

DH RANCH



Youth Empowerment Initiative

Location: DH Ranch
53 Cattle Dip Road, Tsuut'ina Nation
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Sonya Dodginghorse
DH Ranch, Owner/Facilitator
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www.dhranch44.com

Sonya Dodginghorse is an accomplished and driven individual with a passion for education, horsemanship, and entrepreneurship. As the owner of DH Ranch, she merges her expertise in teaching with her love for horses to offer unique programs that promote Indigenous culture and history. With 21 years of experience as a teacher and a Bachelor of Education, Sonya is dedicated to using her skills to help others heal and grow through horse-assisted learning programs. She is also pursuing an Indigenous Addictions Counselor certificate at the Nechi Institute to expand her knowledge and impact. As a professional barrel racer and two-time INFR World Barrel Racing Champion, Sonya is a role model and advocate for Indigenous people. Through Intergenerational Healing retreats for Indigenous Women, Sonya uses the power of the horse spirit to empower and inspire the next generation.



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Brent Dodginghorse
Co-Owner/Facilitator
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Brent Dodginghorse is a former professional hockey player who has also made a significant impact in his community through his work on council and as an advocate for youth. As a professional hockey player, Brent had a successful career on the ice, earning recognition for his skill and dedication. After retiring from professional hockey, he turned his attention to serving his community, and was elected to council where he served for nearly 2 decades. In addition to his work on council, Brent is also a two-time steer wrestling world champion, and he used his platform and influence to become an advocate for youth in his community. He is passionate about educating the next generation about racism, indigenous culture, and diversity, and works tirelessly to create a more inclusive and equitable community for all. Throughout his life, Brent has been a role model and leader, both on and off the ice. His dedication to his community and commitment to making a positive impact is an inspiration to many.



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About DH Ranch

At DH Ranch, we believe in the power of nature and the spirit of the horse to promote greater respect and appreciation for culture, history, and understanding. Our 25-acre property, located in the heart of the beautiful Tsuut'ina Nation, offers a peaceful retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

We are surrounded by wide-open spaces and a natural forest, including Fish Creek, DH Ranch is the perfect place to unplug from technology and reconnect with nature. Our guests can breathe in the fresh air, take a leisurely walk, or even participate in one of our unique cultural programs.

We offer a variety of programs at DH Ranch, including team building for corporations and organizations, birthday parties, retreats for men and women, indigenous and diversity awareness education, day camps, and more.

Whether you're looking to bond with your team, celebrate a special occasion, or simply escape the stresses of everyday life, DH Ranch has something for everyone. We invite you to come and experience the beauty and serenity of our property, and discover the power of the spirit of the horse to promote greater understanding and appreciation for culture and history.



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Why is there a need for the DH Youth Empowerment Program?

The DH Ranch Youth Empowerment program for indigenous youth is a much-needed resource for the community. Indigenous youth often face unique challenges related to intergenerational trauma, including disconnection from culture, language, and land. These experiences can have a significant impact on the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of indigenous youth. The program aims to address these challenges by providing a safe and supportive environment for indigenous youth to explore their cultural identity and connection to the land.

Through horse assisted learning, land-based activities, cultural practices, and educational opportunities, the program will provide a holistic approach to healing and empowerment. Horse assisted learning will help youth to build trust and self-esteem, while land-based activities will reconnect them with their cultural heritage and the natural world. Cultural practices such as storytelling, drumming, regalia making, and ceremony will provide a sense of belonging and belonging, while educational opportunities will help youth to develop the skills they need to succeed in life.

Sharing circles will provide a safe space for participants to share their experiences and support each other, and the youth rodeo will be an opportunity for them to showcase their talents and celebrate their accomplishments. The program will be located on the DH Ranch, which is situated on the Tsuut'ina Nation, providing easy access for local youth to participate in this program.

In summary, the DH Ranch Youth Empowerment program for indigenous youth will provide a much-needed resource for the community by addressing the unique challenges faced by indigenous youth, and providing them with the support and resources they need to thrive.



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DH Ranch Youth Empowerment Objectives:

1. To examine the potential of land-based healing as a tool for empowering Indigenous youth. This will include exploring traditional land-based activities such as spirit of the horse programming, medicine picking, nature walks, hunting, tipi pole harvesting, cold water cleanse, cutting wood for elders, outdoor cooking, dry meat making.
2. To investigate the spirit of the horse programming as a means of promoting self-esteem, trust, and responsibility in Indigenous youth. This will include horse assisted learning sessions with knowledgeable facilitators and activities that promote horse care and horsemanship.
3. To examine the role of culture and language in empowering Indigenous youth. This will include cultural practices such as storytelling, drumming, regalia making, drum making, and ceremony, as well as language instruction and opportunities to learn more about traditional customs and practices.
4. To provide a safe space for participants to share their experiences and support each other through sharing circles.
5. To provide educational opportunities such as financial literacy, how to apply for school, field trips, and volunteering in order to prepare Indigenous youth for their future.

