HALLECK CREEK RANCH

*Breaking Barriers Since 1977*

# *Giving Thanks this Season*

## A Message from Molly Scannell, Executive Director

Summer has turned to Fall and we're seeing our four-legged friends get furry and leaves fall from the trees as we reflect on the past year. Last winter, despite the unusual cold and rainy weather, we witnessed the resilience of our remarkable participants, who showed up with joy and determination to mount their horses and hit the trails. **Each day, we are touched by the courage, trust and unwavering perseverance** shown by the people that we are privileged to serve, as well as the **dedication, encouragement and optimism embodied by our staff and volunteers.** Words will never capture our gratitude to each of you for all that you do.

Six months after a momentous and totally unexpected call from Maja Kristin, RockRose Ranch came under our ownership, brimming with the promise of extending our programming to new and additional participants. We are currently working with a team of Stanford MBA's who are providing pro-bono consultation to help us define a multi-year strategic plan and rollout of programming at RockRose Ranch, while also starting on the immediate modifications we need to allow access to all of our community with dignity and safety. **Thanks to the generosity of our donors at the Annual Buckles and Bling fundraiser**, we have raised the funds to start the planning and permit process for ADA

bathroom conversions and ramps to the house and arena. We are committed to breaking down any barriers that would hinder our community members accessing the house and our programs **equally with safety and with dignity**. Others have pledged their time and expertise to help with electrical and plumbing work once permits are in place. Please keep watching our newsletters for updates, and feel free to reach out directly if you have expertise and time to support these efforts.

As I look into the future, and with your continued support, I envision a thriving and diverse community gathered in our new community center, finding the connection, friendship and support we all yearn for. This vision encompasses partnerships with other local organizations serving the same and similar communities, and expanded programming of our own, while always extending a hand up to those in need of it. In the spirit of our co-founders Joyce and Duane, we intend to continue to break barriers for decades to come.

As we head into the holiday season, we at HCR want to thank you for your support and wish you all the very best. Whether you ride with us, volunteer your time, or donate to our cause, we are all Halleck Creek Ranch.

In gratitude,
Molly Scannell, Executive Director

# *2023 Buckles and Bling Photos*
## Slideshow Now Available!

One final thank you to the community that supports us: To all of our in-kind and auction donors, the generous people who donated at the event, those who support our mission through monthly donations, and to those of you who donate their time by volunteering here.

**In case you missed it!**

- **Rider-parent Kelly DeDominic's speech is well worth watching!** Watch (and share) Kelly's reflections on being a parent to HCR rider Lucas, and what being a part of our community has meant for her family.

- **Check out our annual fundraising video here.**

A big thank you to **Kiera Condrey** for being our photographer at the event. We're not sure how she did it, but she even managed to snap a shot of our crew while they were busy working the event.

**Watch the full slideshow of photos from the event by clicking here.**

# *Important Upcoming Dates*

## Please note these on your calendar

**Remainder of 2023**
November 11: Veterans Day (no lessons)
November 19-25: Thanksgiving Break (no lessons)
November 28: Giving Tuesday!
December 9: HCR Holiday Potluck @ RRR, 3:30-6:30pm
December 17 through January 1: Holiday Break (no lessons)

**2024 Highlights**
January 2: Session 1 begins
April 20: HCR Open House
May 18: HCR Horse Show
June 25 through July 20: Summer Horsemanship Camps
September 20, 2024: Buckles & Bling Dinner and Auction!

# *Staff Spotlight*

## Robyn Moyer:
## Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor

Fortunate to grow up with horses and benefit from their strong, loving and generous spirit,

**Robyn Moyer** was involved with Marin County 4H, enjoyed Western Pleasure shows, and rode her horse Lily in the hills of Novato as a youngster. Since joining the HCR team, Robyn has had the opportunity to share these experiences with so many others. Robyn joined HCR as a volunteer in early 2015, and rose to the occasion when invited to become an instructor, becoming a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor through The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International (PATH, Intl.) in 2017. Upon reflection of her time at HCR, she says that she cannot imagine doing anything else, anywhere else.

Several HCR students have been riding with Robyn for many years, and they praise her for her patience, kindness and ready sense of humor. One of her young riders is Lucas D., whose story is told by his mom Kelly, above. While safety is always paramount to her, she seeks out many creative ways to keep students engaged, from games in the arena to seasonal changes and holiday decorations along the sensory trails.

***Thank you, Robyn, for your years of dedication to our mission and the people we serve!***

# *Volunteer Spotlight*

## Youth Volunteer of the Year Nominee

We are thrilled to announce that we have nominated **Parker Piombo** as Youth Volunteer of the Year for the Heart of Marin Awards, to be announced January 11, 2024. We have many, many terrific volunteers and fortunately there are a few categories in which we can nominate special individuals. This year, we felt Parker was the perfect candidate for the Youth Volunteer of the Year award. An excerpt of the nomination follows:

Parker is a Senior at George Washington University Online High School, and has been a Halleck Creek Ranch volunteer since July 2023. He is considering majors in Accounting, which he has some experience with, and/or Political Science or some combination of the two, but he also really enjoys mechanical engineering and tinkering. Since joining our team, he has volunteered approximately 80 hours of his time while also being a full-time student. Parker applied to volunteer knowing his experience working with his family horses would come in handy, and he quickly established himself as a great and reliable resource across our lesson programs. He is compassionate, patient, and dedicated to all of the participants he assists. Parker volunteers consistently on Friday afternoons, and thus is typically paired with the same riders each week as this helps to establish a bond of trust for the rider. The instructors value him for his listening skills, his gentle yet enthusiastic help with the students, and calm, confident demeanor around the horses.

