



THROUGH OUR KIDS EYES – WHAT THEY SEE

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Remember what it was like when you were a youngster and trying to negotiate the world of the adults in your life? To me, all adults seemed tall, powerful, were always right, made all the rules, and had all the answers to the mysteries of life. Wow, have I learned a lot since then about the adult world! Adults don't have all the answers; sometimes our kids can set us straight with a less cluttered view of life. I would like you to meet a very interesting young rider.

I had the pleasure of talking with Mason and conducted a little interview. Mason is twelve years old and attends Buffalo Middle School. I asked him where he learned about horses and he quickly pointed out that his Grandpa and Grandma taught him and proceeded to tell me how to rub a horse's neck, not pat it. Patting or slapping a horse's neck scares it but rubbing it makes it feel safe and like you are a horse too! Mason's grandparents are members of the Tri-Lakes Chapter. Some of the questions I asked and Mason's answers are:



Question: What do you think SMMBCH stands for?

Mason: "I don't know exactly but I know it has to do with trail riding."

Question: What does SMMBCH do?

Mason: "I think it has something to do with cleaning up trails so others can have a good time but you can go back and ride the trails."

Question: Is that important and if so, why?

Mason: "No cleaning – no trails - no trail riding – no good."

Question: You attended one of SMMBCH's youth rides, didn't you? What do you remember learning?

Mason: "I attended two. I think it was neat to learn about horses and how they see and hear and not to follow the horse in front of you too close. You should put a red ribbon on the tail of a horse that likes to kick."

Question: So, you liked learning about trail etiquette and ethics. Do you remember anything about the Leave No Trace principles that was talked about?

Mason: "Yes, you should leave nothing but tracks, ashes and holes." (He is referring to "cat holes" if you have to go to the bathroom.)

Question: Did you hear anything about other trail users – users who are not riding horses?

Mason: "You need to be friendly and safe and be careful when you pass each other. The one that goes fastest should go first."

Question: Is there any advice you would like to share with other kids who want to trail ride?

Mason: "Yes. You should not start with a colt. They can be hard to get to do what you want. You should have a horse that is broke good."

There were a few more questions but you can get the feel that this young man knows the important thing by his quote *"no cleaning – no trails – no trail riding – no good."* We as the "wise" adults all know it goes a little deeper than this but what it boils down to is "NO involvement – NO trails". I would like to commend Mason's grandparents for their involvement not only with Tri-Lakes Chapter but the involvement and teaching they are doing with their grandson.