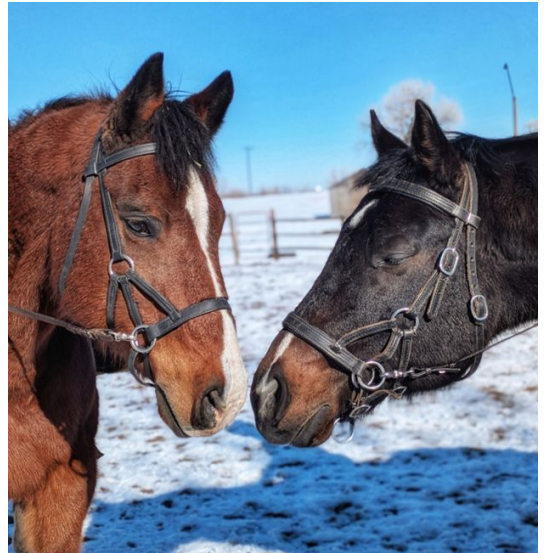


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FRIENDS OF  
LAUGHING BUCK FARM

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**Annual Report 2024**

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## Hello from FarmHer Rosemary

Dear donors, volunteers and friends,

2024 has been one of incredible collaboration and growth. Our core programs, Farm School and riding lessons are going strong. New **partnerships**, **expanded educational programs**, and **strong community support** through fundraisers and grants allowed us to deepen our impact—providing farm experiences, therapy programs, and essential care for our animals while fostering learning and connection for all.

We partnered with **Align Behavior Therapy** to create opportunities for growth and learning in the garden and on the farm for over 60 community members with offerings of free produce along with unforgettable summer memories. The campers, 95% supported through Medicaid, had never experienced a farm first-hand. Our nature-based Occupational Therapy partner, **Peaks and Bounds**, created a fundraiser for the nonprofit, and held summer camps and farm-based therapy sessions at Laughing Buck. We also created a Women's Equine-Assisted Therapy group, working with local psychotherapist Christi Piker at **Lotus Blooming Out**. We hosted a family with the **Make-a-Wish Foundation**. Sharing the farm in new ways, these partnerships allow us greater community impact and we are so grateful.

Education and mentorship was a focus in 2024 and we have honed our work-based learning curriculum, training **new interns**. We also added several youth helpers to our Farm School and Summer Camp programs. Training new instructors and **youth leaders** will help us serve additional students in our programs.

Our main fundraisers - Plant Sale, Fall Festival, Online Auction, and Santa on the Farm have grown in attendance and impact. The enthusiasm and excitement for these farm events is palpable and the donations reflect it! We were also added to **Colorado Gives** this year - a new avenue for receiving community support. Through new grants and support through **Rotary** and **Bohemian Foundation**, and contributions from YOU, our donors, we were able to purchase over **\$20,000 of hay** for our horses and goats and a **new lesson horse**, Poppy. Your donations also helped us with some **unexpected vet bills** for our sweet Haflinger, Prince. As our herd continues to age, we expect more vet visits for the herd and your support means so much.

Looking ahead, we are excited to further ways for our expanding community to experience the Farm. None of this would be possible without you—our incredible community. Thank you for believing in our mission and being part of this journey.

With love and gratitude, FarmHer Rosemary





## Hello from Rachel

I am the Program Director/ Head Instructor for the Adaptive Riding (AR) Program at LBF and have been here for nearly five years. Having worked in multiple Therapeutic Riding programs for 23 years, I am honored to lead the programming at LBF, due to the fact that we are a facility that focuses on quality over quantity.

The majority of our students in the AR program have grown up in the program. This speaks volumes to the time, dedication, and personal quality of programming here at the farm. Our volunteers also are dedicated and develop relationships over the years they've been working with individual students.

Studies show that the single most important factor in the success of children growing into effective, kind, functioning adults is the presence of a trusted, safe adult mentor. Our volunteers provide this mentorship. Even if our students are capable physically of riding independently, having their trusted adult there weekly to provide support and kindness is so important to the emotional wellbeing of our students. We love and appreciate our volunteers!

