



**GIANT  
STEPS**  
Therapeutic  
Equestrian Center

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on this past year, we are filled with gratitude and pride for all that we've accomplished together in support of Giant Steps' mission. At the heart of everything we do is our unwavering belief that people of all abilities deserve access to joy, empowerment, and community. We know that the relationship between animals and people holds incredible potential to help all of us live our best lives, and we are committed to ensuring that more people can experience these transformative connections.

Our deepest thanks to the entire Board of Directors for their ongoing leadership and dedication. In particular, we are incredibly grateful to our outgoing Board Chair, Toni Forsberg, and past Treasurer, Dean McCauley, for their many years of service and steadfast commitment to Giant Steps' success.

This year, we made bold commitments to expand our services and programming. We are proud to have introduced new initiatives like our literacy program and summer camp. We also trialed exciting new experiences such as off-site horse shows and trail rides, which we look forward to offering to our entire community in the near future.

At Giant Steps, we measure our success in every goal and milestone achieved by our clients. Smiles, laughter, friendships, first steps, and first words are the currency of our success. These are fundamental experiences that every person deserves, and we are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to them through the transformative power of our programs.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to reaching more people and offering even more diverse programming. As we continue this journey, we are calling on our community to join us in our mission. Together, we can ensure that the rights of all people with disabilities are realized and that everyone has the opportunity to experience the joy and connection that Giant Steps makes possible.

Thank you for being an essential part of our community and for your ongoing support of Giant Steps.

With gratitude,

*Libby*  
Libby Porzig  
Executive Director

*Cindi*  
Cindi Pérez  
Board Chair



Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center was founded in 1998 by Robert Pope and Lee Justice; what started as a small endeavor serving 10 riders in a backyard in Petaluma has grown to serve over 120 participants per week, with a dedicated team of certified instructors and volunteers offering a range of therapeutic riding programs designed to enhance physical, emotional, and social well-being for individuals with disabilities.



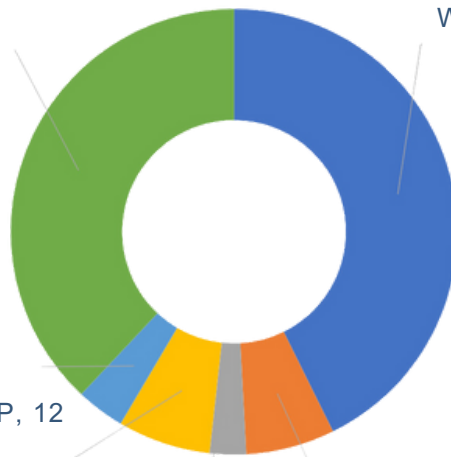
# OUR IMPACT 2024 AT A GLANCE

In 2024, we were proud to have created **276 days of programming** serving **329 people** made possible by **98 volunteers** giving over **4,800 hours of service!**

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED BY PROGRAM

SPECIAL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, 130

WEEKLY PARTICIPANTS, 146



SUMMER CAMP, 12

VOCATIONAL PROGRAM PARTNERS, 23

LITERACY PROGRAM, 9

MILITARY VETERANS, 22



“Since joining Giant Steps, I’ve experienced changes in myself and have seen changes in other attendees. Equine therapy has helped me rebuild trust, which is especially significant for someone like me who has faced trauma. Interacting with the horses has also improved my communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. This time spent at Giant Steps has made it easier for me to connect and engage with others, especially when I used to close myself off. I can’t express enough how much I believe this program benefits veterans like myself.” -Julian, Client

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES BUILDING DREAMS, CHANGING LIVES

In 2024, Giant Steps launched an ambitious two-year strategic plan, guided by the voices of those we serve. Our clients shared overwhelming feedback in a recent survey, expressing not only their joy in the benefits they experience with us but also their dreams for even more opportunities. 100% of clients who gave input indicated they would like to see new offerings at Giant Steps, including advanced therapeutic programming and new recreational experiences like trail rides and play days with other adaptive riding centers.

This client-driven feedback has inspired and motivated our team, shaping the foundation of our Board-approved 2024-2025 Strategic Plan. We are committed to making these dreams a reality, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to grow, explore, and achieve their goals.

## OUR 2024 PROGRESS

- 21% increase in the number of clients served
- New programs including a summer camp and a literacy program
- Successful piloting of offsite horse shows and trail rides, with the commitment that all clients will have access to these opportunities in 2025.
- Several enhancements to our sensory trail

And we are just getting started! Every stride we take brings us closer to a future where all of our clients' dreams become reality.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Our work doesn't stop here. With your support, we are committed to expanding our programs, building new partnerships, and continuing to develop innovative opportunities for those we serve.

Join us in this exciting journey as we make 2025 a year of transformation and growth! Together, we can continue turning dreams into reality and changing lives—one ride at a time.



“It’s a joy to be an instructor at Giant Steps. To teach and facilitate horsemanship to our fun, diverse, engaging participants is a great privilege. This year, I’m proud to be a part of the team launching our trail-riding initiative at Bouverie Preserve. I’m lucky to pull on my boots and come to work here.”  
-Sue, Instructor



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

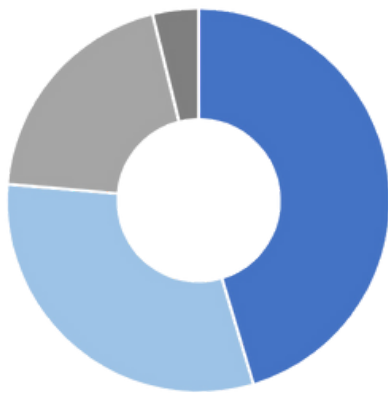
## YOUR GENEROSITY CHANGES LIVES

**\$1.3M annual operating expenses**

**66 cents of every dollar spent on program services**

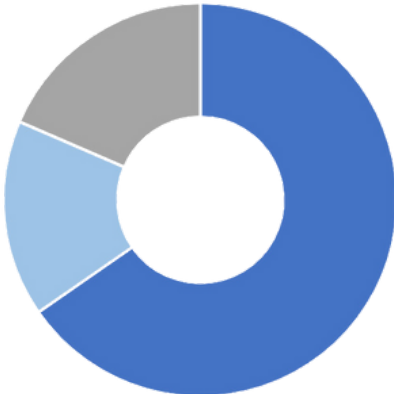
**Over 800 individual donors contributing \$1 to \$60k**

### Revenue



- GRANTS & DONATIONS: 45%
- EVENT INCOME: 31%
- PROGRAM FEES: 20%
- IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS: 4%

### Expenses



- PROGRAM EXPENSES: 66%
- FUNDRAISING: 16%
- MANAGEMENT & GENERAL: 18%



For a complete financial report, please contact Libby Porzig, Executive Director, [libby@giantstepsriding.org](mailto:libby@giantstepsriding.org) or 707.769.8900.

Summary of our fiscal year July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 | Tax ID 68-0404917



“Within the first 3-4 months of equine therapy, my husband and I noticed improvements in Maia’s balance, posture, confidence and overall mental health. Maia is now a regular client of Giant Steps sessions and loves to ride her horse, Buster. She often leads the class and is able to ride Buster even without holding the reins.” -Fatima, Client Parent



# EVERY DOLLAR DRIVES CHANGE YOUR SUPPORT POWERS OUR MISSION

We are grateful for our strong community of donors, volunteers, staff, clients, and partners who contribute to our success. In the past year, our work has been made possible by over 800 individual donors. Every gift played a vital role in helping us reach our goals—thank you! Scan the QR code to the right to see the full list of our contributors.



Below, we acknowledge those who contributed \$5,000 or more since July 2023:

**AHS Foundation**  
**The Albertsons Companies Foundation**  
**Alex and Jeanine Ryan**  
**Annunziata Sanguinetti Foundation**  
**Bruce and Sandy Smith**  
**Catherine Yewell**  
**Chelsea and Matt Cain**  
**Donna and Dean McCauley**  
**Dmarlou Foundation:**  
**in Memory of Dorothy and Martell J Kaliski**  
**Double R Family Foundation**  
**Elizabeth and Will Robbins**  
**Eric and Heather Friedlander**  
**Eva L. McKenzie Memorial Foundation**  
**Georgene Petri**  
**Goodwin Family Memorial Trust**  
**The Heimann Family**  
**Holli Kolkey**  
**Jones Lang LaSalle America Inc**  
**Julie and Tom Atwood**  
**Julie Young**  
**Karmen Johnson**  
**Lennox Foundation**

**Leslie Taylor**  
**Marc and Marjorie McMorris**  
**Marin Charitable**  
**Marin Subaru**  
**Mel and Lois Tukman Family Gift Fund**  
**Michaela and Bill Kalf**  
**National Philanthropic Trust**  
**Odell Fund, Robert Stewart & Helen Pfeiffer**  
**Pamela Hamel**  
**Patricia Rames**  
**Pérez and Bennett Family**  
**Pinnacle Equestrian LLC**  
**The Porzig Family**  
**Quest Foundation**  
**Robert Scott Fearon**  
**Rombauer Vineyards**  
**Saba Foundation**  
**Simone & Tench Cox**  
**Sonja Petri**  
**Sonoma Horse Park**  
**Susan Wayland**  
**Ted Rorer and Lauren Whitlock Rorer**  
**Terri Hamilton-Gahart**

**Todd and Christina Goodall**  
**Toni & Greg Forsberg**  
**Tully & Elise Friedman**  
**The Wadhvani Family**  
**The Waitte Foundation**  
**William H. Donner Foundation**  
**William and Theresa Moore**



“Giant Steps' commitment to inclusivity and excellence in therapeutic riding has made me a dedicated supporter in every way I can. Their skilled instructors and wonderful herd of horses create a nurturing environment where individuals can overcome challenges and achieve personal growth, making every donation and hour of volunteer time feel like an investment back into the community and human potential.” -Sarah, Donor

# OUR TEAM

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Cindi Pérez, Chair**

Chief Operating Officer; Stifel Investment Products & Services

**Debra Beresini, Treasurer**

Co-Owner; Black Dog Ranch  
CEO: Invencor; inc.

**Christina Henkel, Secretary**

M. A., Licensed Marriage, Family Therapist

**Julie Atwood**

Founder & Executive Director; HALTER Project

**Zé Figueirinhas**

Executive Managing Director, JLL

**Karmen Johnson**

CEO; Edible, Inc.

**Andrea Pfeiffer**

Owner; Chocolate Horse Farm

**Sarah Ryan**

Corporate Strategy & Sustainability;  
The Duckhorn Portfolio, Inc.

**Dina Smith**

Executive Coach & Owner;  
Cognitas Coaching & Consulting



## STAFF

**Libby Porzig, Executive Director**

**Julie Larson,<sup>1,2</sup> Program Director**

**Jana Heimann, Development & Communications Manager**

**Ashley Ziehm, Business Manager**

**Audrey Draper, Barn Manager**

**Beth Raetz,<sup>1</sup> Volunteer Coordinator**

**Sean Willer, Facilities Manager**

**Jen McWherter,<sup>1,2</sup> Head Instructor**

**Amy Barboro<sup>1,2</sup>**

**Tess Casey**

**Nicole DeVito<sup>1</sup>**

**Debbie Gardner<sup>1</sup>**

**Krissy Tukman**

**Holly Hansen<sup>1,2</sup>**

**Sue Rickard<sup>1,2</sup>**

**Sara Silberschatz**

“I have been part of the Giant Steps family for over a decade. While I am one of the PATH, Intl. certified instructors at the barn, it is the trust that I am part of a loving family of horses, staff, volunteers, participants and their families that is most meaningful to me. I experience this love while in the arena with riders and volunteers, on the ground with our equine herd, and also as a recipient of support over the years riding the tides of my own life.” -Nicole, Instructor



## CONSULTING PARTNERS

**Sam Durham**

**Toni Forsberg**

**Michaela Kalff**

**Dean McCauley**

**Mattingly Messina**

**Dr. Jill Thornton, DVM**

## HORSES

**Scarlet**

**Pepe**

**Buster**

**Tate**

**Belle**

**Liam**

**Tiki**

**Bomber**

**Cassi**

**Ellie**

**Nicker**

**Martin**

**Annabelle**

**Fruit Loop**

**Corkey**

**Huey**

**Pierre**

1.CTRI,: Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor; 2. ESMHL: Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning

# GET INVOLVED

Help us 'Redefine Possible' through one (or more!) of the many ways to get involved:

- **VOLUNTEER WITH US:** Join our passionate team of volunteers and make a meaningful difference in our community. Your time and dedication can transform lives and foster a sense of belonging for those we serve.
- **MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION:** At Giant Steps, our programs are dedicated to transforming lives and advocating for individuals with disabilities. With 80% of our funding coming from generous supporters like you, your contributions play a vital role in ensuring that we can provide essential services that empower our community and promote inclusivity.
- **BECOME A PATH INTL. CERTIFIED THERAPEUTIC RIDING INSTRUCTOR:** Elevate your career by becoming a PATH Intl. certified instructor with Giant Steps. You'll join a supportive community of dedicated professionals using the healing power of horses to foster growth, confidence, and connection.
- **DONATE OR SPONSOR A HORSE:** Giant Steps offers a happy and well-loved life for many horses with suitable temperament, training, and soundness. We also welcome horse sponsors to help cover the costs of board, feed, and medical treatment.
- **HELP US AMPLIFY OUR IMPACT:** Use your skills and network to enhance Giant Steps' visibility. By sharing our mission within your circles, you can help us reach individuals who may benefit from our services or want to get involved. Together, we can create a stronger community that champions the transformative power of our therapeutic programs.



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[WWW.GIANTSTEPSRIDING.ORG](http://WWW.GIANTSTEPSRIDING.ORG)  
[COMMUNITY@GIANTSTEPSRIDING.ORG](mailto:COMMUNITY@GIANTSTEPSRIDING.ORG)



"Volunteering at Giant Steps is the highlight of my week. Sharing the beauty of horses with our clients is an intense experience, but the incredible GS staff make it all possible. Our clients truly are the stars; I am continually inspired by the progress I see. I love being surrounded by people who are eager to learn and grow."  
-Kiren, Volunteer

