

A man in a cowboy hat is leading a horse through tall, golden grass. The scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The horse is in the foreground, and the man is slightly behind it, holding the reins. The background is a soft-focus landscape with more grass and distant hills under a cloudy sky.

HEROES AND HORSES

2023
ANNUAL REPORT





REPORT CONTENTS

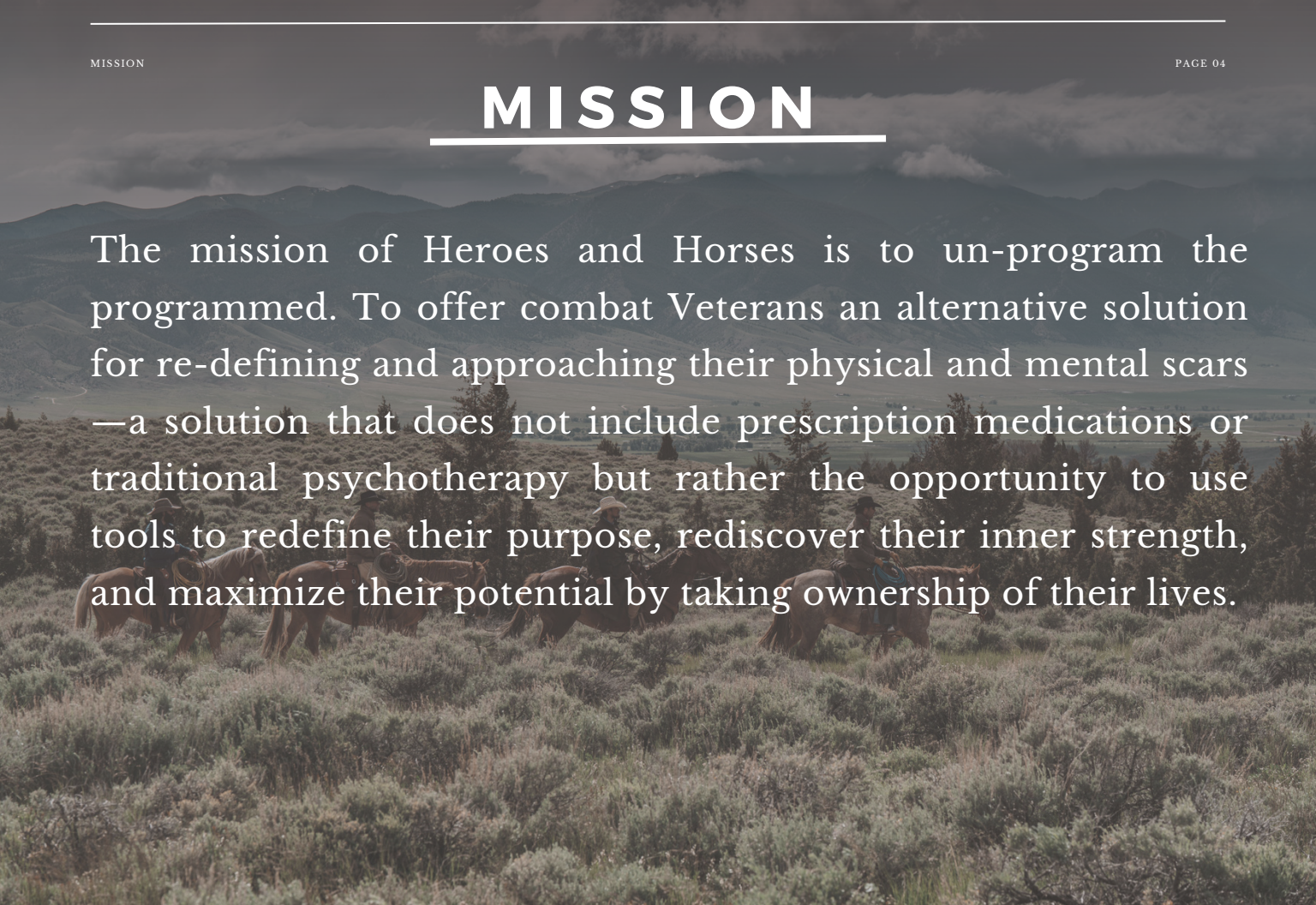
MISSION	04
A DECADE OF REFLECTION	07
PROGRAM GROWTH	13
PROGRAM EVALUATION	19
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	21
FINANCIALS	24
REFLECTIONS	26