In his new role as a Horse Leader, Parker brings those same qualities: His naturally gentle and trustworthy approach to handling the horses allows them to feel safe and confident in their roles as therapy horses. Whether it is grooming, tacking, or leading, he is mindful of the horses' comfort and happiness. During lessons, the role of the Horse Leader is to concentrate on the horse to make sure the horse is focused, feels comfortable, and is safe. From Parker: *"I enjoy being able to create and see incredible experiences for others by enabling them to feel the joy of riding a horse. Seeing others find so much joy when riding rekindles my fondness for horses and the ranch."*

The amazing thing about Parker is the level of compassion and commitment he brings with him every time he comes to HCR. Despite his youth, he carries a level of maturity and humility that is rarely seen among other teenagers. In his encouragement of the riders, he fully embodies the person-first focus on what our participants *CAN do* here at Halleck Creek Ranch.

Next time you see Parker, please congratulate him, and wish him good luck in his college applications as well.

We will feature more of our nominees in the December newsletter. Winners will be announced on January 11, 2024. We consider all of our volunteers winners, no matter the outcome!

# *HCR Holiday Poluck Party*

## December 9, 3:30-6:30pm

Mark your calendars for Saturday, December 9th! We are planning a Holiday Potluck Party for ALL of our community, and we hope that you, your family, and friends alike will attend. Santa will be in attendance, and there will be food, fun, and holiday cheer for all to enjoy.

We had a great time at the Halloween Party (a big thank you to Alex and Sherri for helping make it a success), and we hope to keep offering events like these to build community and connections for all who attend.

**Want to help?** We are looking for a few items for the party, and for some help onsite the day of the party. Specifically:

**Items we need for RockRose** *(gently used or on loan is great!)*

- Cookie cutters
- Baking sheets
- Christmas Tree or two (reusable?)
- Menorah
- Christmas Tree decorations

We also hope to create a space for students, staff, and volunteers alike to have fun and socialize together, and are on the hunt for items such as a Foosball table and beanbag chairs.

***Volunteer opportunities***
Are you interested in helping prior to or at the event? We need your help!

- Decorate the week and/or weekend prior (Sat 12/2 or Tues 12/5 - Fri 12/8)
- Help with baking before the event (~2:00pm on Sat 12/9)
- Help at the event: food setup, games, greeter & traffic control)
- Clean up at the end of the event (6:30-7pm)
- Horse leaders to lead horses in Holiday Horse Parade

**Contact Volunteer Coordinator Kayla Andersen at kandersen@halleckcreekranch.org to get involved!**

# *Herd Update*
## Lacey in Training

Currently in her trial period here at HCR, our newest addition, Lacey, is being tested for a future in therapeutic riding. She is undergoing extensive training, testing, and evaluation with our staff, and if deemed a good fit, some of our students will then be allowed to begin working with her in a controlled environment.

A 16 year-old Arabian/Quarter Horse cross, Lacey was previously used as trail horse, and proved to always be a steady mount. She has been successful in Western shows and gymkhanas, winning blue ribbons in both, and she adores children and adults alike, preferring to spend the day together with her humans.

If she passes her trial period and becomes a member of the HCR herd, this beautiful mare will become available for sponsorship, which helps defray some of the costs of caring for her.

***Interested in learning more about horse sponsorship?*** We do have several other members of our herd who are in need of support, including Finn, Brighton, and Frank. For just $125/month you can help support one of our gentle giants, while ensuring they receive the best care, feed, and stabling possible!

# *Media Coverage*
## Jennifer Bowman Real Estate Group

Staunch supporters of Halleck Creek Ranch, Jennifer Bowman Realty Group recently produced a brief video about living in Marin, in which volunteer opportunities at Halleck Creek Ranch were highlighted. Thank you to Jennifer and her team (shown below at Buckles and Bling) for helping us spread the word about our mission!

Watch the segment by clicking here (*coverage of HCR starts at ~14:00).*

# *November 28: Giving Tuesday*
## Holiday Giving Opportunities

Since its founding in 2012, the Tuesday following Thanksgiving has been deemed **GivingTuesday** - a day of global generosity and shared humanity. GivingTuesday promotes the concept of generosity as an expression of mutuality, solidarity, and reciprocity, and has helped thousands of nonprofits throughout 90 countries raise billions of dollars to serve hundreds of local communities just like ours.

This year, GivingTuesday will be on November 28, and we will be sharing stories of impact,

ideas of how to get involved, and links to the various ways you can support our mission to bring people with disabilities into nature through the four strong legs of a horse.

We've recently updated our **Amazon Wish List**, and will be launching our year-end fundraising campaign in the coming weeks with the goal of raising $75,000 to support our mission. We are also accepting gently used or new household items as we begin to furnish RockRose Ranch. If you have an item you're considering donating, please reach out to Sandy with more information and to coordinate your donation.

# *Year End Appeal*

## Please include us in your year end planning

In the next weeks, we will be launching our year end appeal in support of programs at Halleck Creek Ranch.

**Thanks to your generous support over the years,** we have been able to maintain our low tuition despite dramatically rising costs for feed, veterinarians, farriers, insurance, and other running cost. All of the lessons are subsidized and additional sponsorships are available so that no one is ever turned away due to inability to pay. As we look into the future, our goal is to continue to do so as part of our **Breaking Barriers mission,** ensuring that people with disabilities are able to enjoy all of the benefits of our programs without the additional worries in their lives about costs. ***Your gift supports this freedom for at least one hour a week.***

There are many ways to support us, from a one-time cash donation to donor directed funds, stock gifts and legacy planning. And we always appreciate the gift of your time as a volunteer! Without all of us working together, this would never happen.
To learn more please visit https://halleckcreekranch.org/donate/donate-now/