



## LLAMA MEDICINE EXPERIENCE

### Program for Schools

***“The Ancient Andeans dreamed llamas into existence to communicate at the Soul level as our Speechless Brothers.”*** Llamas of Circle Home strives to facilitate the interactions between the llamas and the individual to enrich people’s lives. Through greeting, approaching, touching, feeding and leading the llamas, the students connect with the llama medicine and therefore with themselves.

The human animal bond has existed for thousands of years and this relationship is of significant importance for human mental and physical health, and spiritual growth. Llamas are intelligent, calm, gentle, loving, social animals used in animal assisted interventions (AAI) for the benefit of human’s wealth being.

Llamas of Circle Home has a multidisciplinary team who offer to the community an educational and health service with a comprehensive and holistic approach. LCH provides opportunities for



motivational, educational, therapeutic and/or recreational benefits to enhance quality of life. Animal Assisted Interventions (AAI) are delivered in a variety of environments by a specially trained professional, paraprofessional, and/or volunteer in association with animals that meet specific criteria. These are generally the basic short meet-and-greet sessions of llamas visiting people in a hospital, schools, colleges, long-term care center, etc. The fact that llamas are calm and quiet is part of what makes them such excellent animals for AAI and animal assisted therapy (AAT).



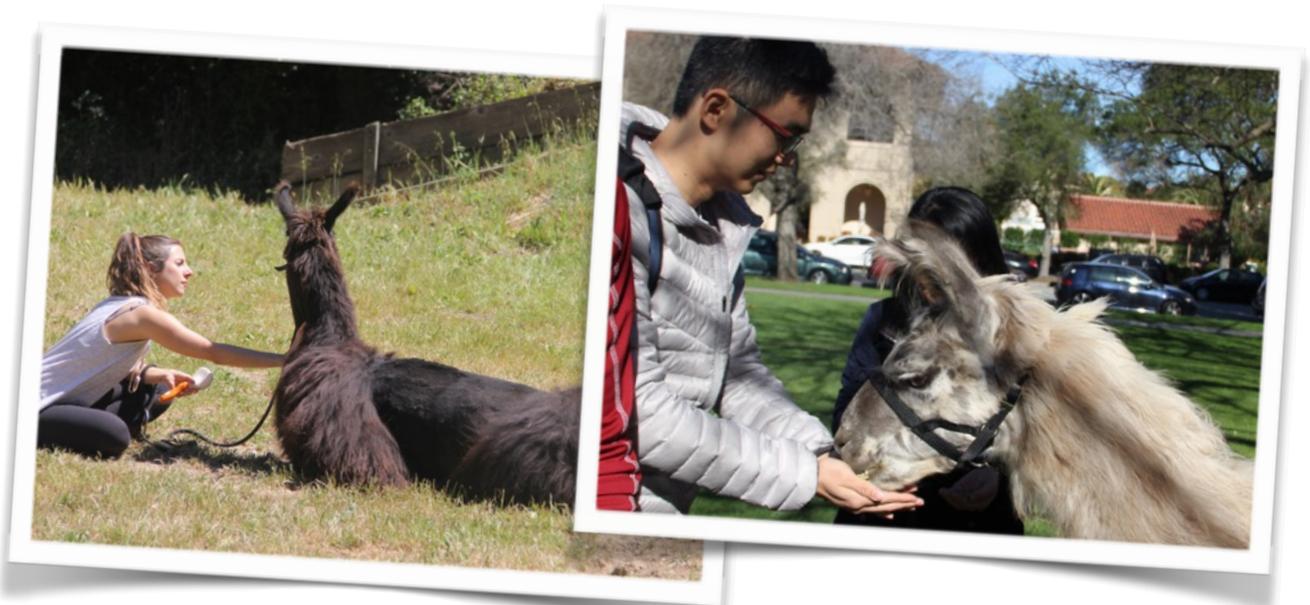
## DYNAMIC:

### **Introduction:**

Meeting the llamas. Each llama is an individual with a different view of life. We will share their name, their personality, their age and their life stories as well. We give our llamas names of meaning from their ancient Andean culture. Knowing the meaning of their names gives an insight into that unique world of the Andes. Llamas are very social herd animals. They are very intelligent and have very specific ideas of intentions towards the other llamas in the herd. When they have disagreements they will sometimes threaten to spit at each other. The spitting works as a deterrent because most llamas find spitting to be disgusting. Our llamas do not have reason to spit at people. They have been raised with kindness and respect and do not even think about spitting at people.

### **Approach:**

The student will learn how to approach a llama. They are sensitive beings and the way to approach a llama is in a gentle movement. Being calm, centred and confident are keys in this process. It is important to be aware of your physical movements and our intentions as they will read all of them. Llamas interact in that level as well. They can perceive you in profound ways. They like to be pet on the neck. The llama generally used to being touched on the neck and shoulders. Several may be hugged. They usually are casual but loving as adults if brought up properly.



