

AHEAD With Horses Inc Annual Report 2020-2021



HOW IT ALL STARTED AHEAD With Horses

AHEAD (Accelerated Habilitation Education And Development) With Horses Inc was founded 53 years ago in 1968 by Liz Helms in Sun Valley, CA, the same year that the sport of vaulting (gymnastics on a moving horse) was brought to the United States. Liz had started her career by teaching riding to “normal” children, and along the way she came across disabled children and saw what a difference it could make. It was one of those first children, a boy with shallow hip sockets who required surgery every year, and his father who was a heart-surgeon at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital, that encouraged his son to join the program because it would maximize the effect of the surgery. The articulation of the hip joint kept his sockets functioning longer and led to him requiring less and less surgery.

Using the techniques that Liz and her former husband Lew Helms had learned, they began working with more severely disabled children, developing individualized programs to meet each student’s needs. The horse’s movement stimulates the brain, which in turn changes the body and the individual’s ability to integrate and process sensory input. The children have fun and experience a sense of success while facing real challenges.

AWH’s mission is to:

Maximize the potential of disabled / disadvantaged / special-needs children providing developmental therapy, education and recreation through horses and related experiences, with measurable improvement physically, mentally, socially and/or emotionally resulting in increased self-sufficiency and the ability to lead better and more independent and productive lives.

In 2012, AWH moved their primary facility from Sun Valley to Shadow Hills, California. Today, AHEAD With Horses serves multitudes of individuals of all ages and disabilities each year, utilizing the main facility and a mobile program in Brentwood at Sullivan Canyon. Program services are comprehensive and combine the benefits of physical,

occupational, speech, educational and recreational therapy; psychological and sociological counseling, other developmental services such as behavior management, sensorimotor services, etc.

Two unique aspects of this therapy are the immediacy of response and visibility of its effectiveness across multiple domains (motor, communication, social, emotional, cognitive, self-help, vocational). Predicated on the philosophy that everyone can learn and achieve, the emphasis is on working with those others feel lack the ability to respond. Most have not responded to traditional forms of therapy and/or education or are not eligible for other services.

The first disabled student was served over 50 years ago and more than 100,000 have been served since. The program has been recognized educationally, scientifically, nationally, and internationally. Its work has been presented at prestigious forums and major conferences including Grand Rounds at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, Council for Exceptional Children (state conference), National Autism Conferences and the Olympic Scientific Congress (just to name a few). AWH children have performed in demonstrations including the XXIIIrd Olympiad, Tournament of Roses, Del Mar National Horse Show, Vaulting Fests, L.A. County Fair, The Hollywood Charity Horse Show and so many more! The program has been featured on national and international television, radio, and print media. One of the highlights of AWH's history was President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan's attendance at Fun Day '92, presenting two of their personal horses to be used as therapy horses in the program and achievement award medals to more than 150 program participants residing in all areas of Los Angeles, including housing projects. Many other prestigious Government officials, including Councilmen, Supervisors and Mayors have honored us by their attendance to our events as well as financial support.

Other AWH projects over the years include: PROJECT M.O.V.E. (Motivation, Oppportunity, Values, Ethics) AHEAD meeting the social and developmental needs of disadvantaged/poverty level children, at-risk youth and gang youth; PROJECT MOUNTAINS AHEAD, an innovative multi-sensory nature trail and learning center; a special summer project served 1500 children living in subsidized housing; AWH supervised and/or provided work training and employment for handicapped, disadvantaged/poor (Summer Youth Employment); field work for education requirements; projects for youth service, at-risk-youth, gang diversion, etc.; court ordered community service for adult and youth offenders and much, much more!

AWH has served the LA Unified School District as one of very few approved sites for Special Education. Classes from various areas of Los Angeles have participated. These programs have reached over 1000 students. Field trips and special events combine developmental therapy, education and recreation disguised as **FUN**, providing positive alternatives and opportunities for success and increased self-esteem.

Additional services have included transportation, food, shelter, computer, clothing, holiday gifts, advocacy, referral, etc.

There have been so many more exciting memories over the program's history... some of which are seen in the accompanying pages. The most important however, are the memories of the children. Each week, we see so many children making progress... some big and some ever so small. Whether it is a child taking his first steps or speaking his first words, another sitting for just a moment longer or just a smile from a "non-responsive" child... this is the real history of AHEAD With Horses! These are the gifts that last a lifetime. In December of 2017 we purchased our own property in Lake View Terrace which we have been working to make into the backdrop of many more memories to come over the next 50 years and on!

