

FIELDSTONE FARM

2023 Annual Report

A Horse Can Change a Life



Our horses help our students reach goals they never imagined. No matter their ability, students feel valued and understood helping them to gain the strength and confidence to overcome their challenges. Read on to learn more about the life-changing experiences at our farm.





Breakthroughs with Horses

It wasn't until Lincoln came to camp at Fieldstone Farm that he was finally able to cry over his dad's death.

"He had been holding everything in," said Darcy, his mom, explaining that he came home after camp and they cried together. "It was good to get those feelings out."

Each summer Fieldstone partners with the Hospice of the Western Reserve to host a camp for children who have lost a loved one, giving them time to heal with our horses.

The first day can be intimidating and scary as they stand next to a horse for the first time. But when they start to trust the people around them and gain the courage to ride, the confidence that results can be transforming.

"Getting on a horse gives the kids a super power that they can tackle other things in their life that may be challenging, like sharing emotions," says Vanessa Smylie of Hospice of the Western Reserve.

"At camp we work on releasing some of the heavy stuff, making space to talk about their loved one in a new way that feels good," says Vanessa. "We want them to rejoice in the happy memories."

Vanessa recalls the day Lincoln shared a memory of his father. "It was so powerful, so touching to all the kids in the room. It created a ripple effect and all the kids started sharing."

Healing is happening!



Lincoln. Photo by Kelly Kimball



Photo by Marty Culbertson



*Twins Emmoni and Alicia bond with Whiz. The girls attended our Riding Through Grief camp to help heal after the loss of their dad.
Cover and photo by Kelly Kimball*



*Lex (left) high fives a student from Mercer Elementary School as Volunteer Cherry smiles along with them.
Photo by Tammie Packer*

Lex Starts Believing in Himself

For many teenagers, navigating online school and isolation during COVID was difficult. Lex was no exception. He fell behind in school and ended up needing mental health treatment for anxiety and depression, like so many of his peers.

But he was facing something even more challenging. He was transgender and was struggling to gain acceptance. Traditional public school was not working. He was avoiding class and began experimenting with drugs.

Gaitway High School was his fresh start. The small class size and one-on-one instruction helped Lex get back on track academically. The school's setting on 45 acres with trails, wildlife and horses helped him to relax. And the relationships he developed with teachers, our social worker and a friend named Maya, gave him confidence in himself and helped him become the person he wanted to be.

"I don't know where I would be without the people here," Lex says, explaining that he is now sober and has a well-paying job. "They believed in me and for so long I felt no one else did."

Lex also gained confidence riding a horse named Fax. "It was almost spiritual. I would just look in the direction I wanted to go and Fax would just walk that way," he said.

Volunteering with Fieldstone's school groups has given him the satisfaction that comes from helping others. "I know what it is like to not be understood and helping these kids feel heard, honestly makes me feel so awesome!"

We are thrilled that Lex is part of Gaitway's 2024 graduating class and wish him well in the future.

Interesting Facts

905 Students Annually

- 524 Children

- 381 Adults

4-80+ Ages Served

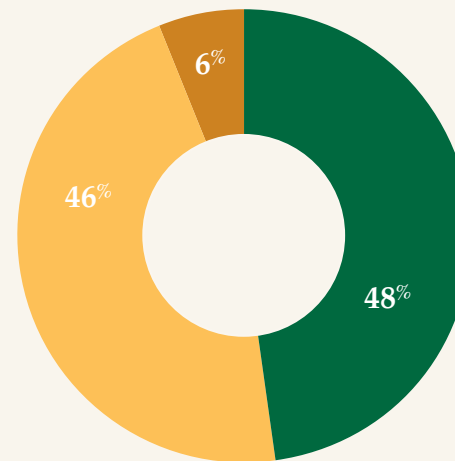
40 Therapy Horses

13,221 Program Hours

16 Instructors

250 Volunteers

7 Counties Served



Primary Diagnosis

- Cognitive*
- Emotional**
- Physical***

*Autism, developmental delays, Down syndrome, learning disabilities, neurological disorders, etc.

