

Horse ride to stimulate motor activity of spl kids

S J Michael Collins|ENS
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THE special children of the City would soon have the 'privilege' of having a horse ride therapy, claimed to be the first of its kind in the State, to provide them muscular and nervous stimulation which would possibly support their motor activity in a better way.

A team of nine students from different disciplines attached to the Equality Line Agency in Sweden that has links with the INTACT Special School, Tiruchy, are here to make the three horses - Nobel, Koko and Equality Line, which they bought from Ooty - accustomed to the climate of the City.

Initially, all the three horses, including the foal, would be trained to the local atmospheric conditions and to move about obeying the commands of the rider', Jenny Ahlquist, student of Animal Science who would stay here for about six months for the purpose, said.

Studies recommend horse riding therapy for special children which would lead to a sense of tranquillity in them and stimulate their nerves, muscles and neurons in the brain in a very unique way', Therese Pettersson, a student of Physiotherapy and member of the team, said.

It is also found that the novel therapy for the mentally retarded children would improve their balance and provide improved muscle interaction. 'At the same time, a ride would provide improved mobility in the hip joint and

more symmetrical load of the trunk', Therese Pettersson said.

Socially, according to Therese, 'the riding and even ground communication with horses would engage the mind and create a unique and distinctive environment for mental stimulation to the riders especially the special children. It develops coordination, concentration and understanding of the surrounding which would also reduce the stress and depression level', Therese said.

The therapy also helps the students of autism to develop communication and brings them out of their inner selves.

The practice to accustomed the horses to the environment would go on for a few months after which, a trainer from Sweden would teach riding to the special children by carefully handling both the children and the animals, the students said.

Michael Klint, Student of Agriculture science, Emma Tejler and Jonna Fallhagen, both veterinary students, would take care of the feed of the animals and other behavioural accustoming in the staple. It may take upto six months for the training.

'Since we are dealing with special children, we are very particular about their safety and safety norms would be strictly followed while they are put on horses to reach our ultimate aim', Therese Pettersson added.

On Thursday, the programme was formally inaugurated by the District Disabled Rehabilitation Officer R Shyamala.



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