This year our students have all shown considerable growth in their riding capabilities so we have been focusing on problem solving and independence. We encourage students to feel capable and competent by completing complex tasks such as tacking up their horse with minimal assistance. All of our students have risen to this challenge and are becoming very skilled equestrians!



## ADAPTIVE RIDING PROGRAM

The Adaptive Riding Program at LBF is unique in that we focus on quality over quantity. Most of our students have been participating for years, so our class focus has shifted over time with long-term students from just riding to "mastery" of life skills and a focus on emotional intelligence. The relationships the students create between themselves, the equines, and their volunteers is so special! These relationships serve as great examples to fuel positive interactions in other parts of our students' lives. Our Adaptive Riding Program offers a holistic approach to horsemanship, relationship, and community.



## SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAM

Friends of Laughing Buck Farm offers scholarships for lessons, classes and camps so that we can invite and include everyone from the community. Scholarships are based upon financial need, on a first come, first served, basis until all scholarship monies are allocated and/or spent.

In 2024, 23 students were able to participate in adaptive activities through the provision of over \$9,300 worth of direct scholarships and program subsidies. These scholarships covered more than 100 hours of adaptive riding, 37 hours of non-adaptive riding, 71 classes of Farm School and summer camps, and 37 sessions of Rainbow Connection. Many thanks to our generous donors!



## **REINBOW CONNECTION**

Few Agricultural Education programs create space specifically for LGBTQIA+ youth to experience farm life. Many struggle to find welcoming agricultural communities, making safe, inclusive opportunities essential. Our **Reinbow Connection** classes provide a fun, judgment-free space where these youth can connect with horses, learn, and truly be themselves.



## **EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY PROGRAM**

In 2024, LBF piloted a Women's Equine-Assisted Therapy (EAT) group. The group was led by Christi Piker, a mindfulness-based Psychotherapist specializing in treating trauma, largely with clients who are part of the marginalized and oppressed populations. Rachel Karneffel, our PATH-certified Equine Specialist, co-facilitated the group.

A small number of women enrolled in our first EAT group. The groundwork sessions focused on various topics each week such as building self-esteem, improving verbal and non-verbal communication, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and building confidence and emotional resiliency. It was beautiful to witness the therapeutic process unfold over the six week session between and among participants, equines and nature.

In 2025, we are excited to bring more therapy-focused programs to LBF that fit with our important values of diversity, inclusion and community.



## **SAFETY FIRST!**

In February 2024, LBF volunteers and Board members had the opportunity to participate in a "Friends and Family" CPR training offered by Poudre Fire Authority (PFA), including hands-on practice on adults and children. In March, PFA came out to LBF and conducted a training on the proper use of fire extinguishers using the PASS Method (Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep.)



## RIDER

Zoie is a gregarious, intelligent 12 year old who has been riding at Laughing Buck Farm for several years. Along with increased strength and coordination Zoie has become more confident in horsemanship skills and daily life. She has been working on her posting trot, a challenge that she has tackled and mastered, even on one of our biggest, fastest horses. She also is working on independence in tacking up her horse which involves memorizing the steps, strength to lift the saddle, and dexterity to correctly attach every buckle.

Zoie is working on balancing her focus on lesson tasks in class while conversing with her favorite volunteer Cathy.



## INSTRUCTOR

This year, we welcomed Milo, our new "home grown" instructor, to LBF. Milo started out in our Adaptive Riding Program, then graduated into non-adaptive lessons. As their riding skills exceeded our teaching levels, they decided to accept an internship with Rachel, the lead instructor at LBF. Upon graduating the internship with flying colors, Milo started taking on students of their own. Milo's students benefit from Milo's kindness, sensitivity, and knowledge of horsemanship. It's been a joy to watch Milo grow up within the LBF community as well as succeed as an instructor.



## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Penny is our dedicated volunteer coordinator, keeping volunteers informed and organized for classes, events, and adaptive rider support.

Originally from Atlanta, she moved to the Front Range four years ago to be near family. She grew up as an "army brat" and has lived all over the world including Germany, South America and Switzerland. Penny rode horses as a child in Virginia and Tennessee where her grandfather had a farm. She also took riding lessons as a college student at East Tennessee State University. A retired dental hygienist, Penny brings a lifetime of experience, care, and passion to our farm community.

