

## Impact & mission

**OUR STAFF** 

6

Certified PATH, Intl. instructors and staff

**OUR HERD** 

*13* 

**Equine partners** 

**OUR PARTICIPANTS** 

104

Participants of all ages and abilities

**OUR VOLUNTEERS** 

**60** 

**Volunteers** 

1,280

Hours of service

**OUR IMPACT** 

1,329

Hours of equineassisted services and instruction

**OUR HORSE CARE** 

2,305

Hours training and caring for our equine partners



HORSES ARE SENSITIVE intuitive creatures that can inspire us in profound ways, promoting health and healing and helping us stretch our personal boundaries.

Seven years ago, the Goguen family dedicated the use of their equine ranch to help

improve the physical, social and emotional well-being of people with disabilities.

Today, Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center operates as an independent non-profit offering specialized equine-assisted services that provide life-changing benefits while fostering growth in confidence and independence.

Our team of professional instructors, volunteers and horses work together to create an accepting and encouraging environment to help participants of all abilities reach their full potential.

Join us, and help others grow in ways they never thought possible.

\*All statistics compiled July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.







## **BOARD** CHAIR ==

**INSIDE Our Mission** A Letter from our Board Chair Who We Serve **Our Programs** By the Numbers 8 **Community Partnerships** 9 **Our Donors** 10 12 **Our Volunteers** Staff & Board Spotlight 14 A Letter from our Executive Director 16

#### Dear Friends,

If you've never seen the magic of using horses and horse movement to improve our health and well being. it is an incredible thing to behold. As board chair and committed volunteer, I have the honor of observing the human-equine partnership firsthand and seeing how this special collaboration positively impacts every part of our ecosystem: participants, families, instructors, volunteers and horses.

It is amazing to routinely witness 'breakthrough' moments in the presence of our equine partners. We hear nonverbal participants speak, just so they can tell a horse to "walk on." We watch individuals who were told they would always have to wear some kind of medical device overcome their limitation and gain freedom from the device. Our wheelchair-bound participants experience the motion of walking for the first time by sitting atop their horse and calmly strolling around the arena. Individuals who are challenged to keep their bodies still and calm stand quietly when their favorite horse approaches. Kids who struggle to recognize others' personal space respectfully "ask" a horse if they can engage—and also accept a polite decline of that invitation.

Our equine partners bring out the best in all of us: strength, empathy, confidence and love. They help us push past our physical, social and emotional limitations to achieve things we didn't think were possible. I hope you will join me in supporting the Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center team and helping us continue to expand our impact—on our participants, our families and our community.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith

**TBTRC Board Chair** 

Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center offers pediatric physical therapy and adaptive horsemanship lessons along with group ranch experiences and summer camps. We serve participants ages two through seniors with cognitive, physical, social and emotional needs. Through our equine-assisted services we adapt our environment to best facilitate our participants' growth in self-confidence and physical ability.

James, age 31, has been riding with us for over five years and has a special smile for everyone at the barn. He loves riding with his partner, Claire, and his favorite horses are Olive, Yogo and Whiskey. He can't get out of bed fast enough on his lesson days.

"Two Bear TRC has been a godsend for James and our family. When we moved here in 2019, James experienced a lot of anxiety and depression with the transition. Because he is mostly non-verbal, James was unable

Meet

to communicate his feelings with words but displayed many anxious behaviors. Covid made this even worse, but James was able to survive that time in part due to the care and dedication of the people and programs at Two Bear TRC.

Through his lessons over the last few years, James has regained many of his physical skills and rebuilt his confidence. The instructors have been awesome—working with us to reinforce the goals set by his speech therapist and primary care physician. At Two Bear TRC James has a place where he consistently experiences the security of a loving, caring team of instructors, horses and volunteers that enable him to overcome his fears and grow his horsemanship, communication and interpersonal skills. We are so grateful for this program and everyone involved in it at every level."

-Lisa & Dan, James' parents

# Who we serve



consistently experiences the security of a loving, caring team of instructors, horses and volunteers..."









Corinne is a seven-year old physical therapy client who loves to dance and explore. Her favorite horses are Yogo and Olive, and they share a special connection when she buries her head in their coats to inhale their warm, earthy smell.

"Corrine has a rare genetic condition that presents with motor, speech, behavior, sensory and intellectual challenges. Riding at Two Bear TRC has helped with all aspects of her condition—improving her balance, reducing her anxiety and dysregulation and even advancing her speech. We are deeply grateful for the kindness shown by the Two Bear TRC team and the gifts they have given our family."

