Serving local heroes and their families since 2006

2023 Year in Review

Horses4Heroes is celebrating 17 years of serving those in our community whose Call of Duty is to Protect, Serve, Teach and Heal and their families.

Horses4Heroes, Inc.

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Horses4Heroes – Serving local heroes and their families since 2006!

Las Vegas-based non-profit Horses4Heroes provides affordable programs with horses for children, teens, and adults with a focus on serving those in our community whose Call of Duty is to Protect, Serve, Teach and Heal. **These programs generate income to support daily operations of the Horses4Heroes Las Vegas Equestrian Center, including the care and feeding of semi-retired and donated horses, as well as allowing us to offer free and low-cost services to Veterans/First Responders with PTSD, recovering addicts, survivors of domestic abuse, violence, trauma and trafficking, at-risk youth and teens and others who need a hand up, not a handout.**

When we first introduced the concept of affordable horseback riding to these local heroes, we received the following anonymous email from Nellis AFB. It touched our hearts then and strengthens our resolve today to fulfill our mission for these local heroes and their families.

"Children that have parents deployed might need a friend. There are some good friends and there are bad friends, but the best friend in the world is a horse. Horses can listen to you and really make you happy if you are down. Some kids may have a hole in their heart from their parent's absence, and the horse could fill that hole with his love. You may not know it but this organization means more to these kids than you may think.

"Now for the parents who are deployed. Some parents might not worry about their kids because they are so worried about getting killed and some parents worry about their kids all the time and how they are doing and if they are being taken care of. For the parents that worry about their kids this organization may help. They will know that their kids are enjoying themselves and maybe aren't thinking about the war and the welfare of their parents. Since they are worrying less about their kids it will help them fight better and give them a better chance at staying alive. Now H4H is helping protect our country."

Anonymous email sent from Nellis AFB

Horses4Heroes serves local heroes and their families with affordable programs with horses. Horses4Heroes owns and operates the Horses4Heroes Family Equestrian Center, a 2.5-acre ranch located in northwest Las Vegas.

Mission Statement

Create and deliver affordable recreational and instructional equestrian activities and low-cost morale-boosting health & wellness programs to local heroes and their families in our communities here in Las Vegas and from coast to coast.

Vision Statement

Our four core values emphasize Responsibility, Independence, Dedication, and Empathy. Working with and caring for horses teaches many important life skills and reinforces our core values that horses build character and will guide us to become empathetic, empowered people who will make responsible choices throughout their lives. Most important we believe that horses teach self-sufficiency, self-reliance, self-confidence, they boost your overall self-esteem and, convince yourself and others that YES, YOU CAN!

Highlights of 2023

In Las Vegas, Horses4Heroes' flagship and HQ facility is the Las Vegas Equestrian Center (LVEC). Here at our 2.5-acre ranch, conveniently located in northwest Las Vegas, we provide affordable educational, recreational and instructional programs that generate funds for our free Health & Wellness EAL (Equine Assisted Learning) programs. Our focus is on Events, Education and Equestrian programs and activities for local heroes and their families, as well as those in our community who need a hand up, not a handout.

Instructional/Educational Programs: A lifestyle, not a hobby!

Through lessons, horsemanship sessions, school field trips and Scouts/Girl Scouts, our instructional and educational programs focus on introducing horses to newcomers, children, teens and adults. Our horsemanship sessions include teaching the fundamentals necessary to become a horseman, horse handling, horse care and horse-riding basics. Students (ages 8 to 17) who have mastered these fundamentals are invited to participate in group classes called Barn Rats. Adult students have opportunities to volunteer as Wranglers or Ride Staff Assistants and earn extra riding time. For children ages 4 to 7, we offer 15-minute mini-lessons during Family Farm Days, our weekly open house.

Educational programs, including Field Trips for elementary school students and Girl Scouts/Scouts Horse 101, not only introduce horsemanship fundamentals, but also introduce farm animals and our miniature horses with a goal to better understanding the responsibility and cost of horse ownership. Ranching is truly a lifestyle, not a hobby. We are pleased to report that many schools return to our center for field trips, some for the second and third time. Teachers continue to rave about our Field Trips, describing the experience as "the best in Las Vegas!"

Field Trips: In 2023, we hosted **28 elementary school field trips,** attended by an average of 40 students for an estimated total of 1,120 generating more than $12,230 in income for Horses4Heroes.

Girl Scouts: Four Girl Scout Troops participated in a two-hour Horse 101 session, $300 per troop.

Teachers say about Horses4Heroes' Life on the Farm Field Trips:

"The Best Field Trip in Las Vegas!"

Recreational Programs: Camps, birthday parties and Family Farm Days

Camps, birthday parties and our weekly open houses, Family Farm Days, provide affordable opportunities for members and guests to enjoy our horses and farm animals. These services also are a great way to introduce our non-profit, our center and programs to new families who might become members and want to enroll children in our classes and camps, donate or volunteer.