In her own words she describes the farm, "*LBF is a sanctuary for me; it's inclusive, welcoming, comfortable and I'm surrounded by like-minded people. There truly is a bubble of love here.*"

## EQUINE

**Prince** is a 23-year-old Haflinger gelding known for his playful spirit and teddy bear-like charm. He helps students build confidence through riding and ground driving and has experience as a cart pony. In 2024, Prince battled colic, but with excellent vet care and incredible support from the LBF community, he's back to his old self—and we couldn't be happier!



## INTERN

Jonathan joined Laughing Buck Farm through CSU's Agricultural Education program, seeking hands-on experience with young people in a farm setting. After volunteering with Farm School and summer camps, he became an intern, and then a paid teacher for our summer camps. He brings deep knowledge of Colorado history, a great sense of humor, and a spirit of service—plus, we love the musical touch of his banjo playing!



## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Our adaptive riding volunteers are truly incredible! We have a dedicated core group, some of whom have been with us for years. In 2024, while we said goodbye to two valued volunteers, we were thrilled to welcome seven new ones! Two of our volunteers, though unable to assist during class times, generously come each week to help with farm chores. Ranging in age from 18 to 74, every volunteer shares an equine background, creating an instant connection with both students and fellow volunteers. No matter the weather, class days are always filled with laughter, learning, and a true sense of family.



*"Laughing Buck Farm is a place where all are welcomed, appreciated and nurtured."*

- Laughing Buck Farm Volunteer

## Wellington Ace

Our ACE (Alternative Cooperative Education) students from Wellington High School find a welcoming space at LBF, where chores and activities are tailored to all ability levels. They are coached by our former PATH instructor, Amy Coen.





## Peaks and Bounds



Peaks and Bounds is run by Occupational Therapists, providing 1:1 private services and nature-based sensory camps designed for children with neurodiversities and other disabilities.

**Summer Camps at Laughing Buck Farm**  
Hosting our summer camps at Laughing Buck Farm has been an incredible experience for both our campers and staff. The farm's supportive and vibrant atmosphere has made it the perfect place for children to explore, learn, and grow. Through hands-on activities like caring for animals and outdoor adventures, campers build friendships, develop life skills, engage their sensory systems in safe supportive ways, and create unforgettable memories.

*Our partnership with Laughing Buck Farm has truly embodied the heart of Peaks & Bounds—connecting with nature, each other, and the community in meaningful ways.*

### Occupational Therapy Partnership

Our partnership with Laughing Buck Farm has been a cornerstone of Peaks & Bounds, creating a unique and meaningful space for our clients to thrive. Bringing individual clients to the farm for therapy sessions has allowed us to harness the therapeutic power of nature and animals, fostering growth and connection in a way that a traditional setting simply cannot. From feeding animals to engaging in farm chores, each session has been an opportunity for clients to develop skills, build confidence, and experience joy in an environment that feels welcoming and calming.





## Align Behavior Therapy / Giving Garden

In 2024, LBF passed the torch for its Giving Garden (large LBF garden whose produce is shared with the community) to Align Behavior Therapy with their talented team of behavior therapists and pediatric clients. From seed to harvest, children ages 3 -19, each with a therapist, tended the garden, and then enjoyed the fruits & vegetables of their labors.

LBF's Giving Garden program impacted over 60 community members with offerings of free produce and lots of time spent at the farm practicing gratitude. Sharing garden produce with families and farm animals helped students understand that the garden provides for all, not just people.



The lessons learned this summer may have been taught at LBF but their reach is exponentially greater. Parents of these farmers-in-training have remarked that their children have increased interest in eating fresh produce, being kind to animals, making friends, continuing to try when things don't work the first time, and having less fear around insects. For a few, farm animals have become their special interest, and they still talk about their experiences at LBF:

*"The most fun thing I did all summer was work at the garden!"*

*"I want to be a farmer when I grow up!"*



## Shine

Shine is grateful to partner with Laughing Buck Farm again in 2024. LBF has become a vital coping space, supporting mental health through hands-on learning, fresh air, and meaningful connections with animals.

