



## 2020 Annual Report



A Horse Can Change a Life



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Our horses impact the lives of our students in many ways. They not only build confidence and provide comfort, but also inspire us to overcome challenges we never thought possible. Turn the pages to read how our horses are changing lives.

*Photo by Frank Gwartz*











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# Horses comfort family after a difficult diagnosis

Nyla and Miles were dealing with a lot. Their parents had gotten divorced and then their mom was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

The Gathering Place, a non-profit organization that helps families coping with cancer, suggested the children enroll in their animal camp at Fieldstone Farm to help them heal in the company of horses and other kids facing similar circumstances. Nyla and Miles loved the experience so much that they decided to continue on with weekly riding lessons at the farm.

That was three years ago. Now Nyla and Miles are accomplished riders, trotting and cantering around the arena. Nyla's confidence has grown which has helped her navigate the responsibilities of being the oldest child in a single-parent household where her mom is fighting cancer. "I've grown and learned so much from the horses," Nyla says.

The horses also give the children comfort. Miles says that when a horse wraps its head around him, it feels like a "nice big hug."

The people at Fieldstone have been just as important in making the children feel secure. "The staff and volunteers have given them that motherly, aunty kind of love," says their mother, DeVonna.

Today, DeVonna's treatments have been successful and the whole family is feeling very optimistic about a bright future...one in which horses will continue to play an active role.

*Cover photo and photos by Ryals Photo*



*"Fieldstone provided stability in a world where we weren't sure what was happening next," says DeVonna, mother of Nyla and Miles.*

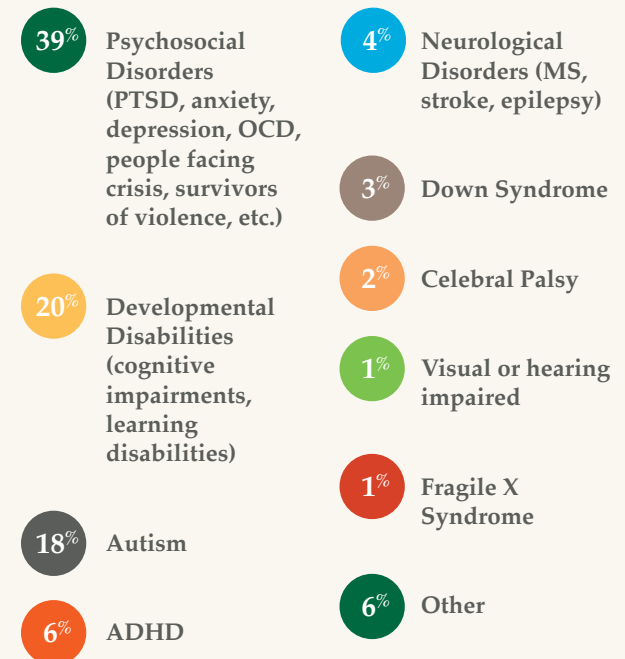


*Nyla learning to canter on a lunge line.*

## Interesting Facts

- We serve students of all ages with a variety of special needs and challenges and they come from all over Northeast Ohio including Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Portage, Summit and Trumbull counties.
- Fieldstone remains one of the largest therapeutic riding centers in the country and offers breakthrough programs that lead the industry.
- In 2020, we embarked on a research project with New York University to study the benefits of working with horses for people with anxiety and plan to complete the project and release our findings in 2021.
- Forty percent of our staff members have been with Fieldstone for more than 10 years, and thanks to the generosity of our donors, we retained all of our employees during the pandemic.

## Student Population









# Adapting in a pandemic

The pandemic certainly has been challenging. In March of 2020, we temporarily closed to help contain the virus, and three months later we began a phased reopening process with many new safety protocols. This reduced the number of eligible participants but families that were able to come back were thrilled as their loved ones were craving the healing time with our horses. In fact, we saw two student populations increase -- youth and those with anxiety and depression, demonstrating the need during these times.

Meanwhile, our staff worked creatively to remain connected with our students who were unable to come to the farm. We introduced telehealth, virtual lessons, expanded social media, and even developed a mobile minivan to transport our miniature horses to groups around town. We also hosted our outdoor horse show, moved our award ceremony to the parking lot and invited families to pick up activity kits for virtual programming. All of these efforts helped create important connections during the pandemic.

We are grateful to our students, families, volunteers and staff who did everything possible to keep everyone safe. And especially to our donors, who stepped up when we really needed it to make this possible, all while still helping us to keep our horses healthy and happy.

