

WindWalkers

Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center

IMPROVING LIVES
THROUGH UNMATCHED
EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



“OUR CLIENTS ARE AT THE HEART OF EVERY DECISION THAT WE MAKE. WE PROMISE TO ALWAYS STRIVE TO EXCEED EXPECTATIONS AND REMAIN COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE HIGHEST QUALITY EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES AND THERAPIES THAT OFFER RESULTS.”

GABRIELLE GREEVES

Executive Director, WindWalkers





*Proudly
in Service
to the R&V
Since 2005*

Since its inception, WindWalkers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center (“WindWalkers”) can proudly boast providing 51000+ service hours -“**butts in the saddle and boots on the ground**” as we like to say – to over 9700 unique clients. In 2005, WindWalkers began with exactly two clients and only one horse. We generally serve between 75-130 clients weekly with 24 equine therapy “school” horses (and, hope to return to such numbers again soon). Our service area includes 3 counties (Garfield, Pitkin, and Eagle), 16+ towns and a population of over 130,000. Many specialized groups like kids with [dis]abilities, at-risk teens, veterans, seniors and a wide spectrum of affected needs populations are still signing up for sessions in the midst of a pandemic.

Since COVID, we are employing more instructors, tutors/teachers and mental health professionals in order to provide healthy/safer sessions to smaller groups.

WindWalkers is where horses and caring professionals help individuals (and families) with challenges to grow and thrive- from Aspen to Parachute.

Here to Help

Call the Office at (970) 963-2909

- Get Knowledgeable advice on services
- Get answers to your tough questions
- Request forms and build a plan
- Volunteer



WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE BELIEVE

With a herd of 24 gentle therapy horses, WindWalkers Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy Center (“WindWalkers”) works its magic, providing equine assisted services to those with a diagnosis, at-risk teens, underserved populations, and their families within our community.

Since 2005, WindWalkers has served more than 9,700 unique individuals from early childhood to late life who are struggling with a variety of emotional neurological, and/or physical challenges. Using an integrated focus, our programs extend therapeutic services and support to the family, helping both individuals and their families experience improved health and wellbeing.

Why Horses? They have a unique ability to affect us, stirring awe and wonder, opening hearts and minds, giving us wings, lifting us out of a trauma response, helping us regulate our emotions, and aiding us to become mobile independent individuals.

The research is clear: horses provide us with more than just a good feeling, they facilitate wellbeing, stabilize moods, and support neurological development making them hugely beneficial in many therapeutic settings. One of the most beautiful aspects of this work is that the horses can be themselves, totally authentic in who they are, and invite us to do the same.

At WindWalkers, we strongly believe that riding increases one’s interest in what is happening around them. As a result, a rider becomes “An Explorer” of the world from the back of a horse. Horseback riding for the disabled builds self-confidence, responsibility for oneself and inspires teamwork while strengthening core muscles and improving coordination.

At WindWalkers, we also put an emphasis on education and psycho/social development usually by including specific goals in areas of educational, behavioral, social, or emotional growth in our standard riding lessons. Moreover, we are involved in mental health issues and substance abuse recovery. Through the bond with their new companion, the horse, WindWalkers offers individuals a safe, fun, and beautiful environment to enjoy themselves in the great outdoors.

The horse is the healer, the doctor, the modality, the tool...more importantly, the friend to those in need!!

Come and visit us, open 7 days a week year round!

Gabrielle Greeves.
Executive Director

Beth Jusick.
Program Director

Testimonials

*I don't pretend to understand the magic behind it, or why it works – all we care about is – **IT DOES WORK!***

"For my autistic non-verbal son, riding at WindWalkers has become the highlight of weeks with me as a single parent. He knows it's riding day and anxiously awaits the time to go, getting his shoes and waiting by the door even hours in advance. He is almost instantly calmed once on the horse, as the rocking motion seems to provide an ability to center himself like nothing else. After only a few sessions he started touching the horse and connecting to the environment around him. WindWalkers has helped him learn control over his environment by what he says and does. He has shown an increase in communication through actions and words (use of an APP), body control, awareness of animals, nature and other people. WindWalkers has gone out of their way to ensure a safe, caring, learning, fun, and special place for those individuals whose needs go beyond the norm."



"BEST DAY EVER!" shouts a class of 8 Latino boys from RiverView School in the social/emotional 3rd Grade class.