Rosemary and Belinda have provided so many areas of education and helped our Shine Members work through complex emotions. Choosing to learn in an outdoor environment has proven to be amazing for everyone. To engage in sensory activities in a safe outdoor space has been tremendously beneficial. We learned how things are made, where they come from, respect for animals and are provided plenty of fresh air and exercise.

For an adult with special needs, like our Shine Members, this is such a positive experience. Thank you to everyone at LBF for all you do! We are lucky to have you in our lives.



## Special Heroes

We made a new connection with Special Heroes, a day program that provides compassionate care for adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

*“Our participants haven’t stopped talking about the tour—it was a highlight for everyone! We had an amazing time and are grateful for the warm hospitality.”*

403

**Adaptive Riding  
Lessons Provided**

\$9,383

**Scholarship Funding**

1004

**Total Volunteer Hours  
Donated**

18

**Total Volunteers**

245

**Scholarship-supported  
Riding Lessons/Reinbow  
Sessions/Farm School  
Days**

### “Make A Wish” Farm Tour

Aubrey had so many options to choose from when selecting her “Make A Wish” Foundation special activity. Would it be a trip to Disneyland? A chance to meet a special hero? No, Aubrey chose to do several locally-based farm tours so that she and her family members could make cherished memories together. In September, Aubrey brought her parents and younger siblings to Laughing Buck Farm for a Farm Tour, and we were so excited to welcome them!

Together they met and fed the chickens, goats, and pigs and played in the Hay Barn. Aubrey even got her special wish to feed all the horses in the dry lot with FarmHer Rosemary! We hope Aubrey’s time at LBF was as special to her as it was to us. Her warmth and brightness were felt long after she left the farm. She is an inspiration!



### Rotary Grant

In 2024, Friends of Laughing Buck Farm received a \$3,000 Community Grant from the Rotary Club of Fort Collins. We were thrilled to receive and use this grant funding to provide educational and therapeutic horse and farm class scholarships for the community, including those with economic and special needs. Scholarships are offered based on financial need and determined using the annually updated income guidelines.

### HAY PURCHASES

The cost of hay rose again in 2024 and impacted all Colorado farmers, including Laughing Buck Farm. Extra hay was needed due to extreme winter weather so a total of **\$20,868** was spent on hay alone for the Laughing Buck Farm animals. This is in addition to the numerous other equine care expenses such as grain, supplements, veterinary services, farrier, etc.



## SPRING PLANT SALE

In 2024, we partnered with Mineral Roots, Plantorium, and Moon Pottery to host our second annual Plant Sale. The LBF community and friends came out to buy from a beautiful selection of starter plants and bake sale items, and to enjoy Ellie’s Little Petting Zoo and the warm ambiance of the Farm. We raised over \$1,500 to support the nonprofit programs. Hope to see you on May 18, 2025 for our 2025 Plant Sale!



## FALL FARM FESTIVAL AND FUNDRAISER

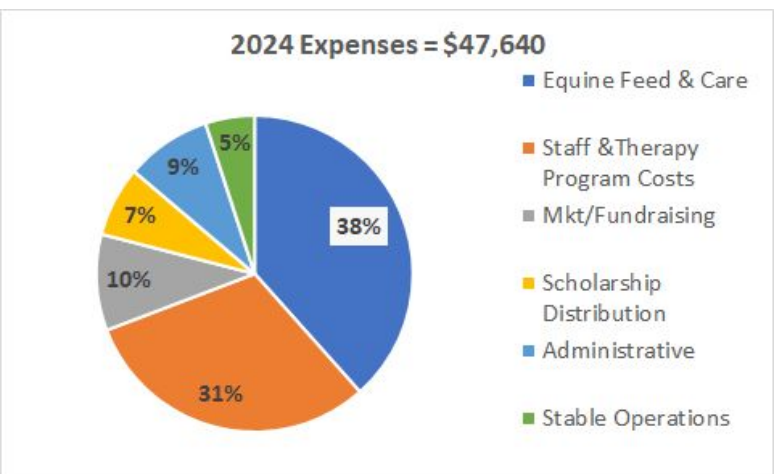
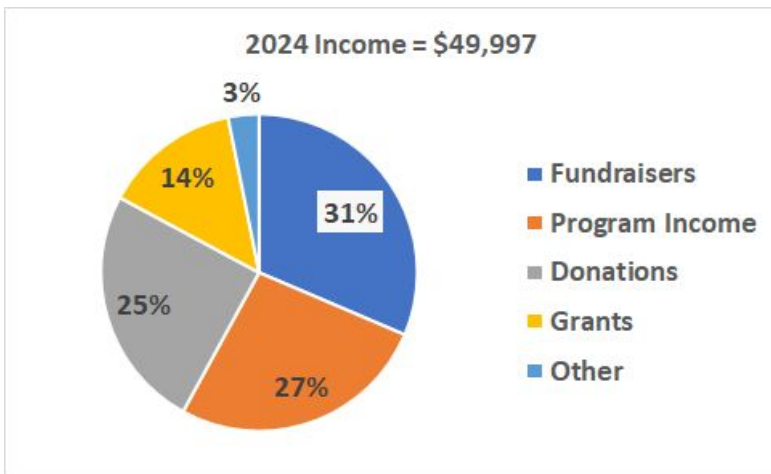
Friends of Laughing Buck Farm hosted its third Fall Farm Festival on October 6, offering a variety of activities for all to enjoy. Along with an online auction, the event raised over \$8,200 to support scholarships and program needs. We look forward to another great festival in October 2025 and hope to see you there!



