

AHEAD WITH HORSES

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



2024-2025

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RIDE ~ SMILE ~ GROW

ABOUT US

FOUNDING HISTORY

AHEAD (Accelerated Habilitation Education And Development) With Horses Inc was founded 57 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. It also improves strength, balance, and coordination. The children have fun and experience a sense of success while facing real challenges.

GET IN TOUCH

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-  www.awhla.org

RIDE ~ SMILE ~ GROW

ABOUT US

OUR MISSION

AHEAD With Horses is dedicated to maximizing the potential of disabled, disadvantaged, special-needs children by 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.

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:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Blindness
- Cerebral Palsy
- Chromosome Disorders
- Deafness
- Down Syndrome
- Developmental Delays
- Hypotonia
- Paraplegia
- Prader-Willi Syndrome
- Quadriplegia
- Spina Bifida
- and many more!



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



A Year of Challenge and Commitment

Fiscal Year 2024–2025 required thoughtful stewardship and difficult decisions. As fundraising slowed and operating funds tightened, the Board conducted a careful financial review and ultimately made the heartbreaking decision to place our Foothill property, once envisioned as our “Forever Home,” on the market. Limited commercial-use allowances on Residential/Agriculture zoning have narrowed potential buyers, and as of June 30, 2025, we had not yet received a viable offer. We continue exploring strategies to better position the property for sale while maintaining responsible oversight.

Throughout these challenges, our mission never paused.

Our lesson schedule remained full, and demand for services continues to grow, with a very long waiting list and new students enrolling as others complete or transition from the program. Our students continued to gain strength, balance, focus, communication skills, and confidence through our developmental therapeutic vaulting program. For many families, AHEAD With Horses remains one of the few places where meaningful physical, emotional, and social milestones are achieved in a supportive and joyful environment.

While we retain the property, it must still be maintained. Dedicated volunteers, including weekly groups from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and a group of 31 UCLA students during a service day, helped remove hundreds of bags of weeds to meet fire-safety requirements. Their efforts kept our property in compliance and allowed us to focus resources where they matter most: our students.

As always, our “Village” carried us through these tough times. To our donors, staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners: THANK YOU! Your support ensures that children continue to **Ride, Smile, and Grow**, even in uncertain times.

With gratitude,

Judy Beem
Board President
AHEAD With Horses

WHO WE ARE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Judy Beem, *President*
 Nancy Kenyon, Psy.D., *Vice President*
 Julie Casey, *Secretary*
 Floyd Newman, *Treasurer*
 Lisa Baragosh
 Denise Barnes
 Joyce Davison
 Stephanie Sheinberg



STAFF

Alex Aguilar, *Stable Worker (Volunteer)*
 Lisa Baragosh, *Instructor (Volunteer)*
 Andrew Berdin, *Stable Worker Intern*
 Judy Beem, *Instructor (Volunteer)*
 Gloryann Cosans, *Marketing Intern*
 Pamela Currie, *Horse Leader (Volunteer)*
 Jairo Omar Diaz, *Facility Manager*
 Luke Hunter, *Stable Worker*
 Meghan Junge, *Instructor in training (Volunteer)*
 Nancy Kenyon, Psy.D., *Instructor (Volunteer)*
 Arline Latino, *Saturday Volunteer Supervisor (Volunteer)*
 Judi Lohne, *Stable Worker (Volunteer)*
 Elsa Marin, *Instructor*
 Kathleen Meyer, *Horse Leader (Volunteer)*
 Michelle Newman, *Executive Director & Head Instructor*
 Liz Nilson, *Horse leader (Volunteer)*
 Gianna Piro, *Instructor*
 Emily Reaves, *Stable Worker*
 Stephanie Sheinberg, *Instructor (Volunteer)*
 Cesera Suarez, *Stable Worker and Instructor in training*



HORSES

Callahan*
 Cassini
 Ginger*
 Jackpot
 Justin
 Mare
 Maverick
 Minty*
 Solo*
 Splendi
 Snowy*
 Sparkles*
 Stitch

*Used at Sullivan Canyon at least part of the time



YEAR IN REVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

SERVICES

- Hosted the Annual Children's Demonstration and Fun Day, Costume Day, and Sullivan Canyon Fundraiser.
- Provided lessons to students at our main facility in Shadow Hills and our satellite location at Sullivan Canyon.
- New students added from waitlist as openings became available.
- Looked at many potential horses; 2 of our herd passed away; 2 joined our herd in Shadow Hills

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

- We unfortunately had to make the difficult decision to put our "Forever Home" property up for sale. After purchasing the property in December 2017, there have been so many bumps and hurdles in the road, along with covid closures, issues with architects and planning departments, that we have run out of the funds that we had set aside to make our dream a reality. The long delays and increases in costs over the years have forced us to recalibrate.
- We have still benefited from volunteers who came in large groups to help with weed clearance and maintenance of the property, including UCLA and Latter Day Saints.

ADMINISTRATION

- Adopted written Whistleblower Policy.
- Switched to a new volunteer sign up platform to improve tracking of volunteer hours.
- Maintained an active social media presence on multiple channels.
- Monthly eNewsletters sent to families, donors, volunteers, and other interested parties.





