



Brave Hearts

2023

IMPACT IN EVERY DETAIL



MISSION

BraveHearts brings hope, joy, and unlimited possibilities through the healing power of the horse.

VISION

BraveHearts envisions being the premier model for connecting horses with people as a catalyst for wellness. Everyone will have the opportunity to discover healing horsemanship through the BraveHearts model.

ACCREDITATION

BraveHearts, a 501c3 non-profit organization, is a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH Intl.), Premier Accredited Center and a member of the American Hippotherapy Association, Inc.

BRAVEHEARTS' WEBSITE

braveheartsridding.org

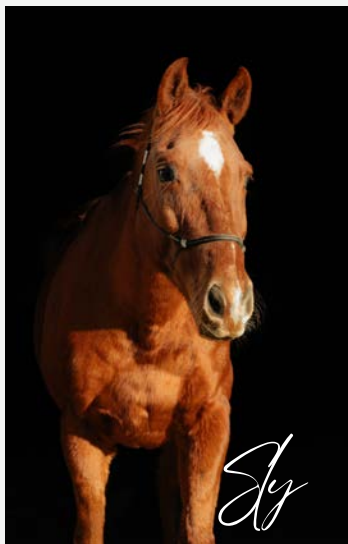


Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

Newest Additions

READY TO MAKE
THEIR IMPACT



In Memoriam



1998 - 2023



1993 - 2023



2002 - 2023



1992 - 2024



1998 - 2023

Board of *Directors*

CHAIR

Ken Boyd

VICE CHAIR

Kathy Allegretti

TREASURER

Cynthia Gonya

SECRETARY & FOUNDER

Marge Tautkus Gunnar

BOARD MEMBERS

Bob Brooks

Denise Drane

Chadd Hartwig

Laurie Johnson

Andy Pataky

ADVISORY BOARD

Meredith Birchfield

Patty Boyd

Karen Felix

Barry Gelbman

Shannon Hall

Jerry Kehe

Jeff Payne

Rev. C. Christian Pierce

Mitchell Reno

Mark Schuette

Barbra Schulte

Mike Smith

Karla Wagner

In 2023, BraveHearts' Board of Directors and Advisory Board members collectively gifted 4,128 volunteer hours of service to our mission sharing expert knowledge and varying skillsets to support the vast needs of our farms.



Dear Supporters,

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping BraveHearts complete one of the most successful years since our inception. Your continued support of BraveHearts is welcomed in so many ways. With your support, BraveHearts has been able to continue and expand the incredible, life-changing, equine-assisted services for our Veterans and their families, and all those who participate in our multitude of services.

In 2023, BraveHearts became internationally known by completing a Trail to Zero ride in Normandy, France. The ride was held in honor of the service members who fought for freedom in World War II, while continuing our Trail to Zero mission for suicide awareness and prevention.

These programs are only made possible because of the amazing dedication from our volunteers and by having the #1 herd of horses in the country - at BraveHearts we have the best of both.

Our year has also been one of the most successful years because of our incredible staff and Board of Directors. These individuals dedicated countless hours to our mission and the design and implementation of an updated strategic plan to make sure BraveHearts continues to thrive into the future.

Thank you for your continued support as we look forward to a successful 2024.



BraveHearts' Board Chair
Gold Star Father



Dear BraveHearts Community,

Our Annual Report, keenly titled “Impact in Every Detail,” is designed to express to you how our organization thrives, because of the great amount of attention we pay in thousands of small, but critical details every day. Just like this concept rings true when working with a horse, it also speaks volumes in a herd, an entire program, and multiple farms. Behind the mission, we know first hand, it is the little things which occur every day that create meaning and serious impact at BraveHearts.

There's a lot at stake being operationally intense, with a significant amount of activity occurring on any given day. Approximately 250 participants come through our farms, each week to work with our herd of 50 stellar horses. The details always matter. Keeping it all up is a lot to handle. Farms. Funding. Programs. People. The secret sauce of it all is always the horses. BraveHearts is its very own ecosystem. From how we teach a volunteer, to how we reach a Veteran, to even how we place a halter gently over a horse's nose. It is all of these little details which establish an impactful connection.

Our horses mean the world to us. Our community means everything. We carry a lot of responsibility on our shoulders to meet the needs of both. It's not always THE big details that matter but, rather, it is all the little details which make a big difference. Every hour, every day, ever person, every horse, every moment – all braided perfectly together to uphold our beautiful mission of connecting extraordinary people with extraordinary horses. Together we are able to impact the lives of others. Thank you for your impact with us in every detail.