*"During my life I have been through many difficult situations that have put me in a vulnerable position regarding my mental health. Since I moved to Colorado I felt the need to seek help to continue my mental health treatment, not only for the transition I was suffering but also the abuse from my spouse, and to help my children. **After an extensive search, I found WindWalkers.** My experiences with the horse and staff at WindWalkers has provided me with **useful tools to make better decisions** during these last months, **and this would not have been possible since my medical plan does not cover my mental health treatments.**"*



WINDWALKERS PARTNERED WITH
22+ COMMUNITY PARTNERS

WE SERVED PARTICIPANTS FROM
3 COUNTIES

14,500

Service hours
"butts in the
saddle and
boots on the
ground"



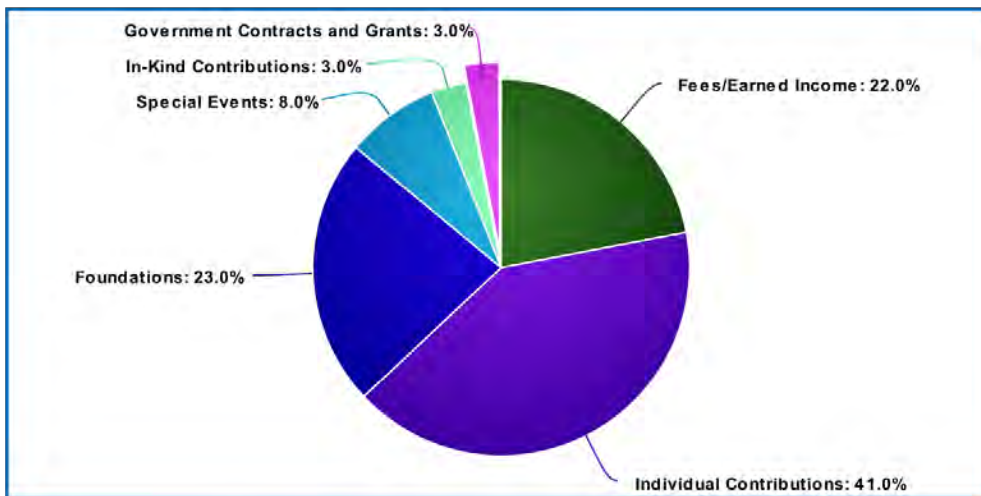
97%
of participants
have seen
an increase
in mobility,
self-esteem
and confidence
in less than
4 sessions

\$45 vs \$175

Average cost vs actual cost
of a riding lesson

By the Numbers

WINDWALKERS INCOME SOURCES



■ Fees/Earned Income
 ■ Individual Contributions
 ■ Foundations
 ■ Special Events
■ In-Kind Contributions
 ■ Government Contracts and Grants

meta-chart.com

WindWalkers as a whole has seen tremendous growth over the last few years. Through a drought, a pandemic and many other difficult factors, we have been resilient in the face of change and hardship.

These numbers show the hard work and dedication that has been given by not only our staff, but the volunteers and families who work with our organization to help change lives everyday.

14,200
volunteer hours



\$355,000
value of volunteer hours

\$65,000

Scholarships given per year
to over 89% of our clients

100%

Individuals were
satisfied with
their experience
and would
recommend us
to a friend

24

Horses carry
the program

3,800

Bales of hay
consumed

JANUARY

28

Sessions begin,
6 days a week
Tuesday-Saturday

MARCH

13

Closed due to COVID-19
Stay at home orders go into effect
Adhered to State closures while performing
day-to-day ranch chores to keep
our healers-horses, goats, and
ranch animals - ready for reopening



APRIL

10

Story time with
Beth, Cowgirl Kate,
Cowboy Smalls
and the farm animals

MARCH
25

WindWalkers participates in
aiding community with
applications for support, meals,
and even comforting our clients
with small acts of kindness - laughter,
jokes, and using talking horses

MAY

4

Submitted
COVID Plan
to Garfield County
Department of Health
to reopen in phases



FEBRUARY

14



“Hearts & Hooves” makes a Difference
Signed the papers to purchase the ranch
Dreams do come true! [Click to Read](#)

WindWalkers set to secure future with Missouri Height ranch purchase

APRIL

20

Free Telehealth programming
begins with Willa Bonzi MOT, OTR/L
designed to meet our clients
“beyond the arena and in their
living rooms”



JUNE

1



Aimee Dale Lucious
a Licensed Clinical Medical Health Counselor joins the WindWalkers family to provide equine and animal assisted psychotherapy to individuals, families and couples.

JULY

11



Breaking ground on Phase II of sensory trail dubbed

“Saddle Up for Discovery on the Trail” with Glenwood Springs Kiwanis Club spear-headed by Bob Littler and Bob Patillo.

Special Thanks to Western Slope Aggregate, Aspen Skiing Company, Walters Company, MPA Consulting, and Aspen Tree Service.

