

HOLD YOUR HORSES

**Fiscal Year 2023-2024
Annual Report**



Director's Note



Dear Friends and Supporters,

I'm filled with gratitude for the people, animals, and community that make Hold Your Horses (HYH) so special. From the moment I joined this organization in 2021, I understood that HYH isn't just a place—it is a catalyst for healing at the individual and collective level. The incredible progress of 2023-2024 was evident by the growth and transformation in every corner of our work.

Together, we achieved remarkable milestones. Across all our services, we reached more individuals and families than ever before, meeting the growing demand for healing in partnership with horses and nature. We welcomed the addition of several new staff members, received a wonderful new horse named Champ (thank you McCann Family!), celebrated the arrival of a new barn cat named Cookie, and completed essential projects like pasture revitalization, planting a perennial stream buffer, and insulating and ventilating the barn to improve air quality and keep us dry. These efforts ensure our farm remains a safe and nurturing space for clients, staff, and animals.

We were also honored to receive the FamilyWise Buron-Campbell Innovation Award, a testament to our team's creativity and dedication to providing truly transformative clinical services to those most in need.

This year was also marked by intentionality as we planned for a leadership transition that allows our founder, Janet, to step back into a mentoring role. Janet's heart, sweat, and tears made HYH what it is today—her dream, belief in this work, and trust in all of us to continue it has left an indelible legacy. While Janet enjoys more time at her cabin, baking, and being with family, she remains an integral part of HYH, and we are so grateful for her continued guidance.

As we move forward, I am energized to build on Janet's legacy. My vision is to expand access through community programming, create training opportunities to share our expertise, foster belonging to ensure HYH is a safe and inclusive space for all, integrate environmental stewardship into every facet of our work, and build relationships on the road to growth and financial sustainability. Together, we are moving beyond being "the best-kept secret" to becoming a premier destination for healing through animals, nature, and community.

Thank you for believing in this important work,

Kenz Becco
(they/them)
Executive Director

Our People

Clinical Team

Mental Health:

Barbara Guy (LMFT)
Molly DePrekel (MA, LP)
Carissa Brandt (PsyD, LP)
Kay Neznick (MSW)

Occupational Therapy:

Janet Weisberg (MS OTR/L HPCS)
Sheryl Butler (MA, OTD, OTR/L)
Rachel White Robinson (OTR/L)
Krystal Balster (OTR/L)
Katie Halek (COTA)

Office, Farm, & Support Staff

Kenz Becco	Shelby Hart	Talia Slovut
Ruth Rovner	Syd Vollendorf	Lyle Uecker
JoJo Reiling	Avery Deffner	Lindsay Shank
Leslie Davis	Grace Palubicki	Jenn Evans

Board of Directors

Brigid Goss, President
Birgit Kelley, Vice-President
Kristi Argyilan, Secretary
Chad Lassen, Treasurer
Alan Eidsness, Member at large
Matt Halley, Member at large

This Year...

74

Hardworking Volunteers

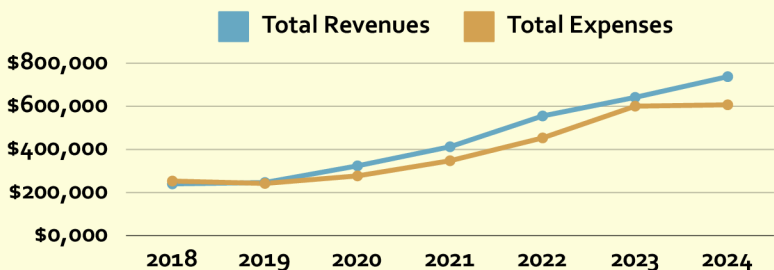
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Business Partnerships

331

Amazing Donors!

Financials



Balance Sheet

ASSETS	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 204,415
Accounts Receivable	\$ 34,653
Subtotal	\$ 239,068
Property and Equipment, Net	\$ 1,126,491
Total Assets	\$ 1,365,559
LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable & Other Liabilities	\$ 8,979
Long Term Debt	\$ 603,286
Total Liabilities	\$ 612,265
NET ASSETS	\$ 753,294
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 1,365,559

Statement of Activities

REVENUE	
Contributions and Grants	\$ 386,276
Program Revenue	\$ 342,055
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$ 9,439
Total Revenue	\$ 737,770
EXPENSES	
Staffing	\$ 460,100
Horse Expense	\$ 71,455
Operating Expense	\$ 75,525
Total Expense	\$ 607,080
Change in Net Assets	\$130,690
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$622,604
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$ 753,294