*"Your COVID safety precautions have been great. I'm so thankful to have Adam back to riding!" says Brian, parent of a student.*

Top photo by Frank Gwirtz  
Bottom photo by Elizabeth Krouse







*“Megan has such an upbeat personality – I love having her in my class and am so proud of all she has accomplished,” says Winni, Megan’s instructor.*



# Megan and Empire reunite

Megan was upset when she couldn't ride last spring. It took her a while to understand why we temporarily closed for the pandemic. She missed the horses, her instructor and her friends. Megan, now 24, had been riding at Fieldstone weekly since she was six.

To stay connected, her parents, Jim and Katy, would occasionally drive her through the parking lot for the chance to see one of the horses sticking their heads out of their stall or grazing in the pasture.

When we began our reopening, Megan was thrilled to come back and see Winni, her longtime instructor, and other familiar faces at the barn. Riding Empire, her favorite horse, was the highlight. The two have developed a bond over the years, with Empire making an eager whinny or paw whenever she approaches his stall.

The horses at Fieldstone have helped Megan gain strength, focus and confidence as she has improved her riding skills over the years. Megan loves our horse shows especially winning ribbons at the Chagrin Hunter Jumper Classic.

The students in her class have become close over the years joining together for a supper club, and attending each other's birthdays and graduation celebrations.

Megan is not the only family member with ties to the farm. Her dad, Jim, is on our board, heading up the governance committee. And her mom, Katy, sister Hayley, and brother, Jimmy, all volunteered over the years. Fieldstone is a family-affair.

*Donohue family with Megan's favorite horse, Empire.  
From left to right, Katy, Jim and Megan.*

*Photo by Tammie Packer*

## Financial Summary

*(Based on 2020 unaudited financials.)*

Fieldstone Farm is a non-profit organization that holds a 501(c)(3) status.

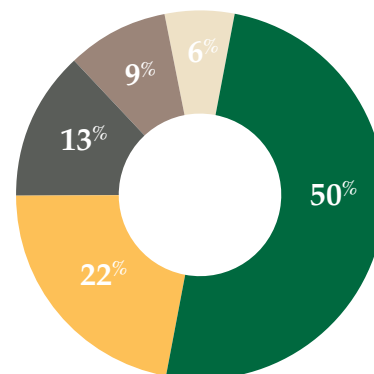
**\$2,076,743** Total Operating Income

**\$1,958,527** Total Operating Expenses

**\$118,216** Total Revenue Less Expenses

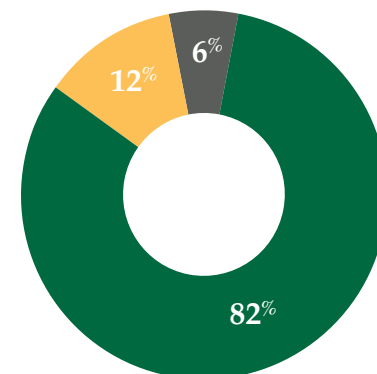
*\* Includes in-kind donations.*

### Income



- Donations - \$1,030,578
- Endowment - \$463,262
- Earned Revenue - \$278,459
- Events & Fundraising - \$187,827
- Other - \$116,617

### Expenses



- Programs - \$1,613,864
- Events & Fundraising - \$232,321
- Administrative - \$112,342







## Gaitway helps teens find their way

When Grace left West Geauga High School she was looking for a place to be herself. She found it at Gaitway, our alternative high school. The staff is supportive, the students are accepting and someone is always available to help. That includes our therapy horses.

The curriculum includes Equine Science and Equine Partnership, where students learn about horses, how to care for them and the therapeutic benefits they provide. The students also take riding lessons and deliver water to their stalls on assigned mornings. Grace loves it. Working with horses has built her confidence and helped her relax. Wrapping her arms around a horse helps her get through a tough day. Riding a 1,500-pound animal makes her feel empowered. And caring for the horses gives her great satisfaction.

*“The horses have helped me grow stronger emotionally and physically,” says Grace, a freshman.*

Ninth grade at Cleveland Heights High School was difficult for Michaila. She had trouble focusing, kept to herself and fell behind in school. Everything changed when she came to Gaitway.

She immediately felt like she belonged. The teachers gave her individualized attention and helped her develop strategies to stay on top of her work. The horses made her feel content and she connected with peers at school. Now she is a junior and on track to graduate early.