A CRUCIAL PART OF OUR PROGRAM

VOLUNTEERS

More than
485
people
donated
time

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."
~ Mahatma Gandhi

Over
4,500
volunteer
hours
logged

Volunteers help with a variety of duties including:

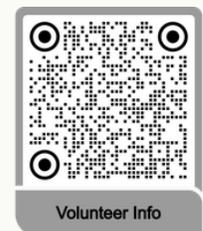
- Cleaning Horse Stalls
- Grooming Horses
- Leading Horses During Lessons
- Side-walking During Lessons
- Gardening
- Counting Inventory
- Event Help
- Stuffing Envelopes
- and more



These individuals are recognized for donating 40 or more hours during the 2024-2025 fiscal year:

Alex Aguilar
Jennifer Alvarez
Lisa Baragosh
Judy Beem
Andrew Berdin
Scarlett Bowen
Eleanor Brindle
Julie Casey
Gloryann Cosans
Pam Currie
Joyce Davison
Ashley Fitzgerald
Ryan Glovna
Stephanie Holmes

Meghan Junge
Nancy Kenyon
Arline Latino
Judi Lohne
Kathleen Meyer
Floyd Newman
Liz Nilsen
Gianna Piro
Norma Rockman
Jose Ruvalcaba
Cesera Suarez
Omar Torres

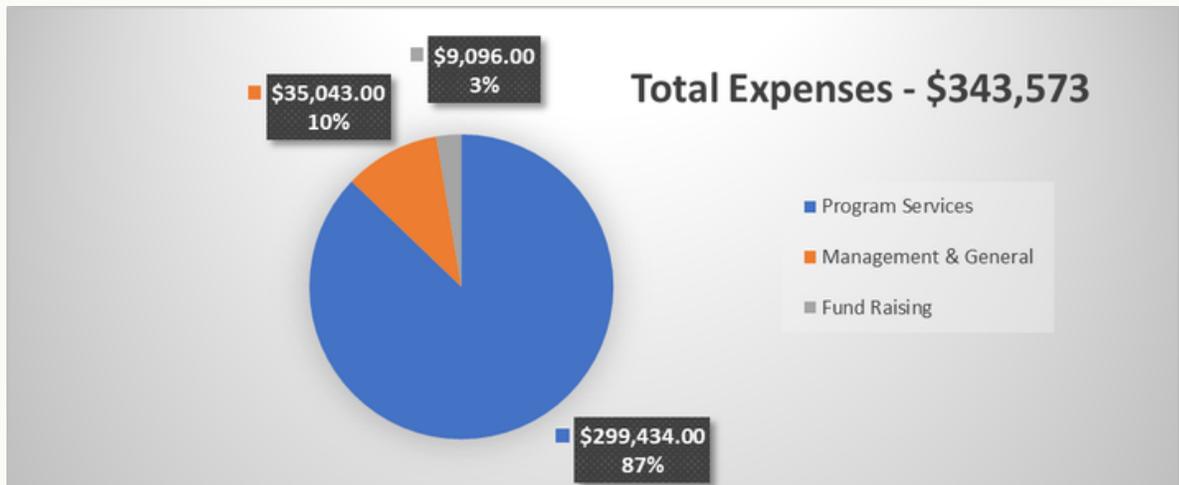
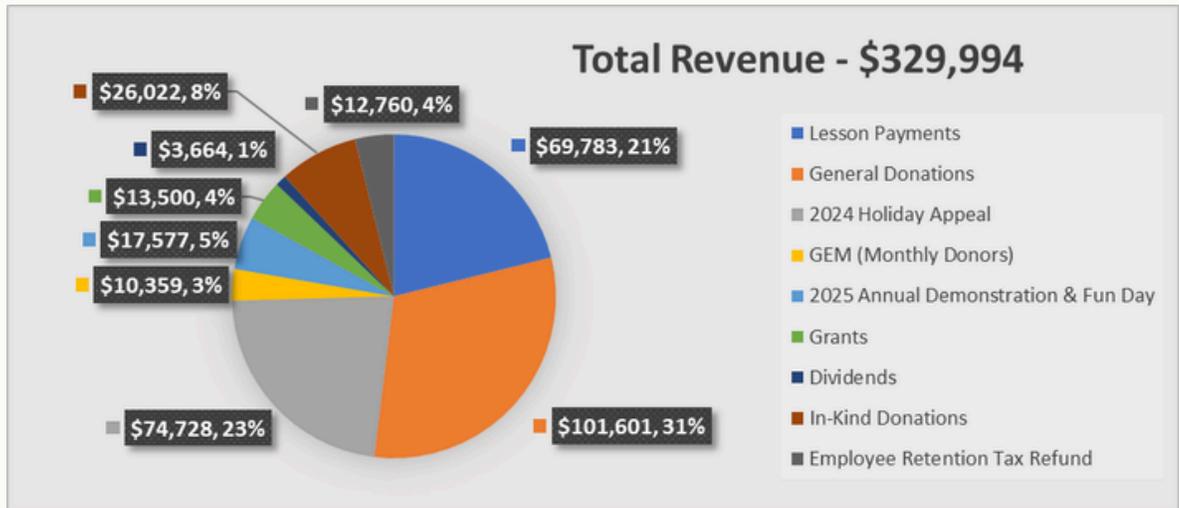


Volunteer Info



YEAR IN REVIEW

FINANCIAL SUMMARY





THE REASON WE DO THIS

63
Students
Served

OUR STUDENTS



WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT US



We wanted to take a moment to follow up with another heartfelt thank you as we continue to witness the incredible impact Equine Therapy is having on Clarence. His excitement & engagement have only grown, & it has been truly inspiring to watch.