Methodology: *The program will take place over a period of 23 weeks, with weekly sessions that include horse assisted sessions, land-based activities, cultural practices, educational opportunities, and sharing circles.* Participants will be selected from the community based on their interest in the topics and willingness to participate in the program. All facilitators will be trained in the areas of land-based work, spirit of the horse programming, culture, and language.

DH Ranch Youth Empowerment Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased understanding of the potential of land-based healing, spirit of the horse programming, culture, and language as tools for empowering Indigenous youth.
2. Improved self-esteem, trust, and responsibility in Indigenous youth through horse assisted learning and other activities.
3. Increased connection to culture and language for Indigenous youth through participation in traditional practices and instruction.
4. A safe space for Indigenous youth to share their experiences and support each other through sharing circles.
5. Preparedness for future through educational opportunities.

By providing a focus group that explores the potential of land-based healing, spirit of the horse programming, culture, and language as tools for empowering Indigenous youth, we hope to promote mental health and wellness in this population and empower them to take charge of their own future.



DH RANCH

Presents

Youth Empowerment

"Empowering our Indigenous Youth: A journey of healing and connection to mother earth's sacred medicine."

ACTIVITIES

- SPIRIT OF THE HORSE PROGRAM
- SHARING CIRCLES
- ELDERS
- CRAFTING
- HORSEMANSHIP
- RODEO EVENTS
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES
- ARCHERY
- TRADITIONAL GAMES
- FITNESS & NUTRITION
- DRUM MAKING
- TIPI SET UP
- WRAP UP - YOUTH RODEO

23 Sessions

DATES:
Every Wednesday
5:30-7:30

Available for 12 Youth (18 & Under)
Registration Package is Available

Food and Refreshments are provided!

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DH RANCH

Presents

Spirit of the Horse Empowerment Program

Spirit of the horse programming incorporates, Horse Assisted Learning, horseback riding, horse care, and traditional horse culture.

Participants will Develop:

- * life skills while using horses
- * self-awareness & self esteem
- * confidence
- * trust & respect
- * relationship building
- * communication skills
- * teamwork & listening skills
- * choice-making & goal-setting skills
- * responsibility
- * problem solving skills
- * appropriate assertiveness
- * leadership skills
- * learn to read body language
- * negotiation skills
- * success over obstacles
- * appreciation of others
- * culture awareness



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DH Ranch Youth Registration

1. Name: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Parent/Guardian Name: _____
4. Parent/Guardian Contact Number: _____
5. Emergency Contact Name: _____
6. Emergency Contact Number: _____
7. Allergies (please specify): _____
8. Registered Status # _____

Agreements:

- I understand that my child will be provided with a helmet for all horseback riding activities.
- I understand that my child should dress for the weather and wear closed-toed shoes for their safety.
- I acknowledge that participating in these activities may involve some risk of injury and I assume such risks for my child.
- I give permission for my child to participate in the Youth Empowerment Program.
- I understand that the Youth Empowerment Program is a 23-week program.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

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Mental Health and Wellness Survey for Youth

1. How would you rate your overall mental health and wellness on a scale of 1-10?
2. How do you feel about your connection to your culture and language?
 - Strongly connected
 - Somewhat connected
 - Not very connected
 - Not at all connected
 -
3. How often do you participate in cultural practices such as storytelling, drumming, regalia making, and ceremony?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - Never
 -
4. How often do you spend time on the land?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - Never
 -
5. How do you feel about your connection to the land?
 - Strongly connected
 - Somewhat connected
 - Not very connected
 - Not at all connected
 -
6. Have you ever participated in horse assisted learning or horseback riding?
 - Yes
 - No
7. If yes, how did you find the experience?
 - Positive
 - Neutral
 - Negative
8. How often do you feel stressed or overwhelmed?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - Never
9. How often do you feel hopeless or helpless?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Rarely
 - Never
10. Would you be interested in participating in a youth empowerment program that focuses on horse assisted learning, land-based activities, cultural practices, and educational opportunities?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your mental health and wellness?