## SANTA ON THE FARM

On Dec. 8, we hosted our second annual Santa on the Farm, where families enjoyed a festive farm visit, hot cocoa, holiday treats and unique Santa photos that included chickens, goats and a mini-mule. This special fundraiser, which raised \$700, helps share the magic of the farm with families who may not otherwise have access to farm animals.

## Financials





*Friends of Laughing Buck Farm extends our deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our work to provide educational and therapeutic horse and farm experiences for EVERYONE. We simply couldn't do it without you. Thank you!*

## All Donors

Anonymous Donors  
Alicia Goetz  
Amara Massage  
American Online Giving Foundation  
Amy Coen  
April Ocasio  
Barbara Kwong  
Bartlel's Pumpkin Patch  
Bath Nursery  
Betsy Thurmond Matz  
Blue Moose Art Gallery  
Board And Brush  
Cara and Van Wormer  
Catherine Pizzi  
Cathy & Tom Prieto  
Chipper's Lanes Horsetooth  
Colorado Gives Foundation  
Dairy Delight Malt Shop  
Dandelion and Rust  
Deerwood Ranch Wild Horse Ecosanctuary  
Donna / Katherine / Anjali Kiah  
Downtown Ace Hardware  
Ellie's Little Petting Zoo  
Erica Michel  
Expanding Horizons Farm  
Find Colorado Real Estate  
Ginny Sawyer  
GroupRaise

Irma Villagomez-Miranda  
Isabelle Clement  
Jamie Bellman  
Jenn Snow  
Kat McGinley  
Kathleen Hunt-Speciner  
Kendra Jeffries Nekoranec  
Kevin and Hilary Schwartz  
Kristi Zambrano  
La Campechana  
Lambspun  
Laughing Buck Farm  
Leslie Stranathan  
Lindsay Wilkinson  
Lucinda Smith  
Lyric Cinema  
Mallorie Barker  
Mary Pat Aardrup  
Maureen Buck  
Michael Castellon  
Mineral Roots  
Mishawaka Amphitheatre  
Moon Myerson  
Photography  
Moon Pottery  
Morning Fresh Dairy  
Mosquito Squad  
Mugs

Nature's Own  
OtterCares  
Owl Canyon Coffee  
PayPal Giving Fund  
Peaks and Bounds Inc.  
Penny Brown  
Pull It Off LLC-Somatic Coaching  
Rachel Hayes  
Rebekkah Jackson  
Red Feather Guides and Outfitters  
Riversong Waldorf School  
Rolf Asphaug  
Rotary Club of FC Charities, Inc.  
Sarah Bacharty  
Sarah McPherson  
Silver Grill  
Slurpz  
Splash  
Stephanie Walsh  
Stockton's Little Big Shire  
Synergy Guiding Hands  
Tatjana Bakke  
The Connection Co-op  
The River's Path Canoe Outfitters  
Thistle  
Tortilla Marissa's  
Welsh Rabbit Cheese Shop  
Whitney Morris

