

EAST PALO ALTO

HORSIN' AROUND AT O.D.S RANCH

By Harriet Stricklen
Contributing Writer



East Palo Alto Rancher O.D. Sims

Staff Photo by Jaleel (Teel) Fattah

In a rural section of East Palo Alto on Green Street sits O.D. Sim's Ranch. With 15 horses ranging from Morgans, Arabians, Appaloosa's, Quarterhorses and Tennessee Walkers, O.D. is not horsin' around.

It was four years ago when Sims opened his ranch to the public and started his equestrian program for children between the ages of 5-12. He started the program to teach children riding techniques and provide a chance for the children to enjoy the horses.

Since that time, he has sponsored such events as free horseback and wagon riding on Saturdays from 12:00-5:00 including a free lunch for the children. For his last event that was held on October 6, up to 50 children attended and not one child showed any fear of horses. "The children were so excited about riding the horses and wagon that they didn't want to eat," said Sims.

Parents who were at the ranch that Saturday were relieved that someone in the community was taking a stand for young children who would not normally be introduced to such a program because of expenses or transportation inconveniences. O.D.'s ranch is central-

ized in East Palo Alto and is within walking distance for anyone in the community.

In past events, O.D. has worked with physically and mentally disabled children in the community as well as train children for riding in competitions and parades.

In Sim's program, children learn basic techniques in horse care, horse dressage and Western style riding. O.D. adds, "The purpose of this program is to give our children in this community an alternative in recreation, and to build confidence and esteem." He also says, "I have lived in this community (East Palo Alto) for 34 years and I haven't seen any programs that children really like."

O.D. works for the City of Palo Alto and owns rental properties. To keep the program running, O.D. spends an excess of \$1,500.00 per month from his personal earnings. Hoping to get financial support from the City of East Palo Alto and local businesses to subsidize the program, O.D. adds, "I don't want to see no children say he can't ride because he can't afford it." The ranch is open seven days a week between the hours of 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m. if the weather permits.



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November 6th, 1990

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