Some of the pictures you will see on the following pages look quite different than in years past. Most students will be on a horse and wearing a mask. In March of 2020, the world had a major event that has affected everyone: the COVID-19 pandemic. It caused us to close our doors under the "Stay At Home" Mandates starting in mid-March. We were able to start allowing some students back to the ranch at the beginning of June 2020, with several changes made to keep everyone safe. This has been different from any period of time in our past, and at times, we have had to limit which of our students we are able to work with. In December of 2020 till mid-February 2021, we had to cancel all lessons again due to a second Stay At Home Order. Since then, we have been able to have our students return and continue to increase the number of students we can see and allow for more students who need more assistance. We look forwards to when restrictions can be completely lifted, and we can allow all our students back so that they can continue to reach new milestones and improve their quality of life.

The success of AHEAD With Horses is best summed up in the words of a parent. "With this program, we have the hope for our son to be the best he can be... Isn't that what we all want for our children?"

AHEAD stands for Accelerated Habilitation Education And Development. We receive much more than we give. Those we are privileged to work with teach us all that we know! We depend on the validation and support of the public.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Judy Beem

Dear Valued Friends,

Amazingly we survived this last, most tumultuous year -a pandemic threatening chaos throughout our AWH world as well as throughout the entire world.

And survived we did. TOGETHER we found ways to keep the ranch safe during the lessons for the kids, safe while grooming and tacking the horses, safe while our volunteers were in the barn area and safe for the volunteers cleaning in the yard spaces.

First, we ensured that the staff, volunteers, and clients were vaccinated as it became available. For the kids, if they were not vaccinated, they needed to wear a mask. We provided several hand washing stations and had hand sanitizer bottles throughout the ranch area. Mask wearing was expected for all. Safe distancing was encouraged while in the barn or in the areas during cleaning.

We wrapped the leather strap with handles (surcingle) with saran wrap and cleaned it between lessons. We had covers for the pads and these were cleaned after each use. All the objects that the children handled were cleaned with disinfecting solutions-the rings and pole, the balls for the large board, and the helmets.

As the numbers of infections throughout the County diminished, we opened more lesson times especially on Saturdays and were able to take on new students. Sadly, some of the children have not been able to return for various reasons, but we are optimistic that some will still return.

We had Zoom Bingo for fund raising and held a virtual Fun Day. Families were encouraged to video their children dancing, singing, etc. and we had help editing the videos and ran them instead of our in-person Fun Day event. We also had a sponsored Double Dare Day-Bucket of water dunking, pie in the face (it was whipped cream and oh so good) and sitting in a tub of Jello. Again, all on video and shared online.

During this time, the City offices were closed and any items that needed to be reviewed by engineers or Planners were taken to the City office and left in the designated department box. This was a slow process and not much progress was made. We are still waiting for planner approval of our plot plans and permit approvals.

During this time, we were unable to have groups of volunteers that come in busses work at the new property. Instead, we had smaller groups of boy scouts assisting their members with projects for their Eagle awards. We had 2 scouts develop drip systems for the aloes and flowers along the fence lines. Another made a raised sensory garden. We have more projects lined up for later in the summer and early Fall.

I am so pleased to see how the entire team at AHEAD With Horses have pulled together to keep the program stable during this unsettling time. And I am honored at the many donations that have come in from so many. I am looking forward to when we will be back to some semblance of normalcy.

I thank you all for your unwavering support in dollar donations, items from our wish list, buckets of carrots for the horses, your time and effort and the milage you give us.

WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE FRIENDS LIKE YOU.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Members of the AHEAD With Horses Inc Board of Directors represent diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds. Some have been supporters for over 30 years, some have children that are currently in the program or who used to ride in the program. All have a love for what we do!!!

Judy Beem, RN; President
Joyce Davison; Vice-President
Beth Muraida; co-Secretary
Arline Latino; co-Secretary
Floyd Newman, Treasurer
Michelle Newman; Executive Director
Laurelyn "Timi" Brown
Annie Howley
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Bradley D. Perdue
Jennifer Richards
Ed Santiago
Pam Currie

THANKS TO AWH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Our Miracle Workers



Michelle Newman- Head Instructor, Executive Director

Rae Aaselund
Lisa Baragosh
Judy Beem
Eleanor Brindle
Timi Brown

Pam Curie
Jairo Omar Diaz
Luke Hunter
Nancy Kenyon
Arline Latino

Elsa Marin
Kathleen Meyer
Claudia Nau
Gianna Piro
Jennifer Richards

Kammy Schreiner
Shelley Stravitz
Kate Terbush
Happy Watts
Sandi Zaslaw

- We had over 2,100 volunteer hours this past year, including Middle School, High School and College students completing hours for graduation.
 - We had over 154 volunteers join us this year.**

**This number is smaller than usual due to the pandemic and having to close our doors for a time, canceling some of our big events, and once reopening, we had to limit how many volunteers could be on site at a time.

www.AWHLA.org

WHO WE SERVE

AWH is a developmental, therapeutic vaulting program that specializes in working with children with multiple and severe disabilities. Our clients have a variety of different diagnosis, including:

Autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, developmental delays, chromosome disorders, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Spina Bifida, seizure disorders, hypotonia, quadriplegia, paraplegia, blind, deaf, ADHD, and many more!



