



# FRIENDS OF LAUGHING BUCK FARM NONPROFIT



**Annual Report 2023**

## About Friends of Laughing Buck Farm

Friends of Laughing Buck Farm is a registered 501c3 that develops and supports educational and therapeutic horse and farm experiences for EVERYONE. We create programs that are fully accessible regardless of economic class, culture, gender, sexual identity or set of abilities. We celebrate inclusion and diversity and want you to know you are welcome here! Riding instructors are certified by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH).

The nonprofit, formed in 2018, is hosted by [Laughing Buck Farm LLC](#), whose mission is to inspire a love for farming, horsemanship, gardening, and nature through the rhythms of the seasons and hands-on learning and play-- all in an outdoor, farm setting.



## Hello from FarmHer Rosemary

Looking at our growth and impact this year, my heart is overflowing with gratitude and appreciation for the incredible support we have from our community. I want to extend a warm thank you to our donors, volunteers, and the animals that play a vital role in our therapeutic programs.

### To Our Donors:

Our journey wouldn't be possible without the support of our generous donors. Your commitment to our mission has fueled our efforts to create positive change and provide transformative experiences for those who need it most. Thanks to one-time donors, monthly giving partners and those who attended our fundraising events. We were able to offer over \$10,000 in scholarship funds to families in 2023. For a small community-supported nonprofit, this is an incredible gift to our community and one I'm most proud of. THANK YOU for supporting educational and therapeutic horse and farm experiences for EVERYONE.

### Looking Forward with Gratitude and Compassion:

Moving forward, together, we can continue to make a positive impact, nurture inclusivity, and provide meaningful experiences for all who walk through the gates of Laughing Buck Farm. Your ongoing support means the world to us.

**Thank You Again for Being a Part of Our Journey!**





## **ADAPTIVE RIDING PROGRAM**

The adaptive riding program at Laughing Buck Farm delivers equine-assisted activities and equine-facilitated learning to individuals with cognitive, physical and social/emotional special needs. Participants experience horsemanship lessons with Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International certified instructors who are also PATH Equine Specialists in Mental Health and Learning. Students work with equines and volunteers in a safe, secured and private setting.

## **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 provided are based upon financial need, on a first come, first served, basis until all scholarship monies are allocated and/or spent. In 2023, 15 students were able to participate in adaptive activities thanks to our expanded scholarship program. In 2023, **\$10,570** worth of direct scholarships and program subsidies covered 101 hours of adaptive riding, 50 hours of non adaptive riding, 52 classes of Farm School and summer camps, and 8 sessions of Rainbow Connection. Many thanks to our generous donors!



"This is the most confident I've felt in months!" - Participant, Rainbow Connection LGBTQIA+ Club

## **REINBOW CONNECTION**

Rainbow Connection is a safe space where Queer Youth can enjoy equine activities among kind peers and mentors. This unique program blends inclusive and agricultural education-- a rare mix of programming aimed at creating a more compassionate and kind agricultural community on the Front Range.



## **FARM EDUCATION AND ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

Laughing Buck Farm's independent enrichment programs include individuals from *Shine* and *Our House*, Fort Collins' day programs for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities. Folks come from these programs to work and learn on the farm two days per week. In addition, we also work with early education programs and Poudre School District school groups throughout the year. We use an adaptive teaching methodology to offer recreational and educational experiences in a working farm setting to promote cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being in a working farm environment.

## Spotlights



### RIDER

Jasper is 14, uses all pronouns, and has been part of Laughing Buck Farm for 8 years! The program has led Jasper to be a more attentive and emotionally attuned person. Riding helps improve core strength and build better posture and it is challenging to be extremely calm in sometimes difficult situations! Jasper has learned how to listen to body language and the slightest hints that his equine partner will give. Riding has affected Jasper positively because it's been a really good stress relief! One thing Jasper really loves about his volunteer, Alex, is that she is a great listener; Jasper loves having intelligent conversation with her because it's easy! When asked if they would recommend LBF to others, they said *"Definitely, LBF is a group of amazing people teaching valuable skills!"*

### INSTRUCTOR

Belinda Engler came to LBF by way of Kansas. In Kansas she owned a large farm with a herd of 21 horses, mostly Welsh ponies. She trained and raised horses and was the County-Wide 4-H leader for the Horseless Horse project. This involved bringing a trailer load of 7 or more ponies to the 4-H arena once a month and giving the kids a free lesson. Belinda has a background as a special education teacher. She firmly believes children progress at their own pace and should never be held back. Moving to Fort Collins enabled her to be closer to 2 of her 3 children and her grandchildren. Fun fact about Belinda is she grew up all over the world! She has fond memories of living in Ecuador in 8th-10th grade & riding her horses all over the mountains of Quito, Ecuador.