### **Greeting:**

Greet the llama as if you were being introduced to a new friend. Attempt to catch the llama's attention, making eye contact. While engaged with eyes lean forward in an attempt to place your nose next to the llama's nose. The llama greets other llamas by exchanging breath through the nose. Once you are nose to nose, gently expel your breath energy through your nostrils in close proximity to his. Not all llamas who greet this way will do it all of the time. It is an offering from the student to the llama that will sometimes grant closeness. This closeness is amplified by the eye to eye contact with the llama. At times the llama will look deep into your eyes to try to find your soul. It does so with good intention.

### **Grooming:**

Grooming is an important way to form a relationship with a llama. The llama is most used to being groomed on the neck and shoulders. That is the spot you should begin to use the brush, to get a feel for how it pulls and moves through the fiber. If you would like to brush the llama on the neck and body with your bare hand, this is also a way to get the llama to know your soft, gentle touch. Once you have begun to touch the llama with your hand you may attempt to scratch the llama on the top of the back. You will know right away if the llama is receptive to this approach.

**Walking a Llama: (if the location facilitates it)**

The student will be asked to walk a llama through a series of easy obstacles. This will be done under the supervision of a trained assistant or volunteer. Simple commands of “Walk”, “Stand” and possibly “Jump” will be used. This is a most connective exercise, requiring the give and take, the cooperation and acceptance of the handler and the llama. As you learn how to agree with each other on how to move together you will also grow to know each other.

**Giving thanks:**

The student will be invited to thank the llama and feed them to reinforces the bonding.

**Objective:** The central objective of this activity is to put the student in a position of open heart, allowing good intentions and love to flow within, while expressing positive emotions to the llama. This leads to improvements for all psychosocial outcomes (including cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional components) and neuro-sensory stimulation. This effect works the same for children, adolescents, adults and elders as well. De-stress, education, social interaction, sensitivity and awareness with the natural environment are also part of the objectives.

**Work areas:**

The Llama Medicine Experience (in Animal Assisted Intervention) promotes trust, self-control of emotions and improves self-esteem. Concentration, attention capacity and positive impact on memory may also result from these positive interactions. Empathy and Self-confidence levels are often raised. In some cases, the interactions with the llama can promote fine and coarse motor coordination. Communication with the llama intuitively increases one’s connection with the sacredness of Nature. Connection and social interaction between animals and humans can be a life teaching lesson.

**Benefits:** Study after study has shown that the presence of an animal in an assisted intervention or therapy program reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, and releases happiness and relaxation in the individual. Students find the experience to be more calming than traditional intervention, as our trained llamas for assisted activities are gentle and nonjudgmental.

## THE WAY WE WORK

The intention of the Llama Medicine Experience, is to get close to the students and the students close to the llamas in a safe and contained environment. To accomplish this dynamic, we suggest that the llamas should occupy a quiet space in a outdoor/green area, preferably one that permits us to restrict access to the llamas so that we may introduce the students to the llamas in an orderly manner. For 4 llamas we will need a 30x30 feet open outdoor space, for 8 llamas we ask for a 30x60 feet area. We do this work in groups of students, one group at the time. It is very important in that green area is free of poisonous plants. In particular, oleander is extremely dangerous. Just a few leaves can be the end for a full grown llama. The area should also be free of protruding nails and screws or sharp objects such as glass and metal debris.

To accomplish this work, we will need a group of students or staff willing to host and handle the llamas. They will be the holders of the safe space for the llamas. They will not only assure the llamas that everything is safe, they will also use their new skills to facilitate the student's interactions. For that purpose, we will need a 30 minute introduction class with the Llama Handlers prior to the event. There we will learn about their personalities, how to approach them, how to greet a llama and how to groom and handle them. These volunteers llama handlers will benefit from the deep interaction with the llama, learning who they are and how they respond to people.

This is the first step in learning the Llama Michiq Training Program, a more comprehensive approach for llama handlers and facilitators. This course can be designed to produce positive results for students who can most benefit from a repetitive, life enriching experience with the llama. This is where we feel the Llama Medicine can reach those who either need special attention or they have not been reached by traditional interventions.

We ask the school to designate which students or staff will be the Llama Michiq, and to provide an environment where we can admit groups of students to experience the llamas. We suggest the students be introduced to the individual llama either one, two or maximum of 3 students at a time. Each session should last 3 to 5 minutes in length. If time permits the students will have the opportunity to meet with several llamas. In this way we attempt to enhance each student's Llama Experience. At the option of the school, extra students or staff may be trained to rotate the Llama Michiq responsibility