Our Services

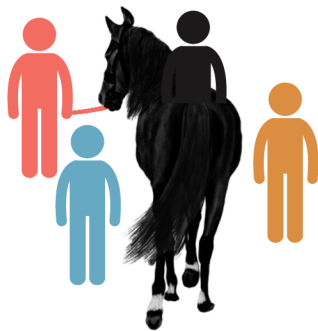
Occupational Therapy

HYH continues to provide exceptional occupational therapy (OT) at the farm with licensed clinicians, paid support staff, and specially trained equine partners to support people as they overcome barriers to improve everyday activities. While time with the horse seems like magic, our clinicians use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning to direct the movement of the horse and client (i.e. hippotherapy) to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems. The experience is unmatched in clinic or classroom settings.

HIPPOTHERAPY TEAM

Horse Leader:

warms-up the horse, advocates for the horse, and instructs the horse how to move during the session.



Occupational Therapist:

leads all sessions, coordinating movement with horse leader and client interactions with therapy aide to implement treatment plan.

Therapy Aide:

walks on the opposite side of the horse to provide safety, emotional encouragement, and physical support to clients as directed by clinician.



Scan the QR code to view a testimonial video about our mental health therapy!

38% of our total service hours are dedicated to mental health therapy

41.1% of our total service hours are dedicated to Occupational Therapy



Scan the QR code to view a testimonial video about OT!



All Services



Trained Staff Therapy Teams

The majority of our team in client sessions are paid staff who have been trained in emergency and safety procedures as well as HIPAA and trauma-informed care.



Professional, Reliable Volunteers

Volunteer therapy aides often have some type of medical background. Volunteer horse leaders have extensive horsemanship experience. All volunteers participating in sessions are fully trained, vetted, and scheduled for consistent care.



Private & Confidential Therapy Spaces

Individual clients are given private access to the indoor arena all year round. Many facilities hold multiple sessions at once in a shared arena, and on a seasonal basis.



Nature & Farm Activity Options

When appropriate, sessions may also include other nature-based activities that incorporate the outdoor labyrinth, fire rituals, farm chores, nature explorations, and/or walk and talk sessions on the trails.

Mental Health Therapy

HYH offers individual, couples, family and group psychotherapy services with animals and nature. Our services support a wide range of needs, from navigating life transitions to overcoming barriers that prevent individuals from living their most meaningful life.

Our licensed therapy team brings expertise in working with people across their lifespan and diverse identities of gender, sexuality, race, and ability. They have specialized training in working with animals and addressing trauma. With a client-centered and somatic approach, our clinicians create a safe, inclusive space for healing and growth alongside our animal partners.

Unlike traditional talk therapy, our services are experiential. Clients work with their therapist and nonjudgmental animal partners to explore challenges, build skills, and develop insights. These interactions create opportunities to identify and reframe thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that emerge while trying new things and building relationships with animals and people.

HYH provided an average of 45.5 total sessions a week in all service areas!

Experiential Co-Therapy

With our innovative co-therapy services, clients can now benefit from compassionate, integrated care that brings together the movement or “doing” of occupational therapy with the mindfulness or “being” of mental health therapy. This co-therapy model creates an embodied healing experience that reintegrates the mind-body connection and is particularly transformative in a farm setting with horses that attune to human emotions.

Our co-therapy approach was developed as our clinical team evolved its approach to best meet the needs of the youth, referred to us by the Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) and Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD), who are at-risk or have experienced sexual exploitation or trauma. Through a 14-week program, participants learn and practice skills for self-regulation, resourcing, communication, grounding, boundaries, cooperation, compassion, empathy, self-love, responsibility, and healthy relationships.

21.3% of our total service hours are dedicated to co-therapy services for Hennepin County Youth

Award-Winning Services

Other Hennepin County community partners have witnessed first-hand the positive outcomes of our co-therapy services. In May 2024, Hold Your Horses was given the FamilyWise Buron-Cambell Innovation Award, which recognizes organizations that help young people faced with adversity build resilience so they can grow up to be healthy, successful adults.

Given the positive results, two of our clinicians, Dr. Sheryl Butler and Molly DePrekel, have been working on articulating our co-therapy approach for other professionals in the field. They presented at the Horses and Humans Research Foundation Annual Conference and were accepted to present at the ATTACH Conference (Association for Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children).



(L-R) Molly DePrekel MA LP, Janet Weisberg MS OTR/L HPCS, and Sheryl Butler MA, OTD OTR/L at Family-Wise Buron Campbell Innovation Award Ceremony



“The program changed the way I speak to myself. I really don’t open up, and the nature all around helped me bring peace in my soul.”
~2024 Hennepin County Co-Therapy Participant



We LOVE our Volunteers!