PRESIDENT/COO

Numbers 6:24-26 





-3 year- *Strategic Plan*♥

In 2023, BraveHearts' Board of Directors spent numerous hours consulting with a leadership consultant, interviewing 70+ stakeholders, visiting with members of our team, and collaborating together in order to develop a thorough strategic plan for our farms.

Below are the main segments within BraveHearts' 3 Year Strategic Plan:

#1

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

BraveHearts will elevate to a highly effective governing board demonstrated by strategic governance, implementing best practices and board policy, generative leadership and significant increased annual give or get per board member.

#2

FUNDING

To develop a clear fundraising strategy with staffing and budget plan by end of 2024, resulting in abundant and diverse streams of revenue to propel BraveHearts' mission and programs.

#3

MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Implement effective management and staffing structure by rebalancing workloads by July, 2025.

#4

GROWTH

Develop a five-year campus master plan, demonstrating expanded facilities, programmatic and development scenarios, to maintain and further advance BraveHearts as the premier standard for equine-assisted services in the United States.

Our Farms in *Numbers*

1,596 UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS REACHED FROM **37** STATES

1,013 Veterans

271 Veteran Family Members

177 Therapeutic Riding Students

135 Outpatient Clinic Patients

Alabama
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Florida
Georgia
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Nebraska
Nevada
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Virginia
Washington
Wisconsin
Wyoming

14,908 HOURS OF SERVICE PROVIDED

9,715 Veteran Lessons & Therapy Sessions

1,754 Veteran Family Lessons

1,675 Therapeutic Riding Lessons

1,764 Outpatient Clinic Sessions

494 VOLUNTEERS GIFTED **25,356** HOURS OF SERVICE

240 Individuals (non-military)

170 Individuals with Groups/Clubs

84 Veterans

53 THERAPY EQUINES SUPPORTING PROGRAMMING

24 American Quarter Horses

9 Mustangs

4 Lipizzans

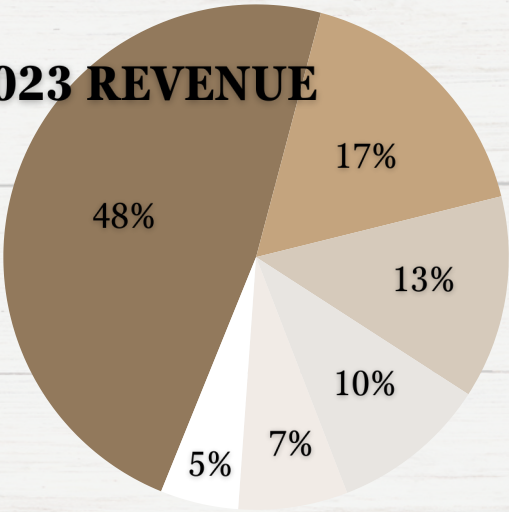
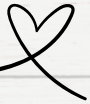
3 Haflinger

2 Miniature Donkeys

11 other various breeds (ie. Draft Cross, Pony, Clydesdale, Caspian, Morgan Cross, Welsh Cobb)

... and **5** barn cats.

2023 REVENUE



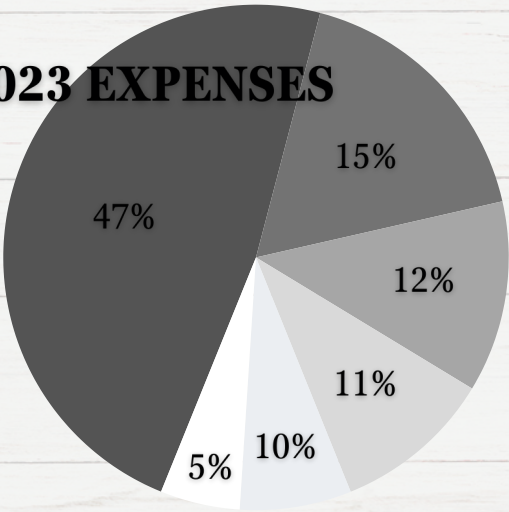
- GRANTS: \$1,338,940
- FUNDRAISERS: \$480,683
- SESSIONS: \$346,104
- DONATIONS: \$277,731
- IN-KIND: \$196,177
- OTHER: \$133,343

TOTAL REVENUE:
\$ 2,772,978

2023 EXPENSES

- PROGRAMS: \$1,295,008
- HORSE CARE: \$410,098
- FARM OPERATIONS: \$324,724
- ADMINISTRATIVE: \$293,236
- DEPRECIATION: \$282,811
- FUNDRAISING: \$137,544*

*67% of fundraising expenses is from in-kind donations to support fundraising efforts. Without such in-kind donations, BraveHearts would have directly incurred the \$90,195 in expenses.



TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
\$ 2,743,421

COST ANALYSIS

Calculated based on evaluating 2023 income and expenses in our departments with direct correlation to total hours provided. The cost for BraveHearts to offer services is significantly higher than what is charged to individuals, resulting in all services being subsidized in some capacity.

	Average cost to BraveHearts per one hour of service	Percentage of service costs subsidized
Veteran Programming	\$152	100%
The current industry standard value of an hour of services for a Veteran ranges from \$150-\$250. Based on an average rate of \$200, BraveHearts provided \$1,943,000 of no cost services to Veterans and \$350,800 to participating Veteran family members.		
Therapeutic Riding Lesson	\$154	73%
Outpatient Clinic Services	\$240	32%

The 2023 financial audit was in progress at the time of printing the 2023 Annual Report. All revenue and expenditures above are unaudited. Revenue in excess of expenditures includes pledges, some of which have not been received, that will be used to support forecasted programming in 2024.

Impact of a Volunteer



“

When I began volunteering at BraveHearts, my intention was to serve. I did not expect that volunteering would serve me. We all go through life's trials and tribulations and volunteering has helped ease the weight of mine. I quickly witnessed the power of the horse to human healing and connection. These majestic creatures offer great peace to all. I love to look into their kind, soft eyes; they offer wisdom. I love to feel their gentle breath, and I read once, 'it's a God thing'. BraveHearts has had an immeasurable impact on me personally and spiritually. It is evident BraveHearts horses have a higher calling, which permeates the entire organization and all those they serve. It is an extreme honor to be a part of the BraveHearts team, and I pray for continued blessings for BraveHearts' mission to be fulfilled.

-Nancy J.

BraveHearts' 2024 Volunteer of the Year

”



According to the Independent Sector Value of Volunteer Time, the national value of a volunteer hour of time is estimated to be \$33.49.
In 2023, BraveHearts' volunteers gifted 25,356 hours of service which is equivalent to \$849,172.44.

11

Training Levels

91

Volunteer Trainings
Taught at Various Levels

1,118

Hours Gifted by Service
Groups to our Farms

64

First Time Volunteers
Welcomed

160

Regular Volunteer
Assignments Covered
Every Week

VOLUNTEER DEMOGRAPHICS

Age:

- 11%: 18 & Under
- 11%: 19-30
- 30%: 31-50
- 24%: 51-64
- 24%: 65+

Proximity to Farm:

- 41%: 25 miles or less
- 36%: 50 miles or less
- 23%: 51+ miles

Military Affiliation:

- 17% Veterans

REASON FOR VOLUNTEERING:



“

BraveHearts is the mainstay of my mental health. This program has given me and my family more than I could ever have imagined. I find myself with great desire to step up and get more hours in. It is not possible for me to give back anywhere near what BraveHearts has given to me.

Cindi K.

Volunteer & U.S. Army Veteran

”



**SCAN
ME!**



*Scan QR with your smart
phone to view names &
photos of BraveHearts entire
team of therapy horses.*



Annual Care

51,450 lbs of Grain Fed

Purina Senior, Purina Strategy, Purina Outlast Gastric Support, Bran Mash (winter only), and Cracked Corn are fed to our herd. This is equivalent to 1,029 50lb. bags.

83,950 Flakes of Hay

BraveHearts utilizes both large and small bales and serves up approximately 230 flakes per day.

237,250 Hours of Turnout to Pastures

All horses have an individualized care plan, however extensive turnout is scheduled for every member of our herd. If a horse has more than 1 hour between working sessions, the horse is to be turned outside. We believe this is essential to our herd's well-being when not in sessions.