### EQUINE

"Turtle" is a bay Quarter Horse gelding and a former barrel racing horse, which makes his name ironic, as he can be fast. Turtle was born in 2014. Turtle is a pretty relaxed gelding, and enjoys being groomed, especially butt scratches. Turtle is used for nonadaptive lessons and is in training for the adaptive program, and is making great progress. Turtle loves being painted by summer camp children and going on trail rides.

*"Turtle has been an incredible blessing in my life, he has helped me to grow in areas that have needed to be cultivated for years! I have something to look forward to every week! In return I am able to take that learning experience and apply it to my everyday life. I didn't know peace of mind could exist for an adult but it can!"*

- LBF Student Rider



## VOLUNTEERS

The volunteers at Laughing Buck Farm are quite a team! Diverse backgrounds and experiences that provide rich experiences for all involved! Most are retired from teaching but there is also a retired Attorney, Dental Hygienist, Geologist and Aquatics Instructor. We have a U.S. Army Veteran with farrier experience, a Swim Coach, an Author of Western Romance Novels, a Director of a Local Youth Western Riding Program and a former National Champion in Western Equitation. Three of the volunteers are on the board of Friends of Laughing Buck Farm and EVERYONE volunteers their time elsewhere as well.

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

*- Laughing Buck Farm Volunteer*

## INTERNS

Julia started volunteering early in 2023 and then transitioned to a paid internship. She helps with Farm School and has a passion for animals and children. Her favorite thing about LBF is the positive energy at the farm and cooperative nature of the work.



Milo, they/them, a former student who "grew up" in our riding program has continued their love for equines, applying their passion to their work! They volunteer for LBF and are also involved in our work-based learning program with a paid internship covering equine care, barn management, and riding instruction. They are doing so well!



## Cooper Home



Poudre School District Transition Program and Cooper Home, works with young adults ages 18-21 years old to develop independent living skills including home management, socialization, transportation and vocational readiness through volunteering. In 2023, groups of students volunteered 20 hours of time learning about farm life and completing important chores at the farm.

*Places like Laughing Buck Farm and their team of amazing people make it possible to create an environment of ability in a world where many of our students have heard the word disability most their lives. Thank you for continuing to make a difference in our program by making a difference in the lives of our students. We Love You!*

*-Cat Turner, PSD Cooper Home*

Gavyn has been a Cooper Home student at LBF since 2022. Known as the resident "horse whisperer", volunteering at LBF fostered that natural affinity. With Rosemary and Belinda's support, Gavyn learned the many aspects of the farm, equine care, maintenance and now Gavyn has a paid position on the Farm, achieving one of the main goals of Cooper Home.



## Peaks and Bounds



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

*“Laughing Buck Farm has generously opened its doors, allowing Peaks and Bounds to host camps and conduct private OT sessions in their sensory-rich space. The opportunity for our staff and campers to engage with the farm animals, particularly the chickens, adds an extra layer of joy to programs. Their sensory hay barn offers abundant possibilities for sensory exploration and adventurous play, enhancing the overall experience for our clients and campers. We are truly grateful for our partnership with Laughing Buck Farm and look forward to future collaborations.”*

- Peaks and Bounds

## Our House

We partner with Our House, a day habilitation program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

*“I love the farm and all of the animals. Lass is my best friend. I like to be outside at the farm, as long as it is above 40 degrees outside.”*

- Sammy

*“I like to clean the animal pens and brush all of the horses’ hair. The horses do pretty good with me. I love the farm.”*

- Rachel

*“I like to say hello to the chickens, roosters, donkey, horses, and pigs”*

- Camden



# 334

**Adaptive Riding  
Lessons Provided**

# \$10,570

**Scholarship Funding**

# 698

**Total Volunteer Hours  
Donated**

# 77

**Total Volunteers**

# 52

**Farm School / Inclusive  
Summer Camp Days  
Supported**

## 2023 Highlights

### HORSE SHOW

In September, we held our first all-abilities horse show on the farm. Students from the Equine Club, the Adaptive Riding program, and owners of boarding horses all participated. Classes were available for all levels and ribbons were awarded for every class. In addition, each student received constructive feedback on their performances. Thank you to Emily McBlair at Emily's Equine Services for judging! It was a great day of good horsemanship and sportsmanship, and fun was had by all!



