

## KIDS CONNECT WITH NATURE AT GODDARD SCHOOL

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BY RAY D. • READER SUBMITTED • NOVEMBER 13, 2008



*(Left to right) Natalie S., riding Nevada, is escorted on her ride by Miss Thea, the Pre-K teacher at the Route 70 Goddard School. (Photo courtesy of Ray D.)*

In today's world, where computers are commonplace, some school children own their own cell phones, and video games often replace outdoor activity, experts say city and suburban kids are getting increasingly disconnected from nature.

That's the reason why "Farm and Harvest" month was celebrated Wednesday, November 12th, at The Goddard School, located at 255 Route 70 in Toms River, (<http://www.goddardschool.com/Schools/Toms-River-II-J/Schools.gsp>).

The children, from 6-weeks to 6-years of age, were treated to a Petting Zoo and pony rides, to experience the farm animals up-close and personal in their own secure and fenced play-yard environment. The event was staged to both enlighten and entertain the children, most of whom had never seen a goat, a donkey, a duck, or a rooster outside of a picture book.

The real magic of the event, however, was just watching the children delight in meeting some of the animals. The event was definitely a great photo opportunity for the parents, too, as the children got to touch and feed the animals, and the ponies were just as happy to pose for some candid snapshots.

"The children, and their parents, really enjoyed the experience," says says Ms. Dana Chibbaro (CQ), owner and operator of The Goddard School. "All of the animals were extremely safe, clean, gentle and friendly".