MISSION

The mission of Heroes and Horses is to un-program the programmed. To offer combat Veterans an alternative solution for re-defining and approaching their physical and mental scars—a solution that does not include prescription medications or traditional psychotherapy but rather the opportunity to use tools to redefine their purpose, rediscover their inner strength, and maximize their potential by taking ownership of their lives.

A group of people riding horses through a field with mountains in the background. The image is a full-page background for a document. It shows a line of riders on horses moving across a grassy field. In the background, there are dark, silhouetted mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is somber and contemplative, matching the 'MISSION' title.

OUR STAFF

- Micah Fink - CEO/Founder
- Mackenzie Fink - Co-Founder/Wellness Director
- Mark Davis - Chief Financial Officer
- Travis Fishburn - Program Director
- Ben Bonner - Ranch Manager
- Dave Bosen - Head Horseman
- Chloe Garrison - Development Director
- Erika Gioscia - Administrative Manager
- Scott Burke - Project Director
- Jim Bender - Executive Chef

OUR BOARD

- Micah Fink - CEO/Founder of Heroes and Horses
- Samuel J. Frederick - Crowley Fleck PLLP
- Dan Brochu - Primerica Financial Services
- Rick Van Arnem - The Table Group
- Clint LaRue - Lewis Energy Group
- Joel Leadbetter - Hall and Hall
- Garrett Glass - Source-Texas LLC





