

WISH ORGANIZES HORSE RIDING SESSIONS FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN AT AL SHAQAB

WISH and Al Shaqab Collaborate with Qatar Autism Families Association

Doha, Qatar, August 21, 2017: The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) has organized a series of horse riding and play sessions as part of its Summer Community Program for children with autism. The camp, taking place at Al Shaqab in Education City, is benefiting children from the Qatar Autism Families Association (QAFA).

The opportunity has been made possible through the support of Al Shaqab's Equine Education division, which has provided facilities, horses, and staff for four evenings a week during the month of August. QAFA already offers horse riding opportunities for autistic children during the cooler months of the year, but in previous years it has not been possible to provide this activity during the hot summer months. The new collaboration with WISH and Al Shaqab has given the children access to Al Shaqab's indoor arena, thereby allowing horse riding to become a year-round option.

WISH created its summer program mindful that Qatar's National Autism Plan focuses on the need to engage autistic children through activities that take place outside of the classroom. Children taking part in the horse riding activities at Al Shaqab are enjoying the chance to improve their motor and balance skills, as well as experience the sensory and emotional benefits that come from riding a horse.

The horse riding sessions commenced on August 6 and will continue through to the end of the month. A separate twice-weekly swimming program began on July 13, in collaboration with Qatar Foundation Recreation Services. WISH also recently collaborated with QAFA to arrange separate swimming sessions for the mothers of autistic children, in line with research by WISH that highlights the importance of building support networks for the families of children with autism.

Neil Moors, Head of Community Development, WISH, said: "Autistic children around the world are often excluded from healthy activities they could enjoy and benefit from because of misconceptions about their disability."

"Having seen first-hand how much fun the children taking part in our summer activities have, and the pleasure their parents get by watching their children enjoying themselves, I'm really glad that WISH has been able to work with Al Shaqab and with QF Recreation Services to create our Summer Community Program."

Ahmed Khalid Al Hameedi, Horse Program Advisor at Al Shaqab, said: "One of the pillars for Qatar Foundation is community development. So, as members of QF, we are delighted to be able to offer our support for this initiative, which is not only a fun activity for autistic children but also has many other benefits for the participants' health and wellbeing."



Sheikha Al Khayareen, a member of QAFA, said: “Having access to Al Shaqab’s wonderful indoor arena during August has meant that our children have been able to continue enjoying the benefits of horse riding throughout the year. We’re extremely grateful to WISH for organizing this opportunity and to Al Shaqab for being such generous hosts.”

Since it was established in 2012, WISH has made autism one of its priority areas for evidence-based research, and has produced reports, held expert panels, and led initiatives in this area of healthcare. Through events, such as its summer program, WISH is ensuring that Qatari society benefits from the global research work it conducts.

WISH is an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF). Its most recently published report on autism is available to read via the WISH website: <http://www.wish-qatar.org/wish-2016/forum-reports>

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About the World Innovation Summit for Health:

The World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) is a global healthcare community dedicated to capturing and disseminating the best evidence-based ideas and practices. WISH is an initiative of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) and is under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, its Chairperson.

The inaugural WISH Summit took place in Doha in 2013 and convened more than 1,000 global healthcare leaders. Through international summits and a range of ongoing initiatives, WISH is creating a global community of leading innovators in healthcare policy, research and industry.

Together, they are harnessing the power of innovation to overcome the world’s most urgent healthcare challenges and inspire other stakeholders to action.

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF’s world-class education system offers lifelong learning



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opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation's development.

QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global research and development challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>