JULY

22

4 Week Pilot “Reading and Riding” program gets started for those with dyslexia and who are challenged readers. Right brain kids get a chance to wake up the left brain just by picking up the reins at WindWalkers and getting much needed support by local tutors to re-wire the way they approach literacy, problem solving and thinking about day-to-day activities.
1 out of 5 students will be diagnosed with dyslexia.

JUNE

8



BARN REOPENS

a soft reopening pursuant to the Stage 1 schedule issued by Governor Jared Polis. WINDWALKERS followed a five-phase plan bringing back 10% of clients first - with a focus on independent riders -gradually increasing to 50% to include “all inclusive” summer camps.

AUGUST

24



BACK TO SCHOOL

9 Week “Distance Learning” POD

In partnership with Roaring Fork School District. Read the full article titled Schooled in a Barn in the Sopris Sun

“We are so delighted to have our riders back and the horses are even more delighted”, said Beth Gusick, Program Director

OCTOBER

31



HALLOWEEN “Trick or Treat”

Not just any traditional Halloween but one in the saddle celebrated with four and two-legged friends at the barn.

FEBRUARY

1

Sessions begin,
6 days a week
Tuesday-Saturday

MARCH

22

Educational (Social/Emotional) Programs

8 weeks of programming to aid children
in learning verbal and nonverbal
communication skills.



MAY

7

Serenading our
Seniors

while their still cautious
due to COVID



APRIL

1

Autism Awareness
Autism Intellectual and Neurodiversion
celebrated



FEBRUARY

14



For the Love of Horses
Celebrating our Herd!

Annual 2 Day
Benefit
Horse Show
Riders show their skills
and have fun.

JUNE
25



**JULY
20**



**Challenge Aspen Camps,
Reading & Riding, and
All inclusive camps**

Our summer camps cover a wide range of activities and skills for different ages. We have over 45 children on the waiting list every year!

**OCTOBER
23**



**Wranglers & Rhinestones
Brand New Annual event**
Hosted by Spring Creeks Ranch
Food, family, music & fun!



**OCTOBER
1**

**Fall Challenge Match
“Fill the Feedbag”**
Our annual
Challenge Match
to help keep “butts in the
saddles and feedbags full”.

**AUGUST
15**



Blue Lake visits and paints ponies

Blue Lake campers come to spend time with the ponies and let their creativity shine!

**DECEMBER
18**

Barn Closes
Holidays bring
closure for the year end.



Our Services

At WindWalkers, we offer several types of services:

Therapeutic Riding: Serving 130 clients weekly in private and semi private therapeutic equine riding sessions. Sessions provide social, educational and adaptive sport opportunities that are uniquely designed by the PATH certified instructors for each client.

EAGALA/ EAP / EAL: Offered by licensed psychotherapist / mental health professionals and an equine specialist designed to help individuals and families suffering from a diverse range of trauma.

Special Group Sessions: Varies from group to group – Some use the time to enjoy riding together while others use it as a critical component of a holistic treatment program to overcome addictions, trauma, and behavioral challenges.

All Inclusive/All Abilities Summer Camps: Camp encompasses various activities which include ranch chores, horse knowledge, arts and crafts, horse grooming, tacking and riding. Camp is available for ages 4-5, 6-11 and 12-15.

Newly designed " Reading and Riding" is a 5 week intensive for those challenged readers -and dyslexics- from 7-11 years old.

Silver Saddles: Focus is on early onset dementia, Alzheimer, Parkinsons, MS and for the Senior Rider who wants to simply get back in the saddle.

Veteran Services: WindWalkers invites active duty, retired and veterans to participate in adaptive riding, wellness and equine therapy camps.

Educational (Social/Emotional): supports children in learning appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication, receiving and understanding positive feedback, reciprocity in positive relationships - especially with the horse - and assertiveness, impulse control problem solving, social skills...and more!



Thank You

On behalf of the WindWalkers family

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our sponsors, families and volunteers!

We truly wouldn't have the success we do without all of you! Thank you for your countless hours of commitment to our programs and to helping individuals in the Roaring Fork Valley to grow and thrive!

We look forward to continuing our mission in aiding residents of the Roaring Fork Valley for many years to come!



Gabrielle Greeves
Executive Director



Beth Gusick
Program Director/Advanced
PATH Int. Certified Instructor



Sarah English
Head of Schooling
Team, Advanced
PATH Int. Certified Instructor



Kristen Wolff
PATH Int.
Certified Instructor



Holly Gressett
Admin Manager



Shannon Weeks
Marketing Director



Abby Easterling
Ranch hand/Mentor



Lily Easterling
Ranch hand/Mentor



Melissa Taylor
Adolescent lead guide
Orton Gillingham Tutor



Julie Lang
Wilson reading instructor