

## Nonprofits partner together to create new memories

May 27, 2025 | Nalani Nuylan

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By NALANI NUYLAN

In a collaborative effort, residents from the Hacienda at Georgetown visited the Ride On Center for Kids on May 14 for a day of equine-assisted learning and a picnic.

"Given that The Hacienda is a Georgetown organization, it is very important for ROCK to assist local groups," said Devyn Kor, spokesperson for ROCK. "Supporting fellow community organizations strengthens local partnerships, fosters a spirit of collaboration, and helps amplify the positive impact on those we collectively serve. It is very important to ROCK that we continue to help the community that has been uplifting us since 1998."

The Hacienda's memory care group participated in the Equine-Assisted Services Experience. Ms. Kor said ROCK has found that interacting with horses often stimulates memories in participants who have had past experiences with them.

"I thought it was amazing when a female participant [Joan] started recounting her memories of growing up with horses while confidently grooming Scooter," Lauren Crabb, physical therapist assistant for ROCK. "She seemed to remember exactly how you are supposed to groom a horse."

This marked the second visit to ROCK for several participants, who found joy and familiarity in the experience. For Bruce Martin, a resident with dementia, the program rekindles his love for horsemanship.

Mr. Martin grew up riding horses while his father served in the U.S. Cavalry during the 1930s. He later met his wife on a horse ranch in the 1940s. His love of horses also extended to his daughter, Courtney Amparo.

"Having the opportunity to spend time with the horses at ROCK is like a homecoming for my dad," Ms. Amparo said. "It's this magical blend of the calm and steadiness the horses offer in the present moment, coupled with the familiarity of my dad's earliest memories — memories he still holds dear."

ROCK is a Premier Accredited Center through the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International. The center provides equine-assisted services to individuals with cognitive, emo-



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HACIENDA AT GEORGETOWN

Bruce Martin, a member of The Hacienda at Georgetown's Memory Care, petting one of the horses, Mo, on a visit to ROCK.

tional and physical challenges. Working with horses has helped many participants, including Mr. Martin, experience improvements in physical and mental well-being. The program often encourages memories that may not surface in everyday conversations.

"When Bruce started dancing and singing to our horse Sneakers while he was grooming him, I couldn't help but smile," said Gaby Stephens, head instructor for ROCK. "He was so joyful."

The Hacienda at Georgetown is a Watermark retirement community located at 60 Del Webb Boulevard. It offers independent living, assisted living and short-term stays for senior citizens.

"It really means so much to my dad, and so much to our family," Ms. Amparo said. "We know our dad is happy and thriving when visiting ROCK. What a gift to us all."