

# Bridle Paths

Bridle Paths' eleventh year was marked by continuity and collaboration. We supported participants with invisible challenges such as anxiety and depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, brain injuries, and experiences of trauma in building mindful presence, awareness of self and others, and honest communication. Our emotionally-attuned services help participants to manage stress, regulate emotions, and build authentic connections, in partnership with horses. Consistent revenues from therapeutic services and donors, along with new relationships with community organizations, position us well to continue to pursue our mission to offer strength, support, and healing to individuals and families through safe, effective, and high-quality equine-assisted services. Outlined below are our goals for 2023 and associated results.

## Develop sustainable programs for veterans, service members, and their families

- Bridle Paths delivered equine therapy groups for 55 veterans and staff from military medical centers and the D.C. Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs with our 2022 VA Adaptive Sports Grant. We are one of 14 organizations nationwide to receive a 2023 VA Adaptive Sports Grant to provide equine therapy for veterans and service members in fiscal year 2024.
- We continued our collaborations with Team Red White and Blue and the Warrior Retreat at Bull Run, hosting both family equine therapy and equine-assisted learning sessions. Executive Director Katie Fallon joined Larry Zilliox of Willing Warriors on Welcome Home - A Podcast for Veterans, About Veterans, By Veterans regarding our *Making the Connection* program for veterans, service members, and military families.
- We began a partnership with the Virginia Department of Veterans Services Virginia Veteran and Family Support to provide equine-assisted psychotherapy sessions for military families.
- We received a grant from the Rotary Club of Leesburg, which will permit us to provide a year's worth of adaptive riding sessions for veterans.

## Expand equine-assisted learning (EAL) programs.

- We partnered with a local behavioral health facility to provide weekly EAL sessions for more than 50 clients and facility staff.
- We began a collaboration with the Ryan Bartel Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to teen suicide prevention, to serve local teens through the FORT and other initiatives.

## Provide training and certification opportunities for equine-assisted services professionals.

- We hosted our first Fundamentals of EAGALA Model Training for more than 40 mental health professionals and equine specialists.
- Katie Fallon delivered an in-person equine-facilitated learning certification for the HERD Institute in 2023, with two more certifications scheduled for the summer of 2024.
- Katie Fallon presented on our *Making the Connection* EAL and equine therapy programs at the HERD Institute conference, and at the first-ever Military Horse Sense Online Conference sponsored by Horse Sense of the Carolinas.
- Katie Fallon joined staff from the Masterson Method to present on equine bodywork for EAS horses at the PATH Intl. conference in October 2023.

## Build operating funds to care for our horses.

- Volunteer hours totaling more than 6,000 supported all aspects of operations, including the establishment of volunteer teams to support website development, social media, online fundraising, and customer relations.
- Haflinger mare Burrito joined our healing herd.
- Bridle Paths served 31 unique adaptive riding clients in nearly 800 lessons. We served 16 unique equine-assisted psychotherapy clients in more than 50 sessions, and established relationships with local mental health professionals.
- Revenue from therapeutic services exceeded \$140,000.
- We hosted our first Horsepower for Healing fundraiser at Lost Creek Winery, raising over \$20,000.
- Contributions to the program exceeded \$70,000. These contributions allow us to provide enhanced wellness care for our horses, allocate funds to serve military families at no cost to them, and invest in technology and administrative improvements to support program growth.

In 2024, we look forward to:

- Hosting another Fundamentals of EAGALA Model Certification training.
- Increasing volunteerism across the range of program operations.
- Expanding opportunities to support our innovative programs and our healing herd.