**Anxiety, depression, anger issues, emotional dysregulation, substance use, PTSD, survivors of trauma, etc.

***Cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, sensory impairments, etc.



*Tammie and Kurt walk Gunnar (left) and Dodge (right) at their farm.
Photos by Kelly Kimball*

Tammie and Kurt Enjoy a Life of Horses

When Tammie stumbled upon Fieldstone as part of her daughter's community service project 16 years ago, she never expected it to impact her life in such a big way.

"My life definitely would not be the same," Tammie says explaining that when she started volunteering she had no horse experience and now she owns three horses and has a barn with several acres.

That one day of volunteering each week quickly became two, then three, and more as she rose through the ranks advancing from a side-walker to an experienced leader in class. Soon she was asked to join our Equine Management Team, which helps with everything from saddle fitting to training new horses. She then co-chaired our fundraising committee and joined our Board of Trustees. She even recruited her husband. He co-chaired our endowment campaign and now is part of our Foundation Board overseeing our endowment.

"Tammie fell in love with Fieldstone, and I have been riding on her coattails ever since," says Kurt, who values how down-to-earth everyone is at the farm and how much responsibility the volunteers are given. "You really feel like you are a part of the organization."

Tammie and Kurt have also been very generous supporting our student Ridership Program and capital projects to improve the lives of our horses, including dutch stall windows, soft stall footing and our Magnawave machine which is used to promote blood flow and healing in the horses' bodies.

They have impacted many lives but Kurt believes Tammie gets more than she gives. "Once I get here, I am not worrying about anything else in my life, I just live in the moment. It's my happy place," she says.



Tammie leads Gunnar. She adopted him from Fieldstone Farm when it was time for him to retire. He is now 30 years old. She also adopted Dodge (pictured on the opposite page). Dodge is now 27 years old. They are both enjoying a happy and healthy retirement at her farm.



*Children touched by cancer bond with their horses. Sometimes the horses become their canvases.
Photos by Michelle McGlenn*

Coping with Cancer

Facing cancer unleashes a lot of emotions. Anger. Sadness. Loneliness. Fear. These feelings are hard for an adult to navigate, but when it comes to a child, they sometimes can be even more difficult.

Fieldstone and The Gathering Place host a summer camp each year for children touched by cancer, giving them a safe space to validate their feelings, share their experiences and learn tools to cope with their emotions.

“Bringing the children together helps them realize they are not alone. Other children are going through the same thing. Cancer is hard,” says Adelle Gates of The Gathering Place.

During the week-long camp, each child is assigned a horse with which they bond. As the children learn to ride, their confidence grows. They ride patterns in the arena and take relaxing rides on trail.

Spending time with horses helps them get in touch with their emotions. If a camper is nervous or anxious, the horse mirrors their feelings and it might step away or hold its head high. But if they take deep breaths and relax, the horse follows, slowing its gait or stepping toward them, lowering its head, showing it wants to form a connection.

“Understanding the horse’s behavior is one of the powerful parts of coming to Fieldstone. It teaches the children that the horse is looking to them,” says Adelle. “On the last day they are so proud of all they have learned. You see their smiles. It’s so cool to see the growth.”

And when they have to say goodbye to their horse, they are taught one final lesson, that relationships end, just as they do with people, but life does go on.



Instructor Jenna poses with Weber and campers from The Gathering Place.

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- South Franklin Senior Living Community
- Stella Maris
- Survivors Outreach Services
- USO
- VFW
- Warrensville Heights City Schools
- Warriors Journey Home



Our Perfect Little Pony

Every barn needs a pony like Blue. Walk to his stall, call his name, and his ears immediately perk up as he turns and looks at you with his big sparkly brown eyes.

Walk into the ring and he’s right alongside you like a loyal friend. Head over to the mounting block and he stills as you stretch your leg over and climb on. Walk him around the arena, and he stays focused on your every cue. The tightening of your core to ask for a halt. The squeeze of your leg to move on.

