

Leadership building atop a 1,200-pound horse By Jane Laskey

Life coach and corporate trainer Sara Sinnard will meet you in the board room ... or in the pasture. Sinnard, the owner of Fusion Life & Leadership, has coupled two decades of work in corporate creativity and innovation with a stable full of four legged partners to create her unique Equine Guided Education (EGE) programs.

"When you're working with a 1,200 pound bundle of energy, the learning sinks even deeper and it's much more memorable," Sinnard said. "It's really experiential learning, like a ropes course or Outward Bound. Because the body's involved it opens up the creative side of your brain."

Sinnard said EGE works because it activates learning on three levels: kinesthetic learning through physical activity; metaphorical learning through symbolism and conceptual application; and metaphysical learning through core energy connections.

"It accesses the body, mind, and spirit to internalize learning," Sinnard said. "Once the brain is open we can work metaphorically through issues. It's a lot easier to get to issues indirectly rather than directly."

Sinnard designs her horse workshops to fit each company's needs, meeting with leadership and conducting anonymous surveys to take the pulse of the organization before she begins.

"It's different every time," Sinnard said. "There are different teams, different objectives and different results. One team from the Twin Cities left with six new



Life coach and corporate trainer Sara Sinnard uses horses as part of her training.

Photo By John Cross

initiatives, established milestones and project plans to move those forward."

Break-throughs in the stable are reinforced later with follow-up workshops or office coaching sessions for best results.

"Ideally to extend learning and maximize workshop results we'd do follow-up coaching. That's always recommended," Sinnard said. "When teams are done working with the horses we try to come out with new processes, new rules, new goals and metaphors they can go back to the office and start using."

The EGE is particularly effective in assertiveness training and leadership training Sinnard said.

"If they aren't out there with the right kind of energy, solid and centered, the horse is not going to respond," Sinnard said. "It's the same in the office, in life. If you're not solid and centered, what kind of day do you have? What kind of choices do you make? We work on it first in the pasture and then translate it to everyday life."

Sinnard emphasizes that no horse experience is necessary for the equine workshops. Participants stay out of the saddle with their feet on the ground at all times.

"It's not about horsemanship. It's about humanship," Sinnard said. "People only do what they're comfortable doing. Then we take it a slight bit further. Once they do that they think, 'What else can I do that I thought I couldn't do?' It starts opening doors."

For more information on Fusion Life & Leadership or Equine Guided Education, visit Sinnard's website at <http://fusiononesource.com> **MV**