Herd Health Care Team

- Round the Clock Daily & Overnight Barn Staff
- Various Veterinarians
- Equine Nutritionist
- Farriers
- Equine Dentist
- Equine Masseuses
- Equine Chiropractors
- Master Saddle Fitter
- Hay Farmers
- PATH Intl. Master Level Instructor overseeing daily plan, exercise/conditioning & care schedules
- Exercise Riders

Cost of Care

compared to year end totals of 2022 vs. 2023

Grain & Supplements	Increased 24%
Veterinary Care	Increased 29%
Equine Masseuse/Chiropractor	Increased 29%
Horse Tack & Equipment	Increased 38%

\$ 12,721

Total Annual Farm & Herd Costs per Horse
6% increase from 2022 to 2023

Impact on Veterans

“—

Prior to starting my journey at BraveHearts, I was a lost soul. I was angry, filled with hate in my heart for all the things that I did and the things that happened to me while I served multiple combat deployments. I was a broken man, constantly and excessively drinking alcohol to make my memories disappear, seeking some sort of relief from the symptoms of PTSD and panic attacks. I had recently completed a surgery from an injury that I received while in Afghanistan. I had to have my neck fused together to take the pressure off of my spinal cord. I had nearly lost all the strength in my left arm and had constant pain that traveled through the upper left side of my body. I had, what felt like, hit rock bottom in my life. I didn't have the support from the military anymore, I had all but been abandoned from what family I thought I had. I began to have suicidal ideations. I truly believe had my brother not mentioned horse therapy to me, I could have been a statistic to Veteran suicide. I am truly grateful that I found BraveHearts at the start of 2023.

The first time that I came to BraveHearts, I wasn't really sure of what to expect. I was hesitant if it could really work. I had tried numerous different programs and forms of therapy, but nothing seemed to truly help. I was invited into a round pen with a horse named Moose. I was so amazed on how the horse responded to me. As I gained confidence in what I was doing, the horse began to gain that same confidence and trust in me as his leader. At that point, I began to feel less worried, less anxious, and my mind stopped racing. It was the first time in a long time that I felt like I accomplished something. I didn't feel like I was lost. The more I progress as a horseman, the longer these positive feelings last.

Being at BraveHearts with so many other Veterans who have the same symptoms that I do makes me feel more comfortable. Being around people that understand what I am going through and are there to help and support me, really makes me feel that it is all going to be ok. I have made so many new friendships, something that I once struggled with, but my fellow Veterans in the program have made it very easy and so natural.

I have been blessed with multiple opportunities to continue to build on my horsemanship through lessons and clinics hosted at BraveHearts. Each time that I go to the farm, I find a closer bond with the horses and that feeling of gentleness and calmness. Every time that I go to my lessons and clinics it helps me find my center again. I find that all of the things that I do with the horses, finding a calm, trust, and respect translates to my daily life. I had the best experience in my life when I was afforded the opportunity to ride with BraveHearts on the Trail to Zero ride in New York City. The meaning behind this ride to end Veteran suicide had really resonated with me and it has become my mission to reach as many Veterans who like me, struggle with mental health. I rode with a heavy heart for my fellow brothers and sisters who lost their battle. As I will forever carry those Veterans with me, I now strive to reach those searching for an answer knowing from my own experience that horses can save lives.

What BraveHearts has done for me, and other Veterans, has been nothing short of amazing. While I have been participating at BraveHearts I have been on a journey to finding my sobriety and easing my symptoms of PTSD and panic attacks - thankfully having found great success in that. I look at these magnificent creatures and all I can do is thank them for caring for me. There is nothing more compassionate and understanding than a good horse. I am truly blessed that I have BraveHearts and forever grateful that this program has given me life again.

—Andrew C.

U.S. Air Force Veteran

—”



“—

I am so impressed and in amazement as to how this organization has helped our Veterans and others that suffer from physical or mental disabilities. How it impacts their lives with confidence, trust and a better self-esteem and believing in oneself... it is beautiful. Thank you again for this opportunity and allowing me to see my son in this setting. It's a blessing he found you and has placed this gift of opportunity in his heart. It has saved him and has given him the strength to move forward in life. We as a family see this first-hand. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you BraveHearts and what you do for others. I look forward to more visits in the future.

—Barb C.

Mother of Andrew

—”



“...I now strive to reach those searching for an answer knowing from my own experience that horses can save lives.”

<Andrew pictured with Waylon.>

Impact of healing *Horseness*



<Adam pictured with Beau.>

“Becoming involved with BraveHearts made me realize that I had been just going through life with a big, horse shaped hole in my heart. Through participation at BraveHearts, that spot has begun to fill and create a positive impact in several areas of my life, with my personal mental health foremost among them.