### INSTRUCTOR/BARN MANAGER TRAINING GRANT

We received a grant from Colorado Dept. of Labor and Employment to develop a Work Based Learning program and PAID internship. The funding allowed us to develop a training curriculum for Equine and Barn Management and Riding Instruction for Adaptive and Nonadaptive lessons, preparing our intern for employment in the horse world.

### HAY PURCHASES

The cost of hay has risen again in 2023 and is impacting all Colorado farmers, including Laughing Buck Farm. We have gone through extra hay with the cold snaps this winter. In 2023, a total of \$18,448 was spent on hay alone for the Laughing Buck Farm animals.



# 2023 Fundraisers



## SPRING PLANT SALE

We partnered with Historic Cherry Mill Farms to host a plant sale May 21, 2023. Cherry Mill Farm brought a beautiful variety of starter plants to sell and our community was able to come together and add a bake sale as well to help raise even more funds for our programs. We raised a total of \$1,485. See you mid-May for our 2024 Plant Sale!



## FALL FARM FESTIVAL AND FUNDRAISER

Friends of Laughing Buck Farm hosted its second Fall Fundraiser and Barn Dance on October 7, 2023. A variety of activities were offered throughout the afternoon and evening to ensure fun was had by all. We also offered an online auction and are grateful to report that through the Fall Festival and online auction, we raised \$6,635. This funding will be used to support more scholarships and other program needs. We are looking forward to the Fall Farm Festival again in October 2024, and hope to see you there!

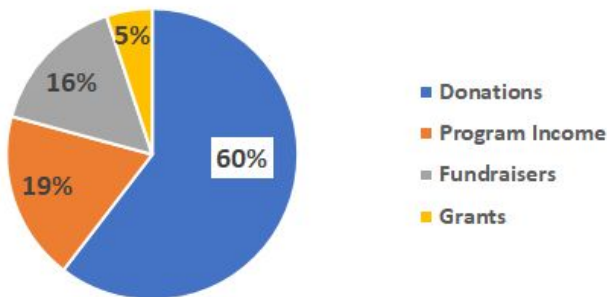


## SANTA ON THE FARM

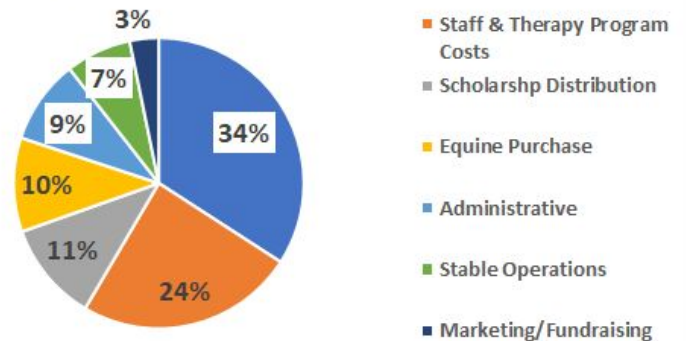
December 2nd, 2023 was the first year we were able to have Santa join us on the Farm for a family friendly photo opportunity. We were pleased to offer a calm Santa experience for all abilities, with photo opportunities with Santa, equines and even our goats! We are happy to report it was a success for all involved and we were able to raise \$570 to support our programs.

## Financials

2023 Income = \$61,120



2023 Expenses = \$47,764



*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!*

## Financial Donors

American Endowment Foundation	Jacqueline Kozak Thiel	McGinley Family Donor Advised Fund
Anonymous Donors	Joanne Matson	OtterCares Foundation
Catherine and David Pizzi	Kamron Atkinson	Penny Brown
Freedom Reign Foundation	Kathi McGinley	PEO Organization
Gina Janett	Kathleen Hunt-Speciner	Tessa Albrecht
Grant Dieterly	Lindsay Wilkinson	United Way
Irma Villagomez-Miranda	Lucinda Smith	William and Nicole Kiah
Isabelle Clement	Mallorie Barker	