Clarence is now identifying horses & even requesting to ride on his AAC device—a huge milestone for him! His enthusiasm is so strong that he places his riding bag & boots at the door daily, eagerly waiting for his next session.

The level of ease with which he has adapted to riding has been remarkable. Each session builds his confidence, strengthens his coordination, & enhances his sensory regulation. We are beyond grateful for the opportunities this therapy is providing him & for the unwavering support from you.

Thank you again for helping Clarence access such a life-changing experience.

The Banks Family



“I’ve been coming to AHEAD With Horses, now, for about 7 to 8 years. I circle this weekend on my calendar. This is so profound, in terms of what it brings, the goodwill and the joy that it brings to me and to the other volunteers. You’re actually able to see how horse therapy opens young people’s minds up, brings them joy, and as you watch it bring them joy, you become even more joyous. In a world where there are many things happening, joy is the essence of life and this, being here, being with the horses, being with other volunteers, being with the kids, this is the essence of joy.”

David, member of the U of M Club of Los Angeles
Volunteer

DONORS

Over 325
unique
donors

"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."
~ Maya Angelou

OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all of our supporters - without you we would not be able to do what we do!

\$10,000 AND UP

Evie & Lainie Becky
David S Nagy Charitable Foundation
Hollywood Charity Horse Show

Nicholas H & Margaret H Carlozzi Charitable Foundation
Orrion Farms
Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Council District 5

\$5,000 - \$9,999

The Albert Parvin Foundation
Andre Family
Anonymous Foundation
Brittany, Erik, and Victory Belz Philanthropic Fund
The Emmy Lou Tompkins Foundation

Roberta and Paul Currier
Gina Goldman Walter Schupfer
Jean Kerkorian
LADWP Employees' Association
Share, Inc.

\$1,000 - \$4,999

The Accounting Doctor*
ADP
Barneck Family
Barnes Family Foundation
Becky Family
Berns Team Blessings
Eleanor Brindle
Dan & Julie Casey*
Dalton Equestrian, LLC
Joyce Davison
Eugenia Riordan Mule 2010 CLAT
Global Temp Services*
Halper Fine Art*
IUOE Local 12 Charitable Golf Committee
Katherine Hickman
Patti Holmes
Kevan Husky
Herbert Kean

Nancy Kenyon*
Edrea Lara*
Looking Above and Beyond, Inc.
Lucille Ellis Simon Foundation
Muraida Family
Michelle Newman Ravich*
Socorro Oseguera*
David Penner
Petco Love
Fran Reichenbach
Norma Rockman
Stephanie Sheinberg
Gina Stikes
Sullivan Canyon Preservation Association*
Frances & Larry Watts
Walmart Spark Good
Matthew Weiner
Steven Zucky

DONORS

"Think of giving not as a duty, but as a privilege"

~ John D. Rockefeller Jr.



\$500 - \$999

Paul Balke
Alexander Brown
Tim Brown
Buffum Family
Sadie Bronfman
Paula Claborn
Combined Federal Campaign
James and Gunilla De Arkland

Robert Dubin
Ginny & Micheal Gibbs
Kohen Educational Services*
Kroger Community Rewards
Andrew & Mary Lindblad
Jay Luchs
Kathleen Meyer
Gail Mitsui

Jack Morrow
Floyd Newman
Carol Reynolds
Mary Jane Stack
Stan Schultz
John & Ruby Turner
Susan Zolla

\$250 - \$499

Alcedo Family
Lisa Baca*
Dabney Beck
Judy Beem
Patricia Bellinger
Sharyn Burks
Christine & Bill Carrington
Kalou Cheong
City Cruises*
Laura Daniels
Saul Del Toro*

Flappers Comedy Club*
Marcy Gensic
Joseph Ginete
Bill & Jenna Greene*
Rachel Haun
Diana Hecht
Laurie Hilton
Melanie & Josh Kaplan
John Kenyon
Kiwanis Club of La Canada / La Crescenta
Knott's Berry Farm*

Christian Koziol
Arline Latino
Jennifer Nummelin
Lisa Palma
Debra Piro
Lisa Prosser
Kid Richmond*
Marv and Judy Schmidt
Jopei Shih
Sandi Zaslav
Maria Zecchetto

UNDER \$250

*Includes in-kind donations

Over 200 additional donors also contributed in the 2024-25 fiscal year - donations of all sizes are truly appreciated.

"Sometimes those who give the most are the ones with the least to spare."

~ Mike McIntyre



GET IN TOUCH

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