I believe that sometimes the people (and creatures) we connect with most in life are those who mirror back parts of us, especially the pieces we want to see. You see Beau, he is big, he is strong, but gentle and friendly. On a deeper level, I have seen him push through uncertainties almost like he tries to cover up his little stumbles and startles. With him, I know he may never be the fastest or most sure footed in the herd, but he is consistent and steady. He is almost always to be found near the paddock gate, ready to answer the bell again and get back to work. His work ethic serves as a constant reminder, encouraging me to just keep picking myself up, to keep answering the call, - whatever that may be - and makes me love him even more.

Most recently, I had a visit with my VA therapist. I shared with him all that I was doing at BraveHearts at length. We realized I hadn't refilled my 'as needed' anxiety prescription that at one time I took daily and now I haven't taken in so long that it had actually expired. I also no longer need a medication for sleep. My therapist shared that in the seven years of being his patient, this was the best he has seen me doing and strongly encouraged me to stay involved. I'm so grateful for the BraveHearts team for having such an impact on my life.

-Adam K.

Veteran Participant and Volunteer Since 2023

”

Impact for Children of Veterans

“ BraveHearts is important to me, because I love going out to see the horses. I am always learning new things to make me a better rider. One time at the barn when I was walking past the arena, I saw Lucky laying down. I was told I could go sit by him. It was so peaceful that this big creature was letting me sit so close to him and he was so calm. Just recently I got asked to join the Young Lopers Club! I am the youngest in the group and it felt good to know that I have the riding ability to join. I look forward to every time we get to come out to the farms, because that means I get to help out and I'm able to spend time with my mom. I feel really good inside each time I help – even if I'm really tired when I'm done. Without BraveHearts, I'd be really sad, because I wouldn't be able to see all the horses and people. I am thankful for all of these things I have learned so far to make me a better horse person.

♥ Bennett

Daughter of a U.S. Army Veteran



<Bennett (right) pictured riding Waylon with her mom, Shorty (left), riding Pud.>

- At BraveHearts, Veterans are welcome to include one immediate family member to their lesson time, up to two times per week.
- 40% of Veteran family members participating are children and/or grandchildren who are under the age of eighteen.

“For our daughter, it has made her a more confident kid who has the tools to handle the changes of life. Being around the barn helps her confidence and mental health.” – Shorty



Why do horses *work for Veterans?*

Since working with horses, Veterans surveyed at the year end of 2023 stated the strongest positive change and/or reduction in the following areas:

100%



Better Mindfulness

94%



Explore Passion
Depression
Anxiety

91%



Better Physical Health
Positive Relationships
Building Trust
Overall Quality of Life
Post Traumatic Stress

87%



Desire to Isolate
Suicidal Thoughts/Ideologies
Trauma/Trigger Responses
Substance Misuse/Addictions

84%



More Happy / "Good" Days
Communication Skills
Confidence
Stress of Unknown

77%



Feeling of Purpose/Fulfillment
Better Sleep
Panic Attacks



Since 2017, BraveHearts rides 20 miles in cities across America to increase the awareness of the fact that 20 Veterans/active service members are lost EVERY DAY to suicide in the United States. We know horses help heal Veterans at programs like BraveHearts.



June 2, 2023 & June 3, 2023

Normandy, France

For the first time, BraveHearts' Trail to Zero mission traveled internationally to bring Veteran suicide prevention initiatives to a global level. The team successfully completed two, 20km rides alongside BraveHearts' President/COO, Meggan Hill-McQueeney, who has led every Trail to Zero ride to date.

Veteran Team Included:

- 6 U.S. Veterans
- 4 Veterans of the British Armed Forces
- 2 Members of the French Military



August 11, 2023

Bull Valley, IL

For the third year, BraveHearts has hosted a Trail to Zero conditioning ride. This is often the first opportunity for a Veteran to become involved in Trail to Zero. This ride is shorter in distance, but greater in number of riders, allowing for more Veterans of all horsemanship levels, physical capacities, and endurance abilities to get behind the mission in a safe and scenic environment.

Veteran Participation Included:

- 46 U.S. Veterans
- 21 BraveHearts Therapy Horses



September 16, 2023

Fort Wayne, IN

BraveHearts returned for a second time to complete 20-miles through Fort Wayne. This is the first city that BraveHearts has incorporated the mounted participation of a local program serving Veterans (Summit Equestrian Center). The ability to help not only spread the Trail to Zero mission, but to promote growth with another program is very impactful.