At 27, Blue has a “nice pep in his step,” says Lauren, one of our instructors who loves having him in class. He is the perfect mount for our smaller riders at 14 hands. Born in 1997, he is a Paso Fino Quarter Horse cross, with an active gait that helps our riders engage their muscles.

Donated in 2018 by Dianne Gotschall after a life of trail riding carrying her grandchildren and a stint of cow sorting, Blue has become a wonderful therapy horse at Fieldstone. Everyone in the barn, both two legged and four, loves Blue. Often we train our newest volunteers on Blue because he is so easy to lead.

Next time you come to the farm, look in the front pasture for a striking blue roan pony quietly grazing with another stunning horse, a large black and white Tobiano spotted draft named Xena.

A big thank you to our longtime sponsors of Blue, The Thomas and Mildred Taylor Fund of The Cleveland Foundation and the Walker Family, who fund his veterinary care, feed and dental care each year. We are grateful to have such a perfect pony in our herd.

Financial Summary

(Based on 2023 unaudited financials)

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

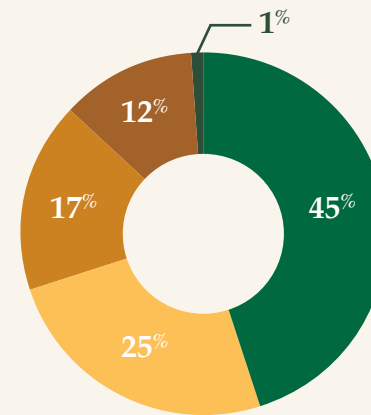
\$3,155,918 Total Operating Income*

\$3,033,543 Total Operating Expenses

\$122,375 Total Revenue Less Expenses

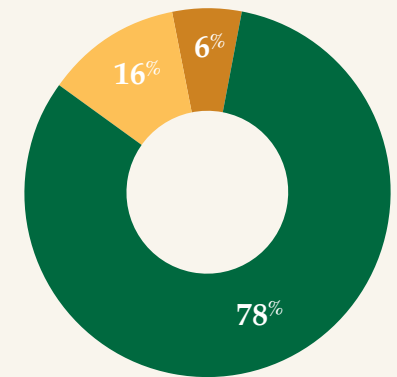
* Includes in-kind donations.

Income



- Donations - \$1,434,482
- Endowment - \$776,503
- Events & Fundraising - \$542,901
- Earned Revenue - \$365,021
- Other - \$37,011

Expenses



- Programs - \$2,370,924
- Events & Fundraising - \$472,060
- Administrative - \$190,559



*Molly enjoys a moment with one of her favorite horses, Romeo.
Photo by Michelle McGlenn*

Molly Keeps Coming Back

Molly has volunteered at Fieldstone for nearly three decades, making her part of an exclusive club of longtime volunteers at the farm. Dedicating this amount of time to any organization begs the question, what keeps her coming back?

“It’s the relationships with the students, staff, volunteers and those big furry animals,” she says with a twinkle in her eye. “I’m just so comfortable here. It’s like home.”

Since 1996, she has served in just about every volunteer role from leading horses, to walking alongside our students in class, to feeding the horses and even serving on one of our fundraising committees. At the same time, Molly has also worked in various jobs on and off as a staff member, including being an instructor and a volunteer coordinator. Now she works as job coach for Gaitway High School.

Witnessing students say their first words while on horseback, watching students overcome their fear and experiencing the joy of riding, as well as seeing volunteers who she has mentored love Fieldstone as much as she does, are unforgettable and powerful moments.

“It’s just so rewarding,” she says. “It never gets old.”

Molly’s family has also been part of Fieldstone with both of her sons volunteering and her youngest son building a run-in shed for his Eagle Scout project. Her husband also helps with our annual fundraiser.

A big thank you to Molly and our other 250 volunteers who make our program possible!

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 2023.

(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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