Grace and Michaila are two of 20 students enrolled at Gaitway currently. Since the school's opening, 79 students have graduated.

*Grace enjoys working with Cody.*

*Photos by Tammie Packer*





*“When a horse puts its head on my shoulder, I don’t want the moment to end,” says Michaila, a junior at Gaitway.*

*Michaila gives some love to Dillon.*

## School and Community Partners

- Bryant & Stratton College
- Caley Home
- Case Western Reserve University
- Cleveland Heights/University Heights (Canterbury, Fairfax, Monticello and Roxboro)
- Cleveland Metropolitan School District (Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lincoln West, Orchard, School of One)
- Cleveland VA Medical Center (Blind Rehabilitation Center, PTSD Residential Treatment Center, Spinal Rehabilitation Unit, Women’s Treatment Program)
- Educational Service Center of the Western Reserve
- Footpath Foundation
- Galvin Therapy Center
- The Gathering Place
- Girl Scouts
- Hamlet Village Senior Center
- Homeschool Support Group
- Hospice of the Western Reserve
- Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- Mayfield School District (Lander, Mayfield Middle School, Millridge)
- Metzenbaum Center
- New York University, Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Nordonia Middle School (Girls Club)
- Ohio Operation Military Kids
- Our Lady of the Wayside
- Positive Education Program
- Pressley Ridge
- Re-Education Access
- Renee Jones Empowerment Center
- Shaker Heights High School
- A Special Wish Foundation
- Stella Maris
- University of Akron
- Ursuline College





*“Jackson is like your best friend. He is calm, reliable and enjoyable,” says longtime student, Kelly.*



# Jackson is perfect in every way

Jackson is one of our all-time, go-to horses. He's dependable, even-tempered and has a nice consistent trot. He's loved by everyone he meets. A 14-hand Haflinger / Paint, Jackson had been happy and healthy since he joined the herd 18 years ago, until a sudden episode this past spring.

Jinene, our equine director, was clipping his winter coat and noticed he wasn't himself. Walking didn't help. He continued to fuss and paw and then started to breath heavily. Within a half hour our team determined he needed to go to the Equine Specialty Hospital. Dr. Milligan quickly evaluated Jackson and recommended immediate surgery which saved his life. His intestine had wrapped around itself causing a lot of pain and bloating. Thanks to the swift action of both our team and Dr. Milligan, they caught it early and the damage was minimal, leading to a full recovery.

After months of rest and relaxation, Jackson is now back in lessons and is as perfect as ever. We are grateful to our barn team and Dr. Milligan for saving his life so that he can continue to aid and comfort our students.

Jackson is one of 40 horses in our herd of 20 different breeds including a Kentucky Mountain Horse, Oldenburg, Percherons, Quarter Horses, Selle Français and Thoroughbreds.

*Photos by Tammie Packer*





A photograph of Jean, a woman with short brown hair, smiling and standing next to a dark brown horse named Romeo. Jean is wearing a green quilted jacket. The horse has a white blaze on its face and is wearing a brown halter. They are outdoors in a snowy field with bare trees in the background.

## Jean puts heart into Fieldstone

Jean gets as much out of volunteering as the students and horses she helps. When she steps into the barn and smells the horses, she immediately feels relaxed. "I love it here. Working with the students and horses, I forget about my problems and feel calm and happy," says Jean.

She works with many students but veterans have made the biggest impression. They often arrive tense and a little skeptical about how horses can help. By the end of the session you see their mood change and they are smiling and more open and relaxed.

Jean has become good friends with other volunteers and staff who have been supportive of her through tough times, including a divorce. "It meant a lot that people cared," she says.

Jean is one of our most dedicated volunteers, coming six days a week. She helps in every type of class from carriage driving to therapeutic riding and horsemanship. She also cares for the horses, turning them out, grooming them and anything else that is needed.

Thank you Jean!

*Jean stands with her horse buddy, Romeo.*

*Photo by Tammie Packer*

*"Jean is one of those quiet, unsung heroes of Fieldstone. She is so dedicated and we are fortunate to have her on our team!" says Lisa, Manager of Volunteer Services.*



# We are extremely grateful to our donors

Our program is made possible through the generous support of many donors. Thank you all! Below is a list of our contributors in 2020. (We have made every effort to include everyone. If your name has been inadvertently omitted or spelled incorrectly, please let us know.)

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