Veteran Team Included:

- 17 U.S. Veterans
- 17 BraveHearts & 9 Summit Equestrian Center Therapy Horses



September 30, 2023

New York City, NY

BraveHearts returned for a sixth time to complete 20-miles from Central Park to Ground Zero and other prominent areas. Over 60 horses and officers with the NYPD and 6 other mounted patrol units backed our mission on this day. Two days prior to our ride, BraveHearts team hosted an all day healing horsemanship clinic for the NYPD Mounted and surrounding area mounted units to aid them to help fellow first responders with equine-assisted services.

BraveHearts' Veteran Team Included:

- 8 U.S. Veterans
- 13 Therapy Horses

All because of a horse named *Hank*.

Over the last 25 years as a therapy horse, Hank has helped thousands of children, adults, and Veterans on every level throughout his endless hours of service as a therapy horse.

What makes Hank so unique is his versatility, being exceptional in every program. He has always been the horse you know you can rely on in every single situation. Whether it's a child who needs Hank to patiently wait for her to mount as she is lifted from her wheelchair and slowly placed on his back, or a Veteran who has never ridden without assistance and requires a horse that will instill confidence in him as he rides independently for the first time. There have been thousands of individuals who credit Hank for teaching them how to trust, for igniting their interest in horsemanship, for giving them confidence, and for giving them a passion for horses. He is the perfect citizen, with manners, soft eyes willing to accept anyone, happy ears wanting to help everyone he meets, and the ability to be both brave and kind in every situation.

Hank was the reason that Operation Mustang could happen. He was used to touch, halter, and pony our once wild horses. Hank was the reason a Special Olympic athlete made it to the World Games. Hank was the reason Trail to Zero could have even been imagined to happen. Hank bravely led 15 Trail to Zero rides since inception.

To this day, Hank remains the most honest, willing, confident, trustworthy, steadfast, and diverse companion we have ever partnered with at our center. Hank is a true professional who takes immense pride in his work. He is honorable in every sense of the word. From our founder's funeral service to stepping in to help our therapy horse, Dan, when he lost his 33-year old herd mate, to all of the 'firsts' he has taught people – first trots, first lope, first time over fences, first time on a cow, first gold medal, and being first on every Trail to Zero ride, Hank is one in a zillion.

As the years pass, his age has become more evident with his graying face, his slowing pace, and his increase in health concerns. We know time is fleeting, but we cherish each ride, each whinny, and each moment his kind eyes soften to meet ours. Hank continues to serve as his work ethic and heart for people never slows down.

BraveHearts' President/COO, Meggan, attributes her 2023 Induction into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame to her heart horse, Hank. He has been a gift from God. The next time you see Hank, please make sure you give our very own legend some love.

***Congratulations Hank for being named the very first
AQHA-PATH Intl. Equine-Assisted Services Horse of the Year.***



*"I am still here today, because of the life Hank breathes into me."
- Ben J.*

Hank

Impacting our Clients



“My daughter has been attending BraveHearts since 2017. She began with occupational therapy for a few years and then switched to physical therapy. In the six years that we began there, my daughter has grown and developed in her skills exponentially. She has improved her fine motor skills, hand strengthening, posture, trunk strength, range of motion, and the list goes on. I know that my daughter would not be able to independently walk as well as she does without the support of the BraveHearts' horses and therapeutic services. For years, she primarily rode Dry & Mykee, who are greatly missed. She is now spending time with Biscuit and Amigo. These four horses specifically, including many more in the herd, have been the most gentle, patient, and wonderful therapy horses for my daughter. I would recommend BraveHearts to anyone who is looking for therapy services for their child. It is such a wonderful facility with comprehensive services and a talented and wonderful therapy team and staff!

Mary B.

Parent of an Outpatient Physical Therapy Client

”



BraveHearts Clinical Offerings:

- Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy using hippotherapy (HPOT) as a treatment strategy
- Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP)

Top 3 Diagnoses of HPOT Clients

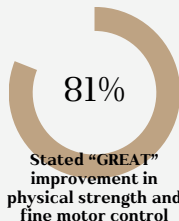
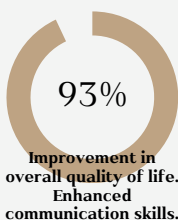
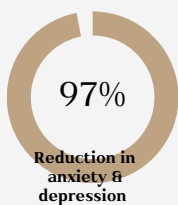
1. Autism Spectrum Disorder
2. Developmental Delay
3. Cerebral Palsy

Top 3 Diagnoses of EAP Clients

1. Anxiety
2. Depression
3. Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS)

Areas of Greatest Impact

Data compiled through 2023 year end survey conducted by BraveHearts. Percentages include if client has been diagnosed and/or relates with symptom surveyed and has seen a positive improvement.