In 2023, we partnered with **Las Vegas Parents Club, Mama Social, Southern Nevada Moms and Vegas Family Guide** (online social media influencers) to host events at the ranch including Summer at the Ranch in July and Halloween Ranch in October and, in December, we provided coupons during Glittering Lights at the Las Vegas Speedway. We sold Season Passes this year and, in 2024, we will be selling Annual Passes for the first time.

No School Day Camps: Our 2023 day camps included Presidents Day, NV Day, and Veterans Day Camp. All camps were sold out.

Seasonal Camps: Spring Break we introduced a weeklong Horse Lovers Camp in addition to our Ranch Camp. Horse Lovers Camp is an immersive experience for ages 10 to 15, fewer campers and a higher price. Winter Break Camp in 2023 will be one week, one week of Ranch Camp and one week of Horse Lovers Camp. Our Winter Break Horse Lovers Camp 2023 is sold out.

Summer Camp: Again in 2023, we offered eight one-week camps and, for the first time, four, two-week Horse Lovers Camp. Our theme was "We're All in this Together." Our teen counselors performed the iconic dance from "High School Musical" every Monday morning and, on Friday, the campers performed the dance with their own embellishments for their parents! The Horse Lovers Campers performed a show for their parents at the end of their two weeks. Also in 2023, we offered a scholarship to eight families who have a parent who was deployed, injured, disabled or deceased. The scholarship was for up to 3 children per family for one week of camp. We were able to offer one family six weeks of camp for their three boys, ages five and eight. Their father, a medically retired AF Veteran, passed away two weeks before summer. Here's a link to our Summer Camp 2023 video: https://bit.ly/3pLOoqh

Summer Camp 2024: We are planning our Olympics Camp for 2024. This will be our fourth Olympics theme summer camp since 2012. Let the games begin!

Family Farm Days: We continue to look for ways to create affordable opportunities for our members and guests to visit the ranch. Our weekly open house is now branded **Family Farm Days** and we are open several days during the week and on Saturdays. We added a 15-minute mini-lesson for $25, available during Family Farm Days, re-rides for $5, snacks and water bottles for $1 each, and a loyalty punch card.

First Rides Club: Also new in 2023, we introduced **The First Rides Club**, an opportunity for a parent to celebrate their child's magical First Horse Ride. For an additional $10, we send them home with a commemorative photo and button. Parents love their child's photo! We change the frame to fit the season. (All of our buttons, promotional, membership, Season Pass and Volunteer are made by Opportunity Village. We love to support small businesses and non-profits!)

Birthday Parties: In 2023, we hosted 19 birthday parties. We charge $400 for a two-hour party, complete with horse rides, generating $7,600 for our non-profit.

Special Events/Outings: Events we hosted this year included: NV Department of Veterans Services first-ever Month of the Military Child BBQ, Nellis AFB Weapons School Squadron Family Friday, the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Assn. Chapter 41-A Family Picnic, Heroes in the Rough Day at the Ranch, Creech AFB 432nd OG Squadron annual Christmas Party, a baby shower and a Family Reunion. Off site, we brought our Hayride (truck pulled flat bed trailer) to Nellis Family Housing for their Harvest Festival and Holiday Party and to Cornerstone Christian Academy for their Harvest Festival. In March, we were one of the sites chosen to host the annual USC Day of SCervice, coordinated by the University of Southern California Alumni Affairs.

Health & Wellness Programs: Harnessing the Power of Horses through Equine Assisted Learning/EAL

In 2023, we continued to expand our EAL programs, with workshops and team building sessions for LVMPD officers and civilians, recovering addicts and survivors of domestic abuse and violence.

OK Corral Series: The year started with hosting our third OK Corral Series workshop, this one focused on corporate team building. A fourth is planned with the OK Corral Series for February 2024. Horses4Heroes is OK! Our Las Vegas OK Corral seminars are among the best attended in the country, with participants flying in from coast to coast.

Workshops/Outings/Sessions

Back in the Saddle (Veterans and First Responders)
Early in 2023, we offered weekly EAL sessions for Veterans with PTSD, Active Duty service members and First Responders. We continue to seek collaborative opportunities to work with local Veterans and Veterans Service Organizations (VSO). We find that it works best when an agency or non-profit brings their clients to us for experiential education with horses. We also have had to change the way we vet the Veterans, including revising our application, requesting a copy of their DD214 and a referral letter from a therapist, family member or VSO. In December, we met with Salvation Army Veterans and a group of local female veterans and have started the planning for 2024 programs. Our Veterans programs are partially funded through a grant from William E Dean Charitable Foundation.

Recovery Ranch (Recovering Addicts)
In 2023, we contracted with local agencies to run weekly, twice monthly or monthly sessions, including Crossroads of Southern Nevada, The Nestled Recovery Center, and The Lionheart Recovery Center.

Whoa! (Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Violence)
This year, we collaborated with Hookers for Jesus, a local non-profit that provides long-term housing to survivors of domestic abuse, violence, trauma and trafficking. For Safenest, another non-profit, we are providing five day camps (Camp Hope at the Ranch) for children, ages 5 to 17, who have experienced domestic abuse or violence. Camp Hope at the Ranch, a Safenest Pathways project, is supported by a grant from The Harris Foundation.

Also in 2023, we hosted a **Whoa! Lunch 'n Learn**, attended by more than 40 adults who work with non-profits, agencies, law enforcement and therapists, to showcase the healing power of horses for these survivors. We connected with the **LVMPD Trauma and Trafficking Task Force**, attended two of their meetings, and hosted a workshop at the ranch in August for Task Force members, so they could better understand the resources we provide.

Focus on the Family: Working with Nellis **AFB AFRC**, we hosted two outings for EFMP Families. These are families who have children with special needs. The outings were attended by parents and siblings as well as the children with special needs. We also collaborated with **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Nevada** to host a Day at the Ranch for Bigs and Littles during the summer.

Stable Leadership (Team Building): In 2023, we welcomed leisure employees from Resorts World for a team-building session. This was their second year visiting the ranch at the start of their busy spring and summer season.

Also in 2023, we reached out to **the LVMPD Health & Wellness Bureau** and connected with Sgt. Al Reeder. Working with Sgt. Reeder, we hosted **19 Team Building** sessions for **10 LVMPD Commands**, attended by officers and civilians. These sessions were provided at no cost to LVMPD, partially funded through a grant from The William E. Dean Charitable Foundation.

Large Animal Evacuation: In April, Horses4Heroes staged a Large Animal Evacuation Drill in partnership with North Las Vegas Fire Department, Animal Control, Desert Pines Equine Center and Clark County Fire & Rescue. It was a great opportunity to introduce our programs to these First Responders and everyone learned how much they don't know about evacuating livestock.

TV 8 News covered the event, here's the link: https://youtu.be/VK9lMP1ix0c?si=FqhlM1hZayTwwG2l

Community Outreach/Networking

Horses4Heroes invited non-profits to visit the ranch to learn about our EAL programs and how they might benefit their clients. **Olive Crest**, which works with Foster Children and Teens, brought their senior staff and program managers to participate in Day at the Ranch. We also took "the show on the road," to **Eagle Quest** Family Day, **TIP** Volunteer Briefing (Trauma Intervention Prevention), **Armed Forces and First Responders Appreciation Day** (Oct. 21, Craig Ranch Park), **Foundation for Recovery** Resource Fair, and **AF Wounded Warriors Care Fair** in Lake Las Vegas.

In 2023, we invited the **VFW Post 10047 Auxiliary** to hold their monthly meetings at our ranch. This VFW lost their post due to COVID-related closings and the Auxiliary has been looking for a place to meet.

Vegas Chamber: Horses4Heroes rejoined the Vegas Chamber and attended Las Vegas Preview. In December we hosted The Vegas Chamber's Leadership Las Vegas Class, "The White Tigers," for a Leadership Training Session and Ribbon Cutting to celebrate our partnership with The Coconut Crush, a local business that makes handcrafted bath and beauty products. President and CEO Sydney Knott was invited to join the Vegas Chamber Executive Women's Council.

Junior League of Las Vegas: In February, Sydney Knott was a guest speaker at a monthly meeting of the **Junior League of Las Vegas** and later in the year, Horses4Heroes received a donation for $2000 from the JLLV.

Horses4Heroes in the News

Media: KLAS TV 8 visited twice this year, once during the Large Animal Evacuation Drill and once during summer camp!

Here's the link to the summer camp video: https://bit.ly/3TkSfHo
Link to large animal evacuation drill coverage on TV 8: https://bit.ly/48cAePK

Fundraising/Grants

We are grateful for the support of our donors, friends and community partners. In 2023, we received funding from the following corporations, foundations, organizations and private donors.

Benjamin R. Binder, Esq. (Tampa, Florida)
Clark County TEAP Grant
William E Dean Charitable Fund
Golden Entertainment
The Harris Foundation
Junior League of Las Vegas
Kroger
Lexicon Bank
M Charitable Fund
Navy Federal Credit Union
Optum Healthcare
South Point Resort and Casino
Terri and Roland Sturm Family Foundation
Subaru of Las Vegas
Teton Ridge (Arizona Ridge Riders)
Lynn and Gary Kantor
Ken MacDonald
Denise Springer Topliff
Katie Wilkinson
Gloria and Mark Fine
Randall Daugherty, CPA

Partial List

OPERATIONS

Our Team, Horses and Humans working together to serve our local heroes!