PARENT TESTIMONIAL

Dear Ahead With Horses Sponsors,

Thank you for choosing us to have the privilege of riding your horses. Our 11 year-old son has recently begun riding with Ahead With Horses after moving to Los Angeles over a year ago. Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, our son was riding horses for over seven years in New York City. We were terribly missing the therapeutic exercise and enjoyment from riding horses, and thrilled to find it here!

Our son, Owen, finds so much joy in riding horses. Since he is unable to walk independently, riding a horse moves his body in a way similar to the human gait, which is important for him to experience. We have found that riding horses has helped with his flexibility, posture and core muscle strength. It truly is amazing we have found this type of therapy that he enjoys, and is equally familiar with. In addition to the physical benefits, we have found that it helps him socially and psychologically, along with bolstering his confidence. Riding horses inspires our son to try new things in life and encourages him to say yes more, rather than no. We often find that he experiences less anxiety after his horse riding sessions.

Right after his first time riding Berit, as Owen dismounted, he was immediately beaming with the biggest smile and proclaiming the whole car ride home how happy he was, and couldn't wait to return next time. Children with special needs often have difficulty navigating life, physically and/or emotionally. An unique organization like Ahead With Horses provides that assurance and courage to individuals just like our child, and strengthens their tenacity and lifts their spirits, to take on the unique circumstances life brings their way.

Sincere thanks,
Cynthia & Justin Gi



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

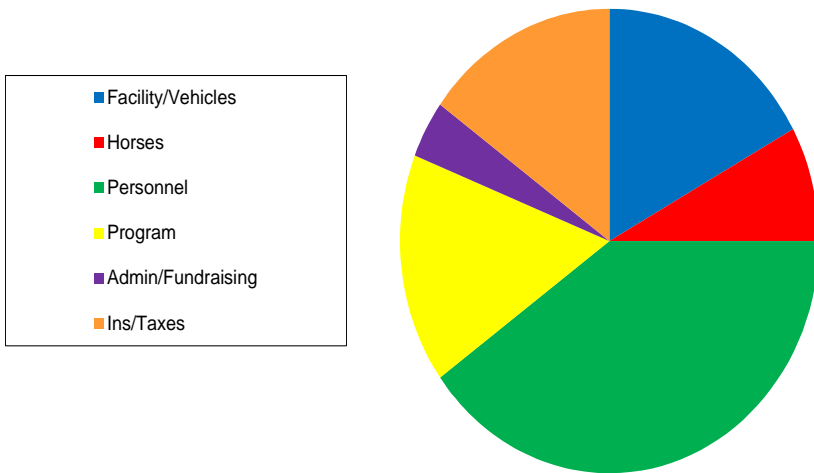
Without you... We would not be

William Shatner & The Hollywood Charity Horse Show

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**To all those whose names do not appear...
We apologize and Thank You. Your names are engraved in our hearts.**



EVERY DOLLAR LIFTS A CHILD UP!!!

For information about this appeal, call (818) 767-6373

- THIS IS NOT AN ENDORSEMENT - FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION ONLY -

INFORMATION CARD NO. E0405

Issued Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter IV, Article 4, Philanthropy

AHEAD WITH HORSES INC.

10157 Johanna Avenue, Shadow Hills, CA 91040

Person in charge of appeal: **Michelle Newman**

Telephone number: **(818) 767-6373**



Activity: Annual Appeal for Donations through June 30, 2021

Solicitation Dates: July 20, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Purpose: Net proceeds to support Ahead with Horses Inc's operating expenses and developmental horse therapy for disabled, disadvantaged, and special needs children.

Previous Activity: 2019 activity collected a total of \$338,331, of which \$2,962 (0.9%) was applied to expenses and \$335,369 was donated to charity.

DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLICITATION RESTRICTED TO THE HOURS OF 8 A.M. – 8 P.M

This Information Card must be displayed or presented to all prospective donors, and should not be altered in any manner.

Cardholder registered with the Los Angeles Police Commission
Charitable Services Section, Commission Investigation Division
Telephone: (213) 996-1260
E-mail Address: pccharity@lapd.online
Web Site: www.lapdonline.org

Date issued: 7/20/20

ERNEST D. CALDERA
Commanding Officer
Commission Investigation Division

To the Board of Directors
Ahead with Horses, Inc.
Shadow Hills, CA 91040

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Ahead with Horses, Inc. (a nonprofit Corporation), which comprise the statements of financial position as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Ahead with Horses, Inc as of June 30, 2020 and 2019, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

16133 VENTURA BLVD, SUITE 880, ENCINO, CA 91436 WWW.GKMCPCAS.COM T: 818.784.9000 | F: 818.784.9010

Report on Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The schedule of functional expenses on page 9 is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Goldman Kurland & Miraglia LLP

Goldman Kurland & Miraglia, LLP
Encino, California

November 23, 2020