“There is no greater joy than watching your challenged child feel happiness, confidence, strength, and peace. When you walk into BraveHearts, you walk into a world of acceptance, tranquility, and talent. With every session, you always come out a little better and **soon the small differences make big differences.** We are so thankful for the amazing therapists, friendly staff, and kind horses. I unequivocally recommend the opportunity for therapy at BraveHearts.

Laura E
HPOT Parent

“Participation in EAP has helped me to overcome my fear and anxiety with certain issues in my life. It has helped me to recognize my thought patterns that led me to feeling so broken on so many levels. It has helped me to learn how to set boundaries to keep myself healthy and safe. **The horses were the centerpiece of my healing process!** I don't believe I could have gotten anywhere near this healing experience with any traditional office based therapy. Thank you to all who make this EAP program possible!

Maureen M
EAP Client & Veteran

The Impact of Horses in Clinical Settings:

“Although a variety of animals can be used in the therapeutic process, horses offer unique traits that enhance the healing process. Horses offer a safe space for clients to explore hurts and painful experiences as they only will react to the client's behaviors and emotions with no bias or judgment of that experience. They are keen observers, are vigilant, and sensitive to movement and emotions. They often provide feedback to the client about their behaviors or emotions within a supportive relationship that allows the client to feel safe.

Dr. Jamie Janssen
Licensed Clinical Psychologist at BraveHearts

Impacting our *Students*

“

Our son Easton has ADHD, ASD, and developmental delays. Although he was meeting milestones at home and school, there seemed to be something missing. I had known of BraveHearts, so we decided to give it a try. From the moment he stepped into the barn, I could see a confidence I'd never seen in him before. When he rode Poptart for the first time, there was no fear. I hadn't seen Easton smile like that since he was a small child. The first few weeks it was as if I was seeing Easton with new eyes. He loved Poptart and couldn't wait until Mondays. His behavior at school and home changed from good to amazing. He was finally taking interest in outside activities. He was becoming a young man that enjoyed responsibilities, his family and friends and his BraveHearts time. He now wants to volunteer - he told me 'It's time we help them out now mom'. He has worked so hard with his instructors and Poptart. He has big goals! This mom and his dad can not thank BraveHearts enough.

Kristine H.

Parent of a Therapeutic Riding Student

”



“I hadn't seen Easton smile like that since he was a small child.”

<Easton H. pictured with Poptart.>

Your own impact story awaits.

Here is a brief outline on how to get involved:

Veteran Services

Contact veterans@braveheartsriding.org | 815.943.8226

Eligibility:

- Must have served in the U.S. military.
- All service eras and branches are welcome.
- All abilities & diagnoses welcome. A service related disability is not a requirement to participate.

Participation:

- May participate in up to two, 1-hour sessions per week. All services are provided at no cost.
- Year-round schedule structured into four quarters at both farms. Work directly with BraveHearts' Veteran Services Coordinator to schedule an available day/time to attend weekly.
- An accompanying, immediate family member may participate alongside Veteran.
- All must have annual forms completed and medical authorization for mounted activity.

Therapeutic Riding

Contact services@braveheartsriding.org | 815.765.2113

Eligibility:

- Must be 4 years of age or over.
- Must have a diagnosed disability .

Participation:

- Year-round schedule structured into four quarters. Work directly with BraveHearts' Equine-Assisted Services Manager to schedule an available day/time to attend.
 - Lessons scheduled as 30 or 60-minute group or private lessons. Cost varies based on selection.
- All must have annual forms completed and medical authorization for mounted activity.

Outpatient Clinic Services

Contact services@braveheartsriding.org | 815.765.2113

Eligibility:

- Must be 4 years of age or over for on-horse therapies. Children 3 years & over may be seen in clinic.
- Must have a diagnosis in need of speech, occupational, physical or mental health treatment.
- Must have a script for speech, occupational or physical therapy [not needed for mental health].

Participation:

- Year-round schedule structured into four quarters. Work directly with BraveHearts' Equine-Assisted Services Manager to schedule therapy with an available provider.
 - Therapy scheduled for 60-minute private sessions with provider. Cost varies based on therapy. BraveHearts does accept select insurances.
- All must have annual forms completed and medical authorization for mounted activity.