Meet our team! From left to right, Libby Bugl, director of Health & Wellness, William Cunningham, director of Operations, Sydney Knott, president/CEO/founder, Diann Dunn Friedman, director of equestrian programs, Mary West, associate director of equestrian programs. Back row, Liana Neville, director of recreational and educational programs and Bryan Richards, Ranch Foreman. We also have 20 horses and a dozen farm animals that are the ones who make the magic happen here every day.

Meet our horses!

Horses4Heroes presents our HERD: The Horses that serve our Heroes!

Special Use Permit: In March we appeared before the Clark County Board of County Commissioners. This was the annual review as mandated when the BCC approved our Special Use Permit in 2022. While staff recommended continuation of the annual review, the BCC voted unanimously to allow us to operate without an annual review, a huge WIN for our organization and our future.

Lease: We will be signing another five-year lease on this property, 4975 North Miller Lane, extending our residency through 2029. The landlord is requesting a $1000 per month rent increase so $3500 starting in January 2024. Currently, we are responsible for all repairs and maintenance on the property. We have put a new roof on the barn, arranged to have all new lighting installed in the barn and public areas, and replaced appliances, lighting and plumbing fixtures in the Ranch House, all through grants and donations. Our goal is to stay and eventually buy this property and create a land trust to preserve opportunities for rural education and experiences in our community. Our investment to date is more than $80,000 in repairs, maintenance, and improvements.

Water Right: In 2023, we finally received confirmation from the State of Nevada that our Water Right has been recorded and assigned to the domestic well located at 4975 North Miller Lane. Horses4Heroes owns this water right, it is an asset.

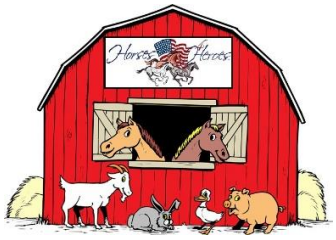
Insurance: We switched to American National Insurance Company in 2023, cutting our monthly premium in half.

Summer Camp: Our Summer Camps continue to be our Big Ticket item, generating the most revenue of any program. This past summer, we raised our rates across the board, eliminated the sibling discount and adjusted the rates to reflect the parents' membership level. Military, Veterans and First Responders paid the lowest rate, while other members and non-members paid higher rates. Summer Camps nationwide were off in 2023, as was our camp. It was the first year that we have not been sold out all eight weeks.

Expenses: Our largest monthly expense remains hay for our horses and feed for our farm animals. The price of hay and grain has nearly doubled in the past year. Our weekly feed bill is $1200.

Volunteers: Volunteers are the lifeblood of our non-profit, however, like most non-profits and organizations, 20% of the people are doing 80% of the work. We have 187 volunteers in our database. We switched to Volunteer Scheduler Pro to make it easier for volunteers to apply and assign themselves a shift. We are working on incentives to encourage more volunteers to show up and work a shift.

Members: We continue to welcome new members to Horses4Heroes. To date we have more than 3,530 members in Las Vegas. We offer a FREE membership to Active Duty service members, Veterans, First Responders, teachers, healthcare workers, our neighbors in the Lone Mountain Rural Neighborhood Preservation Area, and employees with our local community partners, South Point, Resorts World and Amazon as well as Southern Nevada Moms and Las Vegas Parents Club, our Social Media influencers. Others can join for $50 and be our hero by supporting Horses4Heroes. Membership guarantees members the lowest rates we offer and opportunities to participate in programs and activities.



A Look ahead to 2024

Monthly Birthday Bash for First Responders' Kids

Starting in January, we will be hosting a monthly birthday party for children whose parents are Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters, and EMTs. Dates set are January 27, February 24 and March 23. This will be a free party and we will be looking for sponsors to assist with cake, cupcakes, and refreshments.

Foster Farm Lunch 'n Learn

Building on the success of this year's WHOA Lunch 'n Learn, we are planning a similar event, with a focus for those who work with Foster Kids, Teens and Young Adults, as well as therapists, agencies, non-profits and law enforcement.

Unfinished Business/UNLV

We have been approached by a student in the UNLV School of Social Work about hosting an Unfinished Business workshop for faculty and students, to help the healing in the aftermath of the Dec. 6 shooting on the UNLV Campus. We are looking at January 30 or 31.

Programming Changes

To reach our income projections and be of greater service to the community, we are looking at changing our hours of operation, so we are open more hours per day for walk-ins, not just by appointment. We also are unveiling a new logo for the Horses4Heroes' Las Vegas Equestrian Center, with an emphasis on Events, Education and Equestrian.

Happy New Year! Happy 2024!

HORSES4HEROES

LVEC

LAS VEGAS EQUESTRIAN CENTER

EVENTS * EDUCATION * EQUESTRIAN