LITTLE GATE CARE FARM CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR AS A CHARITY AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS

Tuesday 23 September, 2014

Little Gate Farm is delighted to announce that, 6 months after its successful pilot scheme started, they are just about to start opening for a 3rd day each week!

Little Gate Farm is a Care Farm that takes in learning disabled young adults from all over the Hastings, Bexhill, Battle and Rye area and helps them to acquire the skills and confidence required to join the workforce – both paid and voluntary. We also help them look for jobs at the end of their course.East Sussex is well below the national average of having 5% of learning disabled adults employed in the area. It is as low as 2% locally. We aim to help change that!

The young adults who come to us are given a job title, Rangers, and help out on the farm in a variety of ways.The farm is situated in Beckley, near Rye, and we provide a transport service to collect the Rangers each day they attend and then drop them off at the end of the day. This helps to cut down on our environmental impact. Environmental awareness is something that we take very seriously and take as many steps as possible to reduce our carbon footprint on the farm too.

Little Gate Farm has been a charity for 1 year now and we started having Rangers on site twice a week around six months ago, for our initial pilot scheme. This was such a success that 8 out of 9 of the Rangers that started the pilot scheme still remain with us now. We have now taken on quite a few more Rangers and are very excited that we will soon be opening for a third day each week!

Little Gate Farm also offers farm visits and short courses for all schools to learn where food comes from.

"I'm really looking forward to the pigs arriving next week!" - Mary

Little Gate Farm is a hugely positive initiative for those learning disabled young adults who require some extra skills after leaving school before they feel confident enough to look for work. Little Gate Farm is the perfect place to acquire these skills, as there are a variety of tasks to undertake in a structured way. The rural location is beneficial to everyone who visits. The carbon footprint is kept to an absolute minimum and all the staff are so passionate about what they are doing. Being surrounded by animals has been proven to have a positive effect on people from all walks of life and this is evident from the sheer joy on the faces of the Rangers when they interact with them. Referrals can be made directly by phoning or emailing, or through social work teams.

"I really enjoy getting out of the house and experiencing new things." – Mary

The idea of using farming-related activities to provide health, social and educational care services has been growing steadily in the UK over the last decade. Care Farms in the UK provide supervised, structured programmes for a wide range of people, including those with learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

This type of initiative is something that can benefit the whole community in a variety of ways. For instance, what many employers don't realise is that employing adults with disabilities is actually good for business. Learning disabled adults are usually extremely reliable, hard-working prepared to do the small jobs other employees are less keen on. Several studies have found that the work place becomes more caring, and supportive therefore staff in general are more motivated and committed. It also reflects well on the company, as a whole.

"It's really fun to work here!" - Angela

We have had a fantastic amount of support over our first year and have even recently secured a £5000 grant from Rother council, which we are very excited about. However, we still have a long way to go and really need your help and support:

Here are some ways that you can support us:

- Contact us about becoming a volunteer and work alongside passionate and caring people in a relaxed, fun and friendly environment.
- Become a Friend of Little Gate Farm for as little as £3 per month, with a whole range of benefits.

Media:









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- Buying logs directly from the farm or Coastguard Tea Rooms, Fairlight
- Buying lamb that has been raised on the farm, by the Rangers, directly from the farm.
- Pre-ordering Christmas turkeys that have been reared on the farm, also reared by the Rangers.
- Look out for us at Farmer's Markets.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: We have an Open Evening coming up on 6th December with a candlelit procession round the farm and a Christmas play being performed. Look out for the baked potatoes, marshmallows and mulled wine too.

If you or someone you know would like more information about any of the above, please contact Claire on 01797 260125/07811 464202 or email at littlegatecarefarm@gmail.com.

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