-Erin, Corrine's mother



The Dahl family brings so much laughter and energy to the barn the minute they walk in the door. Poppy does physical therapy, and her siblings joined us for a nature and animal immersion at our summer camp. And Christi, the Dahl ringleader, gets a minute to sit by herself, take a deep breath and enjoy a cup of tea without anyone needing anything.

"Poppy's rides with Leslie and Sally are the highlight of her week. She comes for PT, but leaves with so much more! She is challenged to rise to the occasion and encouraged to do and be her very best. Her time at Two Bear TRC fills her cup and gives her something to look forward to and be successful at. Her siblings watch and are just as valued by the staff as Poppy is. We all leave Two Bear with full hearts."

-Christi Dahl, Poppy's mom

## Our programs



#### ADAPTIVE HORSEMANSHIP

Adaptive horsemanship teaches the art of horsemanship in ways that fit each person's unique abilities. We use specialized equipment and techniques, both in the saddle and on the ground, to facilitate empathy, self-regulation and communication skills while building a trusting partnership

"This young man turned his

into a beautiful partnership

understanding and respect."

-Jackie, instructor

with his horse rooted in mutal

need to build deep connections

with a horse.

"The breakthroughs we see in this work can be profound," said Jackie Ruffley, Two Bear TRC riding instructor. "I've watched one of our young participants who has experienced

significant trauma identify anxiety in his horse. This deep empathy allowed him to help the horse, and himself, develop regulation skills for times when they are feeling anxious or overwhelmed. This young man turned his need to build deep connections into a beautiful partnership with his horse rooted in mutual understanding and respect."

#### PEDIATRIC PHYSICAL THERAPY

Thanks to our on-site physical therapy space, our pediatric PT program utilizes a wide range of tools alongside the natural environment of the ranch to create unique opportunities and inspiration for children to work toward their goals. We utilize the dynamic platform

of equine movement to improve challenges with mobility, range of motion, balance, coordination and

strength.

"When you put a patient on a horse, the dynamic movement paired with the joy and connection adds such a powerful element to physical therapy," said Physical Therapist Leslie Hayden. "One of my patients has significant sensory issues, and

her desire to be with the horse helped her overcome her inability to wear the safety belt. She went from screaming and physical aggression that required two adults to place the belt around her to helping put the belt on and removing it willingly. This transferred directly to her tolerance of seat belts in her family's car—a huge win for her and her family!"

**ADAPTIVE HORSEMANSHIP** 

48
Participants
787
Hours of lessons

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Patients

82

Hours of sessions









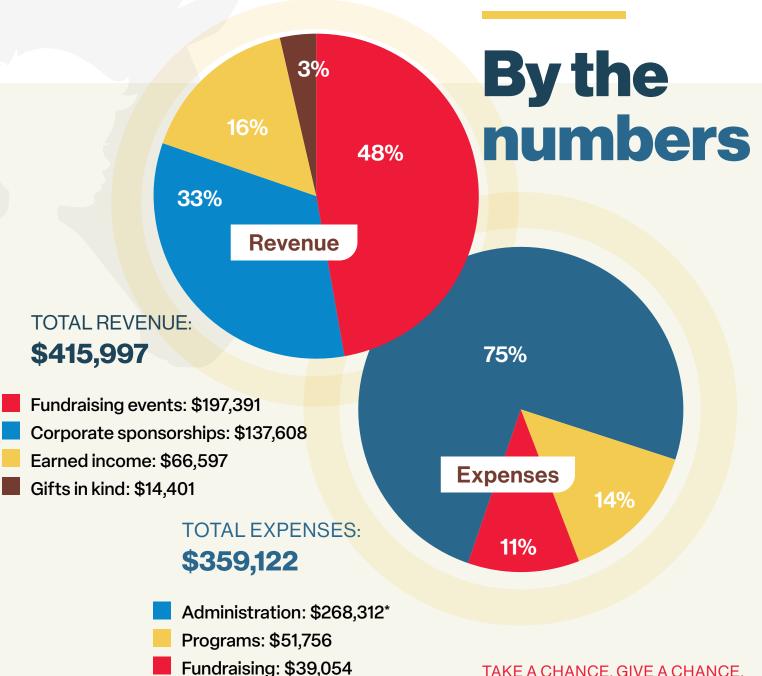
#### **RANCH EXPERIENCE &** SUMMER CAMPS

Our Ranch Experience program offers groups a taste of horsemanship and life on a ranch. These short sessions are perfect for school classes, assisted living facilities, senior centers or other groups simply looking to experience the therapeutic value of interactions with our equine partners.

Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center summer camps create a fun, interactive ranch immersion tailored to the age and ability of participants. Activities include learning about grooming, safe handling, horse anatomy and communication. We build obstacle courses, do scavenger hunts, make crafts and have sing-alongs.

"Our summer camps are a 'grey zone' program, meaning we include participants with and without special needs," said Anna Seagull, Two Bear TRC riding instructor. "In this environment, all participants gain perspective on how someone different than themselves navigates the world. The level of caring, empathy, and excitement they learn together has been unmatched in any other camp environment I've seen. Throw in the therapeutic value of the horse, and true magic happens."

> SUMMER CAMPS **Participants** Hours of lessons



## Want to give a gift?

\*Includes horse care and feeding,

staff salaries and operating costs

#### YOUR GIFT MATTERS.

Every dollar donated directly supports the programs and participants at Two Bear TRC. Visit our website to make an impact for our clients today!

#### TAKE A CHANCE, GIVE A CHANCE.

Two Bear Therapeutic Riding Center was founded by the Goguen family in 2017. The Goguens continue to generously fund our riding center's basic operating costs, including free use of Two Bear River Ranch facilities.

Today, Two Bear TRC operates as an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and relies on program revenue and outside donations to make service and activity improvements, purchase specialized equipment and provide program assistance to families in need.









# **Community**partnerships

It truly takes a village and we are so grateful for all of the foundations, schools and nonprofits that work with us to serve our community. We are better together!

"...improve the



"Two Bear TRC is all about collaboration; they are always willing to share information, ideas, successes and challenges to lift all boats and improve the opportunities we collectively provide to people with disabilities. We are so grateful to call them partners and friends."

-Julie Tickle, DREAM Adaptive Recreation executive director

#### **OUR PARTNERS**

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Big Sky Treatment
- Braveheart Chaplain Ministry
- CASA for Kids
- DREAM Adaptive Recreation
- Flathead Youth Home
- Glacier Connect
- Mission Mountain Empowerment
- Montana Center for Horsemanship
- Mountain State Boys Academy
- Nate Chute Foundation
- · The Skola
- Whitefish Community Foundation

# Thank you to our donors

We are so grateful to all of you who empower us to help others see what's possible. Together, we make all the difference.

#### Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

#### \$10,000+

Michael & Jamie Goguen Lynne Hiatt Colton Martini Keith Melanson NUWEST Revel Real Estate Cory Robertson Jeff & Susan Smith Smith S.H.A.R.E. Foundation Two Bear Services Group LLC

#### **\$5,000-\$9,999**Luis & Ali Alberton

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#### \$100-\$499

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"I support Two Bear TRC because I have worked with service and therapy dogs for many years and have experienced the benefits of the human-animal connection. After meeting Sally, Kat and Anna, I wanted to support their work of bringing the healing power of horses to as many people in the Flathead Valley as possible. I know from experience that people are willing to step outside their comfort zone when they are working in partnership with an animal. The Two Bear TRC staff and volunteers work really hard to provide that opportunity to folks that need it."

#### -Lynne Hiatt, Two Bear TRC supporter

Levi Lusko Janet Mavo Bonnie McKenzie Kate McLaughlin Garth McPhie Ellie Melanson Tom & Kate Mettler **Brian Miller** 

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#### **In-kind Contributions**

406 BBQ

Rocky Mountain Songwriter Festivals, Inc. Two Bear River Ranch **Unleashed Winery** Vista Linda Karen Young

\*We have made every effort to accurately reflect all financial contributions received by our organization in the 2023-24 fiscal year. If we have made an error, please accept our sincere apology and contact us so that we can correct it.

## Volunteer appreciation

Volunteers are an integral part of what we do here at the ranch. Whether working with our riders during a lesson, offering physical or emotional support or taking care of our fourlegged friends, there are countless ways in which your help is indispensable.

We love our volunteers...we couldn't do what we do without you!

Meet EMMA

























#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Horses are sensitive, intuitive creatures that can help us understand how empathy, kindness and forethought create strong bonds that are built on trust and respect. Our horses range from retired show horses, trail ride/pleasure horses, working ranch horses and more.









## Want to get involved?

#### **BECOME A VOLUNTEER**

No experience necessary! Join us for a 1-hour orientation to learn the various ways you can join the Two Bear TRC team...and make a difference in your community.

#### **BECOME A SPONSOR**

Want to make a gift with a specific goal in mind? Sponsor a rider, horse or even your own special day at the ranch! Annual sponsorships ar also available. Visit our website or contact us to learn more.

## Meet **SALLY**

Riding center founder, instructor extraordinaire and horse whisperer!



#### What attracted you to Two Bear TRC?

It has been so fun to steer this organization from the beginning and use the special gifts of horses to help calm us, connect us and strengthen us physically, mentally and emotionally. And I am very pleased that we have made the care and health of our horses a high priority.

#### What is special about this work?

What's truly unique about what we do is that it's therapeutic for all: our families, our horses, our volunteers, our staff, our board and anyone who comes to the ranch. I want that powerful concept to be carved in stone and adhered to...forever!

#### What's your favorite Two Bear TRC moment?

I watched a young boy whose family was going through a difficult divorce come in surly and shut down, not wanting to participate. He consented to just groom

his horse, Whiskey, and did so with slower and slower brush strokes on Whiskey's neck. Within a few minutes he had stopped brushing and was leaning his face into the horse's shoulder, and Whiskey was gently leaning into him. Then the boy's tears started to flow. He cried into Whiskey's shoulder for about ten minutes and the horse stood quietly, holding that space for him. I let them be. The boy's mom reported a major positive shift in his mental state after that transformative moment. And what's so magical about this work is that these moments happen almost every day.







## Therapeutic for all...

...means we customize the learning experience to fit each individual's needs and empower them to experience the art of horsemanship.





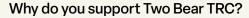


### Meet **JAYSON**

Founding board president,

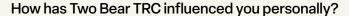
Yogo sponsor and

everyone's favorite guy!



I was initially drawn to this organization to support the beginnings of a special endeavor. We recruited a board to support Kat and Sally

in the incredible work they were doing, and it's grown exponentially from there. I learn from them, to dig in where I can and try to help make a bigger impact. Years later I am impressed by the talent and heart of the expanding board and staff.



I love the calm, centered nature of being at the ranch and spending time around the horses. I enjoy feeding, doing chores and participating in the routine of taking care of the animals so they can take care of the participants. I also enjoy doing the same for the staff—taking care of them and making sure they feel fully supported so they can do the important work with our families.

#### What is your favorite Two Bear TRC moment?

I love watching people cry when they really feel something. Something deep within finally comes to the surface and they cry because they feel the connection with the horse, with their kids, with each other or within themselves. We see

happy tears, sad tears and bittersweet tears, but all are real, vulnerable and with an open heart. I often wonder if horses can cry and feel that same deep connection?









1700 KM Ranch Road Whitefish, MT 59937 www.twobeartrc.org info@twobeartrc.org

#### **OUR STAFF**

Katherine Licence, Executive Director Sally Conrad, Certified PATH Intl. Riding Instructor

Anna Seagull, Certified PATH Intl. Riding Instructor

Jackie Ruffley, Certified PATH Intl. Riding Instructor

Leslie Hayden, Physical Therapist, AHCB Certified Therapist. PATH Intl. Registered Therapist

Erin Harapat, Office Administrator

Tyler Barnes, Two Bear Ranch Manager

Mitch Barnes, Assistant Two Bear Ranch Manager

#### **OUR BOARD MEMBERS**

Susan Smith, Vice Chair Steven Stahlberg, Treasurer Emily Rindal, Secretary Jayson Peters Kim Solem Jennifer Robertson Corey Robertson

Jess Ekman



# From our EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

When we began this journey in 2017, the vision for Two Bear

TRC was to create a space that cultivated creativity, authenticity and true appreciation for individuality. This has manifested itself into a community beyond what I imagined and continues to leave me in awe as the years continue.

Part of why I believe this program has grown so successfully is the slogan, "therapeutic for all" which has turned into our guiding principle for everything we do. We believe that to be truly and authentically therapeutic, each being (two and four legged) needs to benefit from the relationship. This means the horses, participants, volunteers, staff, families, donors, partners and board members all need to feel like they are being seen and appreciated for what they bring, and that no single individual is overlooked.

I have found that when our instructors show compassion and awareness to our horses and their wellbeing, our participants notice. There is a huge carryover into that individual's life and how they treat others. This affects the entire ecosystem and makes such a positive difference.

As we continue to expand and evolve our programs, we have been blessed with the ability to add administrative support and additional instructors to help us grow while maintaining a high level of care and professionalism. We could not do this without the support of the Goguen family and the generosity from our community.

This will be our fourth year of our annual fundraising event, Campfire for a Cause. On May 16, 2025, we will gather our community at our beautiful facility and share our successes of the past and our dreams for the future. Save the date and join us!

This therapeutic facility is so near and dear to my heart, it is impossible to say how thankful and humbled I am to see it grow and see the level of commitment and support from our volunteers and donors. From the bottom of my heart and from each of our families, horses and team members, thank you to all who help others grow in ways they never thought possible.

Sincerely,

Kat License

**Executive Director** 