## In-Kind and Online Auction Donors

2nd and Charles	Downtown Ace Hardware	Old Cherry Mill Farm
Artists from Trimble Court	Ellie's Little Farm	Old Firehouse Books
Betsy Thurmond Matz	Happy Lucky's Tea House	Pull It Off Embodiment Coaching
Board & Brush Creative Studio	Heather Lukman	Red Feather Guides and Outfitters
Catherine Giglio	Hee Haw Halfway House	Sarah Mays
Chippers Lane Entertainment	Heidi Golding	Stockton's Little Big Shires
Citizen Printing	Henna by Angela	Synergy Guiding Hands Massage
Clothes Pony & Dandelion Toys	HG Honey And Hives	Taylor Fontenot
Dairy Delite Malt Shop	JoAnn Hoveland	Tom Mills
Dandelion and Rust	Josh Thurmond	The Morning Fresh Dairy
Deerwood Ranch Wild Horse Ecosanctuary	Krazy Karl's Pizza	The Pig & Plow Farmstead Bakery
Diane Benson	Michael Killion	The River's Path Canoe Outfitters
		Woodhouse Spa

## Fall Festival Sponsors



## Program Volunteers

Allison Poff	Kathi McGinley
Cathy Prieto	Lucinda Smith
Alex Scott	Paula Hall
Amy Coen	Penny Brown
Jill Phipps	Rosemary Graff
Benjamin Ocasio	Trina Garlo
Christy Pickler	Sarah Wilson
	Jill Cordsen

## Board Members

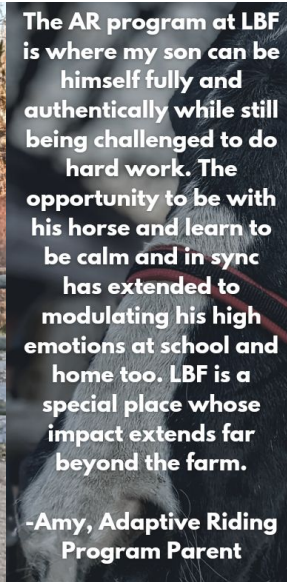
Rosemary Jedel Graff - President  
 Lindsey Gerdes - Vice President  
 April Ocasio - Secretary  
 Lucinda Smith - Treasurer  
 Penny Brown - Marketing and Outreach  
 Cathy Prieto - Safety Officer  
 Sarah McPherson - Fundraising Chair

# Testimonials



Quick ode to LBF and Rachel and Rosemary - It's easy to say you're inclusive it's a whole other thing to actually BE inclusive! Thank you for how you treat your people and your animals. You are making a huge difference in their lives! Anjali just wants to do it "by my own" as she used to say and you let her!! -Nicole K.

WWW.LAUGHINGBUCKFARM.COM



The AR program at LBF is where my son can be himself fully and authentically while still being challenged to do hard work. The opportunity to be with his horse and learn to be calm and in sync has extended to modulating his high emotions at school and home too. LBF is a special place whose impact extends far beyond the farm.

-Amy, Adaptive Riding Program Parent



Zoe has never been happier since she started adaptive riding lessons at Laughing Buck Farm. Not only has she learned a lot about horses and is becoming a very good rider, but she has matured and become very confident around all the horses and other animals at the farm. She has discovered a love that will last a lifetime. We LOVE Laughing Buck Farm!

-Starr, Adaptive Riding Program Parent



Laughing Buck has been such a magical place for Quentin and our family. The instructors, volunteers, participants and animals provide an incredible sense of belonging and connection. We are beyond grateful having this gem within our community. Thank you Laughing Buck - You always fill our hearts!

- Casey, Adaptive Riding Program Parent, Laughing Buck Farm

“2023 has been a fun and successful year for our Adaptive Riding Program at Friends of LBF. Our riders all grew in their confidence, riding skills, and social/emotional literacy. From a student who, at the start of the year, shook with fear at mounting, who now trots independently off lead; to a student whose behaviors have improved significantly from aggression and unkind words, to helpful and open kindness towards humans and their horse; we've seen amazing strides towards happier and healthier participants. One student started her canter work, and is moving towards complete independence. Another has learned to control her body and find balance in her two point on lead at the trot!”

~ Rachel Ann Karneffel, Adaptive Riding Program Manager

# Want to support our work?

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



In 2023, a total of \$22,623 was spent on hay alone for the Laughing Buck Farm animals, not including grain and supplements. *Can you help us feed our herd?*

In 2023 we distributed over \$10,000 in scholarship funds. *Can you help us assist more families?*

**\$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 2023**

Friends of Laughing Buck Farm

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