Our services would not be possible without our volunteers to keep the property running everyday!

30+

Weekly Volunteers

1,460

Wheelbarrows dumped each year (approx.)

1,642

Hours fulfilled annually for barn chores



The Herd



Ghost *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Ghost has been with HYH since our founding and original location at Pergola Farm in 2006. On the very first day, he walked right up to our founding director and placed his head on her chest as if saying, "let's work together." Originally an outcast, he found a new sense of purpose with this work. He became a steadfast therapy horse and is now leader of the herd.



Whisper *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Whisper came to HYH with his owner, psychologist Molly DePrekel in 2012. Whisper is intuitive and playful and a willing partner in all of our programs and services. He is also our only horse who appreciates pajamas to maintain overnight comfort in his stall!



Karl *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Karl was a seasoned therapy horse before joining our herd. He was a member of the Stable Pathways therapy program before joining HYH in 2021. Karl is such a great therapy partner that he has gleefully stepped into mental health sessions beyond hippotherapy.



Bingo *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Bingo was donated by Connie and Jack McCann. He is our go-to pony for little kids and is a frequent favorite with mental health clients. His nickname is "Pony Soprano" because he's the strong silent type, ya know? If it weren't for his size, he would be the leader of the herd - no doubt!



Rose & Ida *Mental Health & OT Partners*

Rose & Ida, a mother-daughter duo, were gifted to us by Dr. Sarah Carlson to bring love to the farm after losing one of our best equine partners, Lily. While they often serve as mascots or comic relief, their small stature and loveable personalities make them approachable therapy partners in OT and mental health!



Bentley *Mental Health Partner*

Our founding director, Janet Weisberg, randomly stumbled across a photo of Bentley online and she immediately drove to Wisconsin to meet him. Bentley was waiting at the fence and it was love at first sight. Nearly unrideable at first because of pain, after some dental work and physical therapy, he is now a happy and dedicated therapy partner with a big heart.



Leo *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Leo was born in Germany! He spent some time in Quebec before Talia Slovut purchased him. Talia has worked with us since high school and is now in OT school. They showed in Hunter competitions for a few years before Talia left for college. Leo now lives at HYH as a therapy horse and is always thrilled to see Talia during school breaks.



Yoder *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Yoder spent many years as a cart-horse on an Amish farm. After losing his cart-horse partner, he was sent to a sale barn for a short while and that's where we found him. Originally not for sale, we inquired and eventually purchased him thanks to sponsorship from the Brachman Family.



Champ *Mental Health & OT Partner*

Champ was donated to us by the same wonderful family that donated Bingo! Champ had been a pasture pony for some time with his closest friend being a cat. Wanting to give him a purpose again, he was graciously donated to HYH where he now loves his job and wants to make everyone happy.



Kubota & Cookie *Mental Health & OT Partners*

Kubota belonged to a past farm manager before becoming a permanent resident at HYH. He fell in love with our farm cat Mittens who sadly passed away in 2023. A few months later, we searched high and low to find him a new friend. Fortunately, a nearby farm had several cats needing a home and that's how the rambunctious Cookie came along!

Sponsor a horse!

Our horses are vital to our work and giving them the best care translates to the meaningful outcomes for our clients. You can sponsor any herd member with a \$5,000 tax-deductible donation that will be designated to that animal's hay, grain, treats, supplements, veterinary care, body work, farrier services, supplies and conditioning for one year.

Horse sponsorship includes a photo certificate and an optional farm visit to connect with your animal of choice. Scan the QR code to get started!



Land & Facilities



We acknowledge that the land on which we work and heal is the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people. We recognize the past harms inflicted upon Indigenous communities and commit to honoring their history and importance today. We strive to foster a future rooted in respect, equity, and justice.

Join & Support!

At Hold Your Horses, we believe in the transformative power of horses and nature to heal, connect, and inspire. Through animal and nature-based therapy and community programs, we provide a place of solace and care for individuals of all abilities. Your support fuels this mission—helping us nurture resilience, foster belonging, and create opportunities for growth. Join us in making a meaningful impact—volunteer, donate, or spread the word.

Start your therapy journey

Volunteer for barn chores

Join community events

  Follow us on social @holdyourhorsesmn

[Give one-time or monthly!](#)

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or by mail



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HOLD YOUR HORSES

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**\$100 =
median
gift size**

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I would like to remain anonymous in any public donor lists and acknowledgements

☐

I would like to opt out of email news and updates

☐

I am interested in volunteering for barn chores and / or board/committee groups

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Sec.Code

Signature: