



Fiscal Year September 1st, 2024 – August 30th, 2025

ANNUAL REPORT



HELPING HORSE
THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS

MISSION:

We provide equine-assisted programs that foster joy and well-being through connections with our horses and team members in an uplifting and inclusive environment.

LOCATION:

Wendell, NC

WEBSITE:

helpinghorse.org

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Execdirector@helpinghorse.org

919-816-2103 – To leave a message

919-623-6375 - Direct

Helping Horse Therapeutic Programs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Letter from the Executive Director
- About Us
- Whom We Serve
- Program Overview
- Participant Spotlight
- Our Team
- Financial Summary
- Fundraising Highlights
- Strategic Goals FY 2025-2030
- Thank You & Ways to Support



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year marked another season of meaningful transformation at Helping Horse. After purchasing our farm in 2023, we proudly made our first principal payment in November 2024 — a significant milestone in securing a permanent home for our programs and the community we serve. Throughout this year, we continued working with Moss+Ross Consulting during the quiet phase of our Capital Campaign and have seen remarkable progress. By the close of this fiscal year, momentum and generosity have positioned us strongly for the future.

Both our Therapeutic Riding Program and our Veterans and First Responders (FRV) Wellness Horsemanship Program experienced a year of growth and impact. Participants reached personal milestones, built confidence, and formed powerful connections — with our horses and with one another. These daily transformations remain the heart of our mission.

We also celebrated together in meaningful ways. Our third annual Joyfully Together Reception honored the generosity of our donors and partners, including recognizing the Martha B. Capps Foundation as the recipient of our third annual White Award. The following evening, our Holiday Festival brought the community together on a festive winter night. In the spring, our Dare to Dream Gala, emceed by Ken Smith of WRAL, highlighted the promise of our Capital Campaign and the vision for a covered arena — a dream that will expand access and ensure year-round programming. We closed the year with our annual Student Showcase, one of the most joyful days on our calendar, as we celebrated the accomplishments of our riders and witnessed firsthand the confidence and pride they have gained.

New initiatives also strengthened our impact. Our fourth annual Horseshoe Campaign continued to support the health and well-being of our equine partners. We launched our first Winspire Trip Raffle, sending one lucky supporter on a Caribbean getaway, and we piloted our first summer camp program — two successful weeks that will now become a permanent part of our summer offerings. While we concluded the fiscal year with a slight programming deficit, this reflects strategic investments in staffing to support our Capital Campaign and the rising costs of horse care. We are currently partnering with Moss+Ross to finalize a five-year strategic plan focused on three key priorities: People, Programs, and Home and Herd. Encouragingly, our campaign — still in its quiet phase — has surpassed \$1 million in commitments and collected funds, with pledges extending through 2027 and strong prospects ahead.

To our Helping Horse family: your generosity and belief in this mission sustain every participant, volunteer, staff member, and horse. Your commitment to our special needs community and our Veterans and First Responders is deeply felt and profoundly appreciated. We simply could not do this work without you.

With gratitude and hope,

Jackie Saxton, Executive Director

ABOUT US

OUR VISION

A community where everyone can experience the transformative power of the horse.

OUR MISSION

We provide equine-assisted programs that foster joy and well-being through connections with our horses and team members in an uplifting and inclusive environment.

OUR CORE VALUES

Community:

We foster a strong, inclusive community that brings together families and individuals of all abilities.

Connection:

We believe in the deep connection between humans and horses to promote personal growth and wellness.

Care:

We are dedicated to the care of our community, our horses, and our historic farm environment.

Integrity:

We are committed to doing what is right, even when it is difficult, having strong moral principles, building trust and confidence with our community.

Joy:

We celebrate everyone's journey and progress, finding joy in every step of our programs for both participants and horses.

WHOM WE SERVE

Therapeutic Riding Program

Our therapeutic riding program serves individuals with a wide range of physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities. This wellness program provides opportunities for growth, joy, and connection in a supportive environment. Participants are eligible at a minimum of 4 years-old with no maximum age limit. Program activities are adapted to each individual's specific goals, often including increased independence, confidence, physical strength, focus, and emotional well-being.

First Responders and Veterans (FRV) Program

We are proud to serve Veterans, first responders, active military, and their families through this wellness horsemanship program. This referral-based program is provided at no cost to participants, bringing them fully into the present moment in a safe space where they can feel at peace and focus on the benefits of communicating with a sensitive, responsive animal. Instructors are trained to grant space and guide mindfulness practices, allowing participants the opportunity to fully experience the powerful connection between horses and humans.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025

THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

Participants Served

- Total riders: 72
- New participants: 14
- Returning participants: 58
- Age range: 4 years - 65 years

Services Provided

- Therapeutic riding lessons:
 - Group classes: 330 classes
 - Private classes: 756 classes
 - Group classes for Summer Camp: 6 classes
 - Lesson contact hours: 1,578 hours
 - Summer Camp contact hours: 81 hours
 - Summer Camp campers: 9 hours
- Equine-assisted learning (EAL) sessions:
 - 12 EAL sessions during Summer Camp
- Scholarships awarded:
 - 5 Full Scholarships
 - 3 Partial Scholarships
 - 8 Recipients
 - Total amount awarded: \$7,900



Total Lessons Provided

- 1,104 Lessons (including Summer Camp mounted and unmounted lessons)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025

FIRST RESPONDERS AND VETERANS (FRV) PROGRAM

Participants Served

- Total participants: 33
- New participants: 18
- Returning participants: 11
- Family program participants: 1 family

Services Provided

- Total FRV sessions: 72 sessions, 131.5 hours
- Veteran sessions: 56 sessions, 104.5 hours
- First responder sessions: 16 sessions, 27 hours
- Reunion sessions: 15 sessions, 25 hours
- Family sessions: 3 sessions, 6 hours



IMPACT AND OUTCOMES



Magnolia's Story

Ten-year-old Magnolia, diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and mostly confined to a wheelchair began her journey with Helping Horse in January of 2025, a little unsure and needing lots of support. In those early days, the 30-minute sessions felt long, and she often needed breaks or shorter rides. Sitting upright in the saddle was a challenge, and her side walkers carried much of the responsibility for keeping her safe and steady. But even then, there was a spark—a quiet determination in Magnolia and a gentle patience in Rocky, the horse who would quickly become her perfect match.

Over the months, **that spark grew into something truly extraordinary.** Magnolia now arrives eager, smiling, and ready to ride beyond the 30-minute mark. Her core strength and balance have blossomed; she can hold the reins, follow instructions, and stay upright with far less support, even though her side walkers still stay close for safety. Rocky has become “her horse,” a magical name in their home, and the bond between them is unmistakable.

Magnolia's mom, Michelle says watching Magnolia participate in an activity that many able-bodied kids enjoy has been “priceless,” a gift of freedom, strength, independence, and joy.

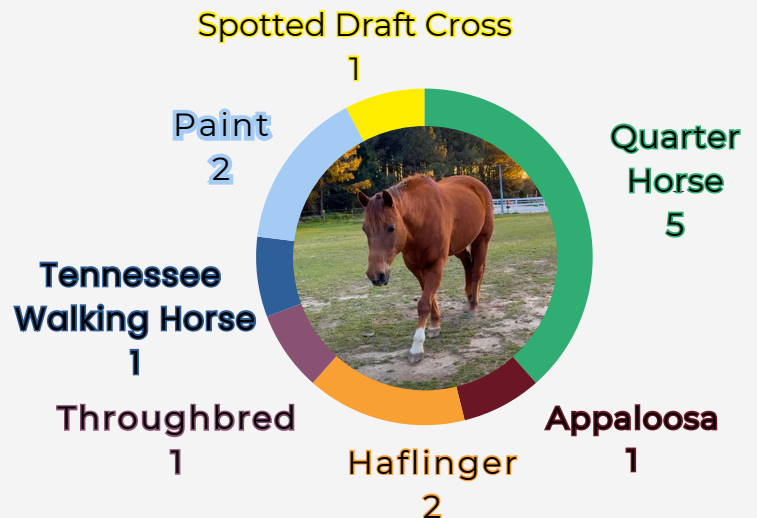
Helping Horse has become a safe space, a new passion, and a forever part of Magnolia's journey—one filled with giggles, growth, and an ear-to-ear smile that melts her mother's heart every single time.

OUR 2024-2025 TEAM

Our Herd

13 Horses

- 7 Mares
- 6 Geldings



Horse Care Highlights

- Veterinary visits
 - 2 well visits
 - 7 diagnostic visits
- Farrier visits: 10 (one visit every 7 weeks)
- Retired horses honored: Buggs

Our Volunteers

- Total Volunteers - 327 Active in Volunteer System
- Total Volunteer Hours - 4,452 hours logged
- New Volunteer Trainings Conducted
 - 11 New Volunteer Orientations



OUR TEAM continued

STAFF



Jackie Saxton
Executive Director



Audrey Ganitopolous
Program Director



Meredith Roethling
Capital Campaign Coordinator
Administrative Assistant



Alex Wepking
Caretaker



Chris Marshburn
Director of Maintenance

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jeffrey Spears, Board President
- Cathy Laffan, Vice President
- Ahsley Westerberg, Treasurer
- Kitty Sarosy, Secretary
- Alexis Parker, Board Member
- Steve Carr, Board Member
- Rick Hofsheier, Board Member
- Elizabeth Andrews, Board Member
- Rhonda Deans, Board Member
- Vincent Griffey, Board Member
- Jill Terry, Board Member

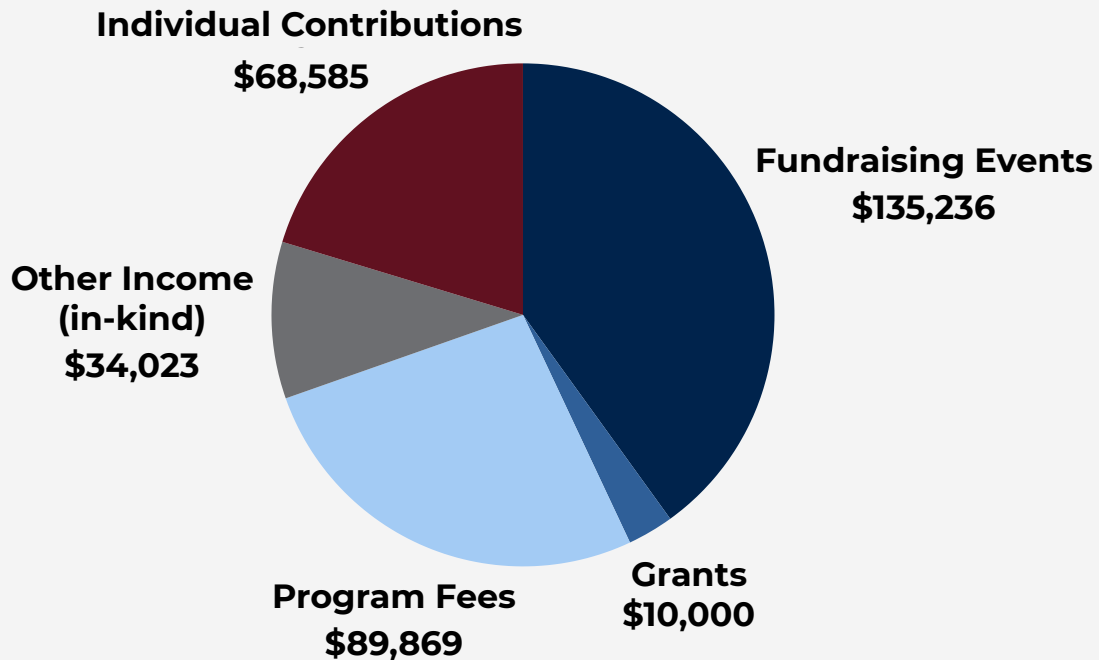
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Baucom Elementary
- Lynn Road Elementary
- Durham VA Health Care System
- Wake County Sheriff's Office
- The Joel Fund
- Big and Small Peer Support
- The Junior League of Raleigh

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Fiscal Year: September 1st, 2024 - August 30th, 2025

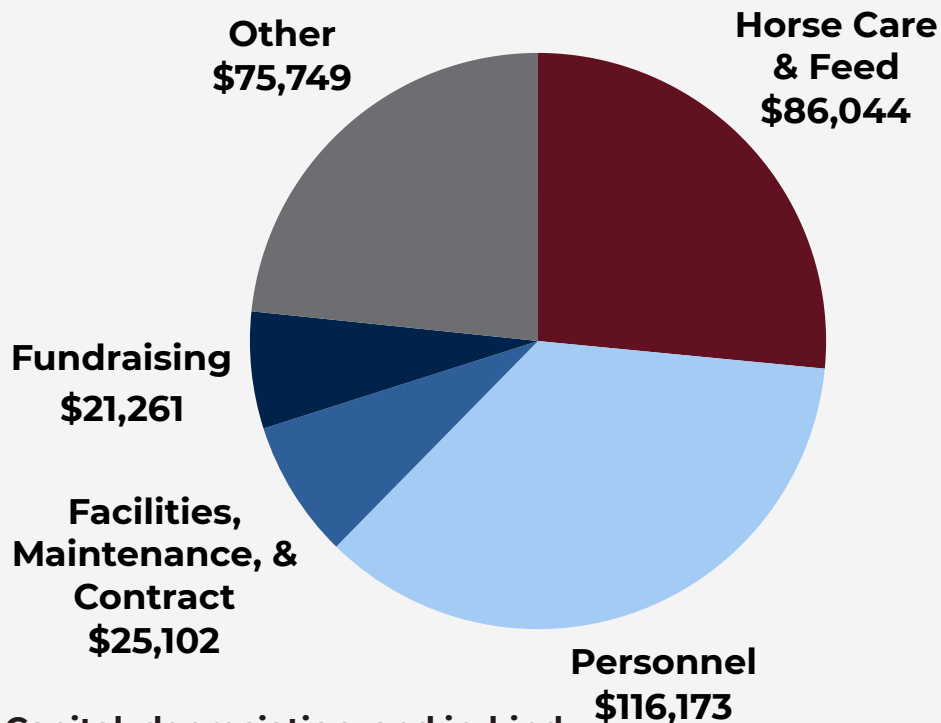
Revenue*



*Excluding Capital Campaign

Total: \$337,713

Expenses*



*Excluding Capital, depreciation, and in-kind

Total: \$324,329

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Major Fundraising Events



Donor Growth

167
Total
Donors

115
Recurring
Donors

52
New Donors
this Year

Grants Awarded

- John William Pope Foundation – \$10,000
- Wake County Community Foundation - \$3,300 for FRV
- Durham VA Health Care System - \$6,000 for FRV

STRATEGIC GOALS

for FY 2025 - 2030

Invest in People

Over the coming 3-5 years, Helping Horse will be focused on transitioning from part-time to full time leadership and operational as well as fundraising or development staff leading to long term organizational and financial sustainability.

Expand Programs

Helping Horse will evaluate new program options such as independent riding and additional daytime offerings. We will look to diversify offerings that could lead to development of revenue generating programs.

Care for Home and Herd

We have initiated a capital campaign to complete the purchase of the property. In addition, we have identified several buildings that need repair and upgrade that the capital campaign will also support. Lastly, the current campaign will fund the construction of a large, covered arena that will allow our programs to continue during inclement or unpleasant weather.

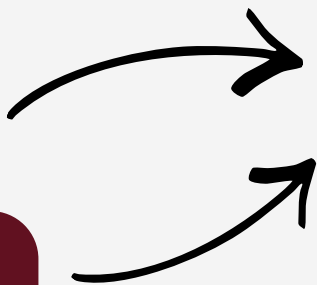
Our herd is near capacity but is under continual evaluation for having the best horses for our participants to work with. Helping Horse has a Horse Committee that meets regularly to evaluate the herd and assure we have the best horses for the program.

THANK YOU

Ways to Support

Donate

Volunteer



<https://helpinghorse.org/support/>

volunteer@helpinghorse.org

Corporate Partnerships: email Execdirector@helpinghorse.org



HELPING HORSE
THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS

5104 Riley Hill Road Wendell, NC 27591

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919-816-2103

Platinum
Transparency
2025

Candid.

Charity
Navigator



★ FOUR-STAR ★
2025

Legal & Compliance Statement

Helping Horse Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Financial information is available upon request.

Our Form 990 is filed annually with the IRS.

EIN: 58-1852114