A DECADE OF REFLECTION

LETTER FROM CEO/FOUNDER, MICAH FINK

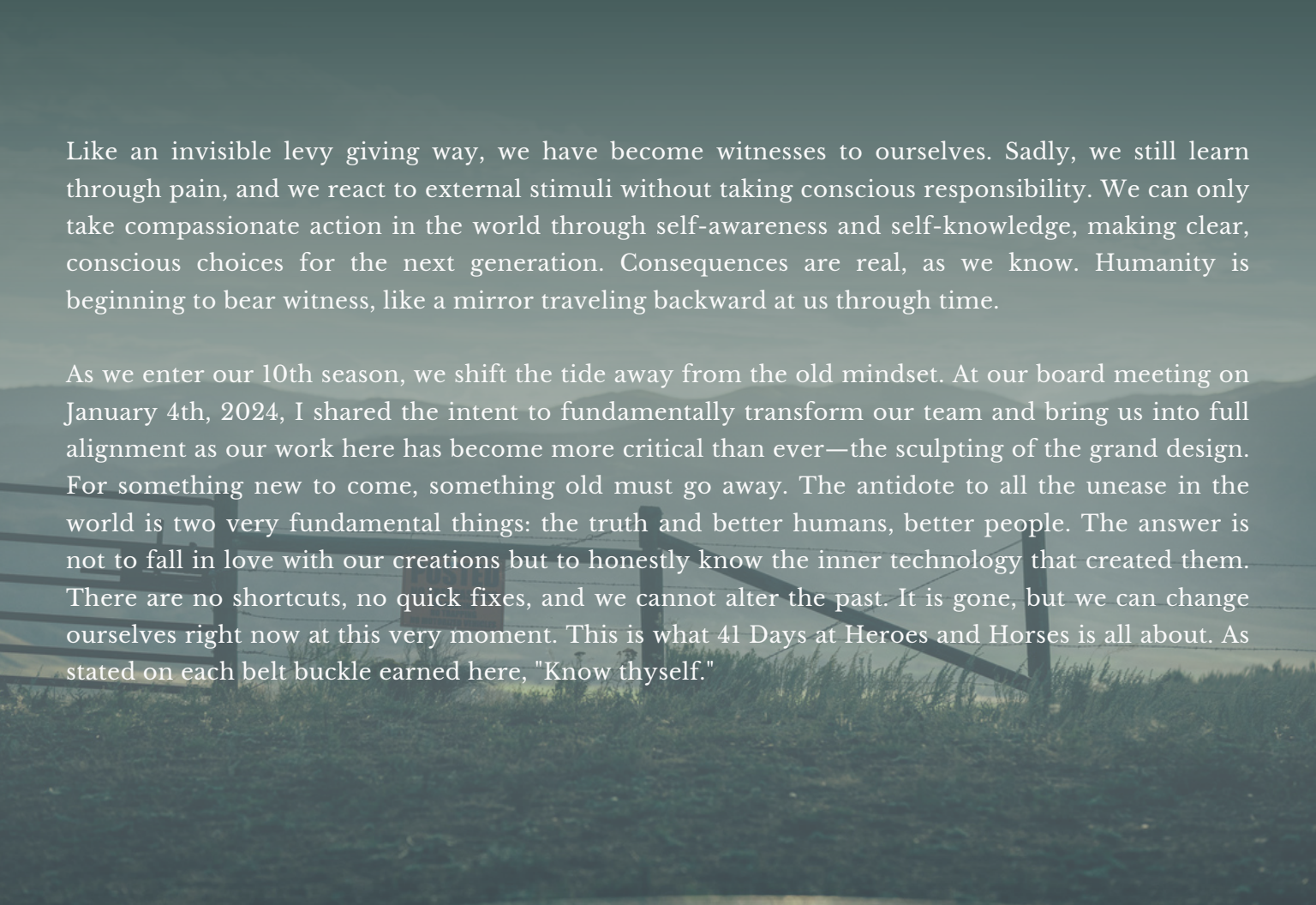
Greetings,

First, thank you this year for all the support, donations, in-kind gifts, and volunteer hours. Spring is here, and in its return, it is our 10th season at Heroes and Horses. It is also my 10th time writing an annual report letter. Maybe this one will have fewer spelling errors than the previous nine. Looking back at where we have been and what has been accomplished is unbelievable. The support, love, giving, obstacles, and hurdles all presented have been powerful lessons deeply considered and essential. In 2013, I sat at the kitchen table with my wife Mackenzie and wrote this statement when filling out the 501(c3) paperwork.

"We are not defined by our many scars but by what we do after the wound closes." This would be on our first poorly designed t-shirt and a guiding light when I felt like life was crumbling, not realizing it needed to. I was making ordinary history impossible in my life. I was going in every direction all at once flung out from the tiny confining prison I was living in, to a world of chaos. Life slowly became an anticipation rather than a servitude to an identity I was projecting. Walking around, I wore psychological clothing that acted as a mediator between my most authentic self and the environment, dictating how I wanted to be seen in the world. I discovered there is no knowledge without risk-taking and no change without realizing it.

I became a student of the process I was creating for others. Thrown into the chaos, it whittled me down, transforming my life as I pushed the edges of everything I had agreed to. Slowly, I began challenging the status quo, defending against the insane institution that was killing the very brothers I stood next to. As I began to know myself outside of what I thought, I became "open to everything thrown at me and closed to nothing," taking what came and letting the rest pass naturally. Today, it is undeniable that we as a species are at a critical juncture. The choices we are currently making have made it no longer business as usual. The signs are all around us. I can write over and over the mind-numbing statistics or staggering numbers about prescription drug use, insane screen time, over-medicated failed systems, or endless wars to try for an attempt for the 30 seconds of impact, or I can say we all feel it.



The background image is a dark, atmospheric photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there is a wooden fence with vertical posts and horizontal rails, partially obscured by tall grass. Beyond the fence, the terrain is hilly and covered in vegetation. In the far distance, a range of mountains is visible under a dark, overcast sky. The overall color palette is muted, consisting of dark greens, greys, and browns, creating a somber and reflective mood.

Like an invisible levy giving way, we have become witnesses to ourselves. Sadly, we still learn through pain, and we react to external stimuli without taking conscious responsibility. We can only take compassionate action in the world through self-awareness and self-knowledge, making clear, conscious choices for the next generation. Consequences are real, as we know. Humanity is beginning to bear witness, like a mirror traveling backward at us through time.

As we enter our 10th season, we shift the tide away from the old mindset. At our board meeting on January 4th, 2024, I shared the intent to fundamentally transform our team and bring us into full alignment as our work here has become more critical than ever—the sculpting of the grand design. For something new to come, something old must go away. The antidote to all the unease in the world is two very fundamental things: the truth and better humans, better people. The answer is not to fall in love with our creations but to honestly know the inner technology that created them. There are no shortcuts, no quick fixes, and we cannot alter the past. It is gone, but we can change ourselves right now at this very moment. This is what 41 Days at Heroes and Horses is all about. As stated on each belt buckle earned here, "Know thyself."



The financials contained in this report are a testament to the support we have received as a result of the outcomes, uniqueness, and effectiveness of this work shown in the lives of each individual. Today, we know that better humans are the antidote, so this place of healing is the home of the revolution of the heart. Thank you for supporting - volunteering, committing resources, approving grants, purchasing gear, supporting the equine program, and sharing the message. I hope to see you all at the Gala this year on October 18th at the Stock Ranch in Bozeman. I am often reminded that as we weave through life's laughter and tears, time becomes a new enemy, and memories will be our only souvenirs. Know thyself.

With Humility and Gratitude,

Micah Fink
CEO/Founder HH

PROGRAM STATISTICS

88%

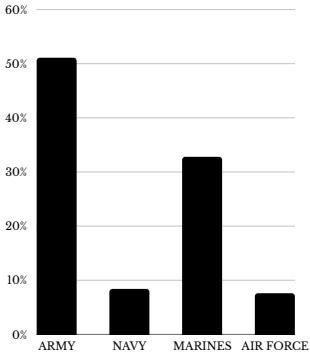
GRADUATION RATE

In 2023, Heroes and Horses received 131 applications.

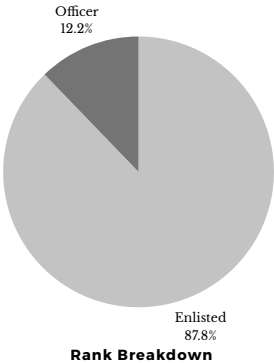
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TOTAL # OF VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are a group of special and thoughtful individuals who dedicate their time, resources, and expertise to our program operations. Our volunteers support our nutrition program, construction projects, and horsemanship programming.

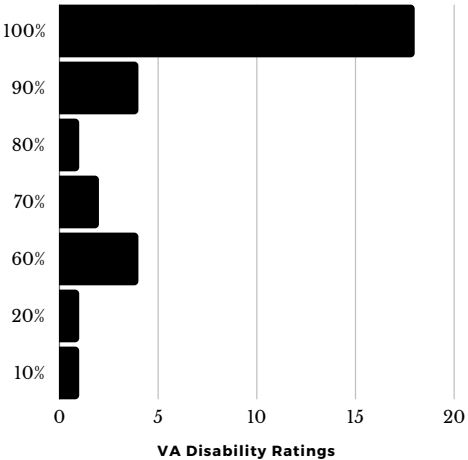


Service Branch Breakdown



Geographic Representation

- 2023 Participants
- 2016- 2022 Participants



2023 CORPORATE PROGRAM PARTNERS





PROGRAM GROWTH

In 2023, 28 veterans graduated from Heroes and Horses' 41-day experience. We ran our first week-long trainer course for future leaders and made several significant changes to the 41-day process. Adding 15 new horses, completing the student cabins, integrating martial arts program, new mobility approaches, advanced horsemanship, pre-course guides, new communication strategy, and developing several program-related partnerships across the globe in alignment with our mission. We completed and took to print our cookbook, the Anti-Inflammatory Farmacy, which has profoundly impacted the health and well-being of each student. Thirty-Seven pounds in 41 days lost was the record, and the total removal of NSAID usage for things like arthritis shows the powerful medicine our food carries. We are working to publish the cookbook by the beginning of 2025. We launched our first impact report with FMG leading. We show results on page 19 of this report. The impact is inspiring, and we continue to be moved by the responses.

Fire and Ice Ritual

This is an experience designed to enable participants to overcome the construct of fear and the limiting beliefs that perpetuate and permeate every aspect of their lives. The ritual includes martial arts, physical activity, a subconscious workshop, breath-work, cold therapy, sound medicine, sauna work, and other self-mastery disciplines delivered in a ceremonial way designed to awaken the warrior within.



Stay the Course 2.0 2024

To support participants' transition and integration back to their daily lives, H&H built, wrote, and took to print the first basic edition of our Stay the Course manual in 2023. Our post-program curriculum now includes integration information, Anti-Inflammatory Farmacy cookbook, a collection of books to stimulate the mind and awaken the spirit, workouts, schedules, and a pile of great knowledge and wisdom from the time here. As we complete version 2.0, we are excited about the value added for each participant. Access to a number of corporate partners discounts to help facilitate integration of mind-body medicine into their daily lives are also included, thanks to our partners.

Sauna Work

Saunas have several health benefits that complement our existing modalities, including heart health, mindset, relaxation, removal of toxins and heavy metals from the body, and help with chronic pain. In 2023, we completed the final construction of our outdoor sauna, the Rock House.

More Time in the Saddle

In 2023, H&H doubled the skill-focused time participants spent with their horses to equip them for the challenges they would face during the program and deliver each student to their full potential within the 41-day span. Focused skill time in the saddle not only significantly enhanced participants' horsemanship skills, from the hoof to the head, but also enhanced their relationship with their equine partners allowing for an unforgettable bond.

Lakota Sweat Lodge Ceremonies

Participants now experience two Lakota sweat lodge ceremonies, one designed to cleanse the spirit and the second to seal the work done during the 41-day experience at sunrise on graduation morning. The lodge and space were reconstructed to allow for growth.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Our curriculum has evolved comprehensively in the last ten years. Each year brings new information, lessons, and a deeper understanding of the human condition. The demand for our un-programming approach has very steadily increased, and so has the need for capacity and the right people working together in alignment for this critical mission. As suicide rates top 44 per day and other increasing numbers sadly represent the living dead as successes, it shows there are no quick fixes. They do not work. One must master himself. To know oneself is the gold - worth more than any metal or substance on Earth.

What is the foundation that will hold you up? You can only carry what your foundation can hold. So, we must take the time to build stability and place roots down. Building a foundation of strength and fortitude allows for the individual to uncover their true nature so that they may decide what to contribute or not contribute to this world in an authentic and meaningful way. Strength, courage, clarity, mindset, and health must be developed. Foundation first. The students who come to the program learn to build this foundation and shift their perspective from looking out for answers to looking in for answers.



For all of this to happen, we have intentionally poured into the development of our very own foundation here at HH. We have worked tirelessly to ensure our foundation will stand as a legacy of healing to affect and offer impact to future generations. We are a community working together to build what is needed in the world right now. We are a beacon on the hill, building a citadel that fully invests in human technology, the greatest of all machines on Earth, and what creates all other machines. Better humans make a better world, one life at a time. This is our why and the reason we need capacity, infrastructure, and support to house this integral process of human investment and development so that we may continue to bring this medicine into the hearts of everyone we come into contact with and to bring an antidote to the chaos we are now experiencing.



A photograph of a longhouse and a smaller cabin in a rural setting. The longhouse is a long, low building with a thatched roof and many wooden pillars supporting the eaves. It is situated on a grassy field. In the background, there is a smaller cabin with a similar thatched roof. The background shows rolling hills and trees under a clear sky.

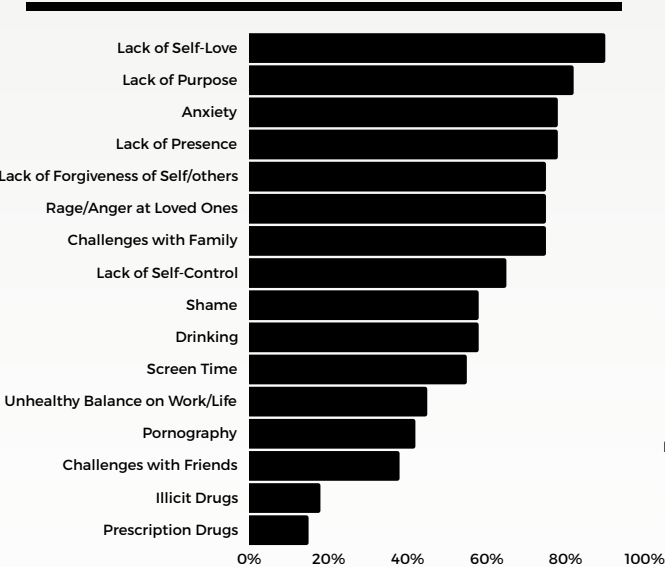
In 2023, we added a fourth class and completed our student permanent facilities. Today, our demand far exceeds our capacity to serve. In 2023, Heroes and Horses could only accept one out of 7 Veterans who completed an application. To strategically prepare for program growth, in 2023, Heroes and Horses hired a head Chef, refined the overall program, began building an aligned team, hired a project manager and wellness director, added board members, and refined ranch operations with a new ranch manager. As stated above, we will continue our multi-year data capture on all participants' experiences and current statuses. In 2023, we were able to share on Capitol Hill about the work we are doing here and how, together, we can actually create change from a small beacon on a hill one life at a time.

In the fall of 2024, we will break ground on the longhouse. This infrastructure is designed to house the transformational work that we are offering, helping to build the foundation of many men with great strength, honor, and fortitude so that these men may fully claim their authentic truth and create impact in the worlds around them. If you are interested in getting involved in this legacy project and the only longhouse in North America please reach out. We want to personally invite anyone to make a trip this summer to see your investment and experience it firsthand.

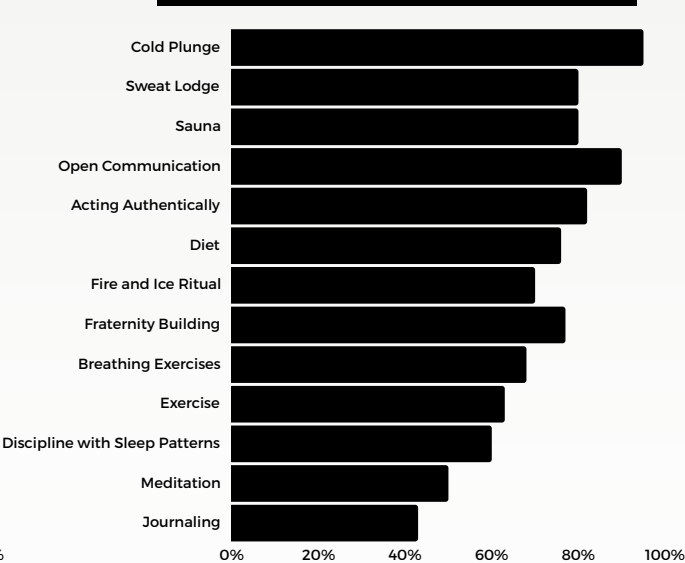
PROGRAM EVALUATION

In 2023, 28 veterans graduated from Heroes and Horses' 41-day experience. Over the years we have tried to capture data in various ways. Nothing felt right, as defining success in another person is a too common mistake. Today in partnership with FMG Leading we created a process that allows the individual to self-define success post the 41-day course. In this report you will hear from unique individual perspectives of their transformation and change journey. Our goal is to holistically represent the truth as opposed to fragments or biased portions of information. A response rate of 93% gave us significant data to guide program improvements, strategize capacity building opportunities, and quantitatively and qualitatively measure program impact. See the [full report here](#).

CHALLENGES FACING PARTICIPANTS PRIOR TO ATTENDING H&H



H&H PRACTICES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GROWTH



PERSONAL GROWTH

100% 

Participants reported that they found more peace, serenity, and acceptance of things they cannot change.

96% 

Participants reported that they can apply lessons learned from H&H to their community.

96% 

Participants reported that they found deeper meaning and sacred purpose in their daily lives.

88% 

Participants reported that their relationships with their families are more meaningful, healthy, and authentic.

"I am more open, I have more understanding and sympathy of the defenses that I built up and how they effected those around me and myself, and how I could deconstruct those defenses and open myself up to life and those around me."

"I've had some open and candid conversations with my family, and as a result, I think they appreciate some of my struggles. I am trying to be present in their lives, and trying to support them in the ways that they are currently supporting me both physically and emotionally, some of these are daily struggles with a work-family balance but at least we are having an open discussion and hopefully it will make a stronger bond."

"I'm around other veterans every day at work and I continue to do the hard stuff and have deep meaningful conversations about obstacles, life, and being mindful always though the ways I learned at HH."

"The changes were slow but I think the most beneficial thing I took from HH is practicing patience and thinking positively."

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2023 was an incredible year toward completing the stated goals of the Capital Campaign raising a total of \$2,766,913.11. We want to express gratitude to all those who have supported us in getting to this point in our effort. We are humbled to be the stewards and overseers of what is now bringing forth incredible change in lives across this nation. Our gratitude and humility cannot be stated fully in words alone. We have more ground to cover as we aim to close out the campaign fundraising efforts this year and the groundbreaking of the lodge. The campaign has unfolded itself organically and un-conventionally as we have maintained our primary focus on our processes' evolution, development, refinement, and effectiveness as the primary concerns. As input from 2023 shows, the trust and belief held for our vision for the future is building a community of strong relationships that have provided support to us far beyond what we could have attempted to predict.

We have always said we have to stay true to our work and path, trusting that our authentic purpose will make room for itself and bring in the support we need, and it has. This past year, we made tremendous progress on all the program infrastructure, and the resources came when needed. Starting from the bare ground and now to fully built student cabins, equine facilities, horses, human development areas, gardens with a food program, and the improvement of the current kitchen mess hall will lead us into breaking ground on the lodge. The progress that has been made has been remarkable. Today, as we finalize this annual report, we are closing in on the final details of these projects before the 2024 season begins. As these are finalized, we will begin Phase III. We sincerely thank you on behalf of every individual who has had the opportunity to transform their life here at the Double H Ranch.

\$9,800,350.23

Total Revenue Raised



\$2,766,913.11

2023 Revenue Raised

2023 PROGRESS

PHASE II PROGRESS

We will finalize the wrap-up of Phase II projects during volunteer week in May of 2024. As we begin the season, we will start the initial Lodge/Human Development complex and greenhouse butcher shop phase of construction - Phase III. As we have progressed over the campaign's life, we have realized that what we create will be left behind for future generations and for those we will never meet.

Its meaning and relevance should represent a tapestry that bridges the wisdom of past, present, and future ways for the warriors to return home from battle. The profound significance of this final piece will be symbolic and not just a will but a testament to the long and narrow path one must tread to know oneself. Knowledge is only potential unless utilized. We also must honor nature's role in the work here. The mountains, elemental teachers, and the animals play a pivotal role in our lives, and here, they create the very conditions on the path home. Historically, we have built things that have always held profound significance in the heart of humanity. Projects like this were created to serve as gatekeepers of ancient wisdom and as bridges connecting our past to the present, telling a story of the epoch. As we move into Phase III, I invite you to become more involved if you feel this is a project you would like to immerse yourself in. Please reach out. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to contribute to our future generations. We will tell the story of this next phase as we begin unfolding something extraordinary. "What we do for ourselves dies with us, but what we do for others lives on and becomes immortal."