Volunteer

Contact volunteer@braveheartsriding.org | 815.765.2113

Eligibility:

- Must be 14 years of age or over to volunteer independently.
- All volunteers over 18 years of age must have a current background check on file.

Participation:

- All volunteers must begin participation by attending a New Volunteer Orientation that is held monthly. From this initial training, volunteers may expand into different areas of service following our expansive flowchart.
- No prior horse experience is necessary!

Additional guidelines and rules in regards to participation are available for your review. Please contact the area of interest for more information.

MEDIA REACH

HIGHLIGHTING A WORLDWIDE IMPACT



Truly a simple way to give back to our farms is by being active on BraveHearts' social media pages - Facebook and Instagram. Like, share, and comment on favorite posts to increase engagement in the social community.

225.6K

Reach

An unduplicated count of individuals who have seen page/posts

64.5K

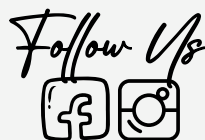
Content Interactions

Number of reactions, comments, shares, saves

13.9K

Followers (Audience)

An unduplicated count of individuals who follow and actively engage in content on page. Followers span nationwide and data includes 10+ countries.



@BRAVEHEARTSRIDING

IMPRESSIONS
BY U.S. RIDES:

13,207,625

Fort Wayne, IN

33,092,466

Bull Valley, IL

80,367,636

New York City, NY



Data comprised by audience listings provided by news outlets for the release of print, online, live, and pre-filmed segments.

- Many people nationwide connect with BraveHearts following a newscast or reading an article on Trail to Zero. BraveHearts has developed an internal database that allows our team to quickly connect a Veteran/Veteran Family member to another PATH Intl. Center if they are not local to BraveHearts. Last year, BraveHearts directly connected over 20 Veterans to a program to seek healing horsemanship.
- Two video reels posted on both Facebook and Instagram have had a combined 28,000+ views & over 30 hours of plays. These posts were also shared by numerous individuals and highly followed pages such as the NYPD and the EQUUS Foundation enhancing viewership.



Harvard

20
ACRES

23
STALLS

12
RUN-IN
SHEDS

8

GRASS
PASTURES

7

FACILITY
STRUCTURES
[SEE BELOW]

13

PADDOCKS

Flagship Farm located at 7319 Maxon Road, Harvard, IL 60033

- Main Barn: Heated Indoor Riding Arena, Administrative Offices & Stalls
- Covered Round Pen
- Hay Barn
- (2) Retreat Homes
- Foglia Family Foundation Conference Center
- Dr. Rolf M. Gunnar Memorial Chapel
- Large Outdoor Riding Arena with Lighting

The major facility projects included a new roof on our large retreat house. Additionally, new stone patios were installed at the large retreat house and behind the Foglia Family Foundation Conference Center.



Poplar Grove

20
ACRES

40
STALLS

5

GRASS
PASTURES

3

PADDOCKS

1

EXPANSIVE
FACILITY
[SEE BELOW]

**Located 11 miles west of our Harvard Farm
4950 IL-173, Poplar Grove, IL 61065**

- (2) Large, Heated Indoor Arenas
- Spacious Viewing Area
- Specially Equipped Outpatient Clinic
- Conference Rooms

In 2023, numerous renovation projects were completed in the front portion of our Poplar Grove facility. Upgrades included improved ventilation, new vinyl plank flooring, paint, carpet in our conference room, bathroom and office renovations. Routine updates such as this renovation project is important for continued appearance and longevity of our programming areas.

Sponsorship Opportunities

KEY WAYS YOU CAN
MAKE AN IMPACT.

HORSE FUND

- Support for Incoming Therapy Horses
- Be a Herd Hero Sponsor

SUPPORT OUR VETERANS

- BraveHearts subsidizes 100% of services for Veterans and accompanying family members. Your support allows Veterans and their family members continued accessibility at no cost.

SCHOLARSHIP/HARDSHIP FUND

- Your gift directly supports the ability for students and clients in financial hardship to continue receiving therapeutic services

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Aid in covering the numerous farm repairs, maintenance, and upgrades necessary for our year-round functioning farms.

OTHER

- Setup a monthly, recurring donation
- See our wishlists for immediate needs
- Remember BraveHearts in your estate planning

DONATE 



BraveHearts

7319 Maxon Road, Harvard, IL 60033
815.943.8226

4950 IL-173, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
815.765.2113

