Patience was also necessary here. I believe that animals are the best teaching tools because everything is interactive and real.

Being at the Y-Camp gave me the chance to use my talents and abilities with horses and share them with the children.



As I look back over the past year, I realize how much I have developed as a person through my AmeriCorps service. I also hope that the children I have interacted with have benefited from me. I realized that I do want to continue to interact and educate children. I may not go for a teaching degree, but I use many of the suggestions I have learned when I give riding lessons out at our farmhouse. I love seeing children enthusiastic about learning something new. I believe children are wonderful teachers, because they always have so much to give, and are willing to take risks. I also understand that sometimes a child just needs someone to just be there for them and to listen. I learned so much about myself along the way. Thank you AmeriCorps, for giving me the chance to work with so many wonderful children and learn from them along the way.