PHASE III - FUTURE

With Phase II nearing completion, we have laid the groundwork for our Phase III projects - our human facilities. Facilities include human development facilities, four student cabins, a lodge, green house, gardens, butcher shop, ranch cabin, and volunteer quarters. The design of our lodge and gym has been finalized, and materials for our student cabins are on the ground. It is with the support of our incredible partners, investors, volunteers, and the entire H&H community that we are able to make the progress we have made, and continue to move forward.



2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Overview

Revenue	\$5,554,385
Expenses	\$2,473,577
Net Income	\$3,080,808
Net Assets	\$10,545,365

2023 Donors Representing
46 States



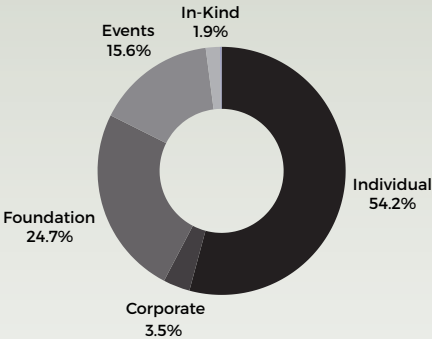
% of New Donors in 2023

69%

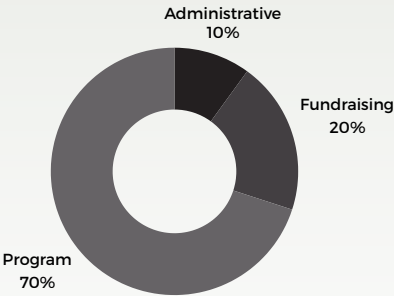
% Increase from 2022 -2023
of Total Donors

40%

Revenue Highlights



Expense Summary





2023 REFLECTIONS

"I truly believe there is magic happening at the H&H Ranch and that all the people I encountered there truly care about the vet attendees, the animals, and the mission. This was truly a life-changing experience that will have life long and far-reaching impacts on not just attendees but their families, friends, and communities. Sincerely appreciate the opportunity to attend and hopefully serve to help others in the future." - HH 2023 Volunteer

"Heroes and Horses was life-changing for me. It still is changing my life. Every day I strive to be just a little bit better. I found a new way to think about trauma, trials, obstacles, and life! "
-HH 2023 Participant

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity, the people I met there, and the mindset of the individuals that helped guide me. It's a place I call home with some people I now consider family, who I look forward to helping change the world with."
- HH 2023 Participant

"The experience I gained throughout my time there has truly changed my life for the better. Never before that, I held myself more accountable with the understanding that the inside world truly does create the outside world. I understood that I should go where I'm appreciated versus tolerated, and that I deserve to be here."
-HH 2023 Participant







VISIT US.

Visit us at the Double H Ranch or stop by our website and check out the latest blog, merchandise, and program updates!

Be sure to subscribe to our newsletter to stay in touch on the latest news!

www.heroesandhorses.org

WISH LIST!

H&H relies on the generous contributions of foundations, corporate partners, and individual donors to underwrite program expenses, equipment, and ranch operations.

Check out our [Wish List](#) to see what we are prioritizing for the coming year!

PARTNER WITH US.

Interested in making a contribution or leaving a legacy? We will work with you to identify the best option for you, your family, or your business . There are a multitude of opportunities from hosting a dinner to sponsoring our annual Gala, and everything in between.

Contact William Wendelman at william@heroesandhorses.org to learn more!

FOLLOW US.

We are on social! We're on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram [@heroesandhorses.](#)

For more ways to get involved, email us at admin@heroesandhorses.org or call us at 406. 946. 2645

HEROES AND HORSES