## Sponsors



## Program Volunteers

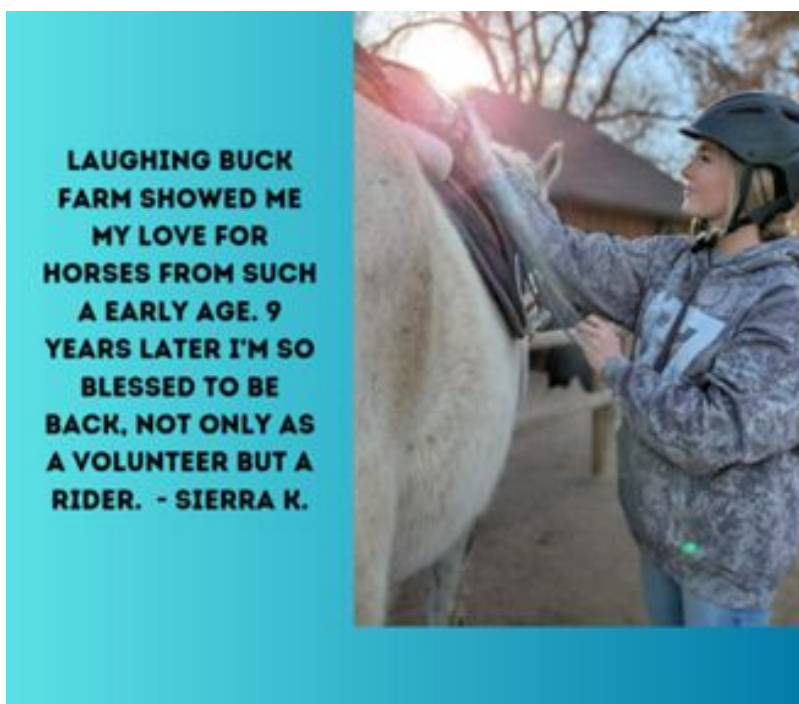
Allison Poff	Lucinda Smith
Annie Wolfe	Maureen Maguire
Cathy Prieto	Paula Hall
Christi Piker	Penny Brown
Dave Culbertson	Rosemary Graff
Greg Vaillancourt	Sarah McPherson
Jessica Horne	Sarah Wilson
Jill Phipps	Sierra Kennaway
Kathi McGinley	Trina Garlo

## Board Members

Rosemary Jedel Graff - President  
Lindsey Gerdes - Vice President  
April Ocasio - Secretary  
Lucinda Smith - Treasurer  
Penny Brown - Marketing and Outreach  
Cathy Prieto - Safety Officer  
Sarah McPherson - Fundraising Chair



## Testimonials



*"I love the inclusivity of the farm, love that I see all these people with special needs doing what they love at the level they can do it. It's amazing that you provide that, and I can't thank you enough for the scholarship/financial help we receive. Just the fact that you offer so many things; farm school, adaptive riding etc... everything you'd want to see, you can get there at the farm! I recommend LBF to everyone. The energy and wholesomeness is like a family. It's amazing, the best thing in our lives. The people are like family. It's really amazing, honestly. You can't fake that!"*

~ Parent of Adaptive Riding Student

# Want to support our work?

Your continued support is instrumental in advancing our mission of providing educational and therapeutic horse and farm experiences that are accessible to everyone. As an educational all-abilities farm, we strive to create an inclusive space where individuals of all backgrounds, economic class, culture, gender, sexual identity or abilities feel welcome. Our AR Program Director/Head Instructor is certified by Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH).



Your support helps us provide scholarships for families, care for our animals, and create a diverse and accepting place to learn and grow.

**\$30**

Bag of Feed or 2 Bales of Hay

**\$45**

Scholarship for One Farm Class

**\$65**

Scholarship for One Riding Lesson

**\$100**

Sponsor a Therapy Horse for a Month

**\$520**

Scholarship for 8 Weeks of Adaptive Riding



**DONATE NOW**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

Friends of Laughing Buck Farm

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Fort Collins, CO 80524

[www.friendsoflaughingbuckfarm.org](http://www.friendsoflaughingbuckfarm.org)