



Spread The Love This

Valentine's Day

Briscoe's Pony Express Love Letter Program

By Alissa Reinhard

Take out your cowboy hats and dust off your boots for the annual San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo on February 8 – 25, 2018! Awarded PRCA Large Indoor Rodeo of the Year for an unprecedented 13 years straight, this event is one not to miss!

When's the last time you sat down, took paper to pen and transcribed your deepest feelings for a loved one? Does a more heartfelt or sincere expression of love truly exist? If you were to ask a recipient of such a letter, the answer would probably be no. But in an age of iPhones, iPads, and iWillJustTextInstead, it seems we're losing the art of written correspondence and the sentiment it inspires.

A few years ago, the Briscoe Western Art Museum and B-Cycle, a bike sharing system in San Antonio, decided to team up to bring back the most basic form of communication – letter writing – while also incorporating the idea of a modern-day

"Pony Express."

"This relay, mail delivery service is synonymous with the Old West and was vital in communicating with each other across long distances," explained Sharon Garcia, Head of Communications at the Briscoe Western Art Museum. "Especially for those in remote areas of the American West, written correspondence was really their only way of connecting with their loved ones that lived far away."

The Briscoe's Pony Express Love Letter program is free. All are encouraged to come downtown from February 1-11 and spread the love! Simply stop by during Museum hours and create a handwritten letter for a loved one or family member. Compose your sentiments using the Museum's vintage typewriter or with an intricate calligraphy pen, adding a delicate, personal touch. Calligraphers from the San Antonio Calligraphy Guild will even be on hand each Saturday during

the program to hand-address envelopes. The calligraphers will even offer a mini-workshop on hand lettering on Tuesday, February 6.

Now that you have the tools you need to create a one-of-a-kind Valentine, are you still in need of a little inspiration? The Museum will also have books or poetry on hand and a variety of stationary designed to foster romantic expression. You can even fill in a Valentine's Mad Lib for a light-hearted touch.

Once you've finished your letter, the Briscoe will mail the letters, covering the cost of postage, and add its own custom rubber stamp to each. However, if your loved one is located in the downtown San Antonio area, a volunteer "Pony Express" delivery rider from the SATX Social Ride will hand deliver your letter, free of charge, on Valentine's Day.

PONY EXPRESS

LOVE LETTERS

FEBRUARY 1-11, 2018



“As a recipient, you can only imagine the surprise and delight of receiving a valentine, hand-delivered to your home or office and written especially for you by a friend, family member or significant other,” said Garcia. “The recipients are so excited by this beautiful gesture, they often beam with happiness or even cry.”

The Briscoe chose to make this a free program so that everyone can participate.

“The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive both from those writing the letters to those receiving them,” explained Garcia. “For many, adults and kids, it is their first experience using a manual typewriter. In other cases, it’s a rare opportunity to take a quiet moment

and actually put their sentiments on paper. It’s so much more personal and heartfelt than simply sending an email or text.”

The Briscoe Museum is proud to inspire both locals and visitors alike to “spread the love” throughout San Antonio and beyond.

“We’ve had a group of school kids send valentines to members of a retirement home near their school, grandparents sending multiple notes to grandkids out of state, sweethearts sending each other custom love poems, and even a downtown worker that used his valentine letter to invite his secret crush out on a date,” said Garcia.

Despite how rapidly communication has advanced, the feelings we harbor for our loved

ones are not expressed as often as they should be. Yes, we have the ability to convey our appreciation, love and gratitude at the touch of a button, but do we take the few seconds it requires to do just that? Through the Pony Express Love Letter program, the Briscoe has created a rare opportunity for us to reflect on how difficult it must have been to be separated from loved ones with only one form of communication – a handwritten letter. Let us focus our minds and hearts on how grateful we should be this Valentine’s Day, and every day, for the people in our lives who make our world go round.

For more information about the Pony Express Love Letter program and for Museum hours, visit www.briscoemuseum.org.