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Who's Cooking
KENNETH GRAY MAKES
LAMB WITH PEPPERS
INSIDE LI LIFE



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Trainer Kieran McLaughlin, with one of his thoroughbreds and office manager Cate Masterson, at rear, left, talks about the care of racehorses at his barn at Belmont Park. Listening are Elmont sixth graders in the Gateway Youth Outreach program, from left, Michael Louissaint, Madison Thomas and Jamelia Jones.

On track to learn about horses

Sixth graders trot along to Belmont after school to get exposure to careers

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On an overcast Wednesday afternoon in Elmont, three sixth graders stood in the dirt in a stable at Belmont Park Race Track, getting a lesson in what racehorses eat for dinner.

Mike Louissaint, 11, picked up a shovel and measured out

the feed, which smelled sweetly of molasses.

"Oooh, I want to eat it!" joked Jamelia Jones, 11, as she watched.

Cate Masterson turned the children's attention to the other items on the horses' after-school menu.

"And what did I say the corn oil does?" asked Masterson, office manager for Kieran McLaughlin Racing, which owns the stable.

"It helps them get fatter," Mike said. That's right, she said, and Mike responded with a smile of pride.

The children are participants in an after-school program oper-

ated by Gateway Youth Outreach in Elmont, which started the stable visits in September. On four afternoons they get help with homework, play sports and board games and participate in arts and crafts projects.

But one afternoon each week executive director Pat Boyle takes a small group of students just about a mile away to the stable, where employees teach them about the anatomy and care of horses and the business of thoroughbred racing.

On one visit, the kids accompanied a veterinarian and watched as she sedated a pony for an X-ray. They got

to help clean the sedated pony's hoofs with a pick. And they braided the horse's mane, getting close enough to see firsthand the results of an equine sinus problem.

"When they first got there, they didn't know what to expect," Boyle said of the children, but after several weeks "the level of comfort that they have within that barn is amazing."

A glimpse of careers

Ultimately, Boyle said, the program is aimed at giving the children a glimpse of different careers they might not otherwise have envisioned.

Gateway Youth Outreach of-

fers traditional after-school programs at four elementary schools in Elmont, providing care and homework help for 800 children. It works with lower-income children who come from a single-family household or a family where both parents work.

The after-school programs cost these parents \$1 a day, and the hope is that the programs can help the children avoid delinquency and make the right choices, Boyle said.

"The long-term vision was for them to be able to see another area that they might get

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After school at Belmont

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interested in,” Boyle said. “There are quite a few jobs within the New York Racing Association and the racetrack that are very high-paying, skilled jobs, and we wanted to have them see that experience.”

Some of those jobs include veterinarians, trainers, owners and turf experts, Boyle said.

Fun for everyone

Trainer Kieran McLaughlin, who owns the stable, which houses about 40 horses collectively worth millions of dollars, said it wasn't a difficult decision to let the children visit.

“I just enjoy having them and seeing their faces and expressions and thoughts and their questions, and answering them,” McLaughlin said. “We're having as much fun as they are. That's the bottom line.”

Boyle said he hopes the program can

expand to two days a week, involving more children.

For their part, the children — none of whom had been up close to a horse before — said they've been learning a lot.

“My favorite part was working with the ponies and cleaning their hoofs,” Jamelia said. “You have to be careful. They move their feet a lot. You can't really be loud around them.”

Mike said he was surprised by how large a horse was. “I learned that they can be very tall,” he said. “I used to think they were only five feet high.”

Eleven-year-old Madison Thomas, who, like the other children, attends Clara H. Carlson Elementary School, said she most enjoyed grooming the horses.

“It's cool and a great opportunity,” she said. “It was a new experience. It was fun.”