

# ANNUAL REPORT

## April 2024- March 2025



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our various links*

(including website, Facebook, etc.)



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# CO-FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of Centaur Stride,

As co-founder and president of Centaur Stride for 32 years, I am excited to announce many new changes and additions to our staff and programs.

We have focused on both infrastructure and sustainability. Our board actively governs and fundraises, and Holly Reslink (Doctor of Physical Therapy) has now joined as my successor. Holly has addressed many critical needs already, including overseeing horse care (training and assessing), training staff and volunteers, and working with the Board to review funding and goals. This year, three new horses were added to the team along with three part-time support staff to expand operational hours as needed.

Our mission is based on the principles that horses and nature can improve overall mind and body well-being. We use trained horses in therapeutic and recreational programs that include people with and without disabilities, aiming to provide a welcoming, safe, friendly, structured, and engaging environment for everyone. Mental health challenges are increasingly prevalent in society. Horses have historically served as teachers, companions, and therapists. Emphasizing nature and the outdoors can foster natural cause-and-effect relationships, creative thinking, and problem-solving in practical environments. The therapeutic benefits of interacting with horses are widely recognized. "There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of man." (Winston Churchill)

Our organization depends on the dedication of our exceptional volunteers and the support of the community to effect meaningful change. With your ongoing assistance, the capacity to extend our help to even more individuals is attainable.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

**Claudia Monroe**  
Co-founder & President of the Board





# ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Claudia Monroe, founder of Centaur Stride, was determined to take action to find a way to help her husband have a purposeful life after he suffered a debilitating injury and was unable to return to work. She went to school to become a Physical Therapist. While attending a five-day seminar called “Hippotherapy and the Multiple Sclerosis patient,” Claudia saw the miraculous progress in people with MS who volunteered to be the subjects at this seminar. This led to a plan for starting a therapeutic riding center.

At that time, working in the schools, Claudia said, “If horses could make so much difference in just four one-hour consecutive day treatments, in people who have been suffering so long with pain and debilitation from their disease, and make such a restorative change, what would it do for the children with cerebral palsy who never learned to walk?”

With a grassroots team of friends, family, a lawyer and a lot of seminars, Centaur Stride became an established 501 (C) 3 not-for-profit therapeutic and recreational horseback riding facility and opened in 1993. Programs were designed to provide access to the benefits of horseback riding to a broad spectrum of individuals with disabilities to improve many facets of the lives of riders and their families. Inclusion and integration are a huge piece to improving quality of life, and programs evolved that had amazing benefits to everyone working with the horses, those with and without disabilities, creating awareness of the basic human needs of friendship, understanding and inclusion for all.

Centaur Stride continues to modify and add programs to meet the increasing needs of the community. Aimed at keeping fees affordable, we currently rely on donations, fundraising events and volunteers. Grants usually do not cover operating expenses, the greatest part of our budget. Therapy horses require continuous conditioning, training and care for all the variations and adaptations needed to promote the safety of our riders.

Some participants in our programs make significant improvements in their physical abilities, and everyone, whether their challenges are physical, mental, emotional, or a combination of all of the above, benefit from the horse and human connection. Today, more than 100 individuals benefit annually. Please consider supporting our efforts.



# PROGRAMS OFFERED

## 1. HORSEMANSHIP LESSONS: (\$35/lesson)

Description: Participants learn varying levels of horsemanship skills both on ground and/or riding on our horses. This is a 1 hr. session, via an integrated group lesson style, that includes horse prep, saddling, riding and dismount time.

Note: participants with disabilities require physician release and require an evaluation prior to start of lesson. This evaluation assessment is part of the first lesson fee to determine plan for any special needs.

## 2. FIELD TRIPS: (\$350- fee covers up to 10 students. Each additional student is \$35/student)

Description: Centaur Stride is listed under 2 different B.O.C.E.S. Co-Ser reimbursements programs:

Visiting experts: students engage with horses, while rotating stations, in order to learn how to care for horses, as well as how to communicate with them on the ground or while riding them.

Arts and education: This involves creative arts at the barn and introduction to our facility, horses, and what we do as a nonprofit therapeutic riding facility. Interactions with the horses may be groundwork or mounted.

## 3. AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM (\$40/person/lesson for groups of 8-15 students. 6-week min.)

Description: This program can be a School Club or enrichment program. The school transports students and provides a responsible adult chaperone/liaison attending with the students. Students engage in a progressive curriculum learning about horses and how interacting with horses benefits people across all domains including physical, social, cognitive and emotional aspects, via either classroom activities, ground horsemanship and/or progressive riding lessons.

## 4. MEET & GREET OUR HORSES (\$25/person)

Description: meet our horses, learn to groom them and introduction to horse communication/body language. (The client remains on the ground for this session; there is no riding) Group size up to 4 people.

## 5. GROUP EVENTS:

We can customize our lessons to create programs to meet the needs and interests of the group:  
Examples: Badge work for Boy Scouts. Girl Scouts; Birthday Parties, Home school groups, Veteran's, Youth groups, etc.

Groups rotate stations for mounted and non-mounted horsemanship as the number of riders is limited to no more than 6 at a time. Prices vary per group size and time element.

Note: Children under 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian while at our center.

**\*\*Centaur Stride plans to partner with other organizations to expand services in FY25\*\***



# KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2,195 Volunteer Hours	54 New Riders
3 New Part Time Employees	1,076 Lessons
\$8,100 Grant Funding	104 Total Riders
3,365 Facebook Followers	3 New Horses

This year was busy, and we made significant progress!

**Grant Funding:** Centaur Stride received \$8,100 in various grants for essential equipment and technological support. Our Equicizer Elite, known as 'Strider' by our riders, was made possible with support from the Garman Family Foundation administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. This wooden horse is used for riders:

- that are not ready to ride a live horse
- that require stretching prior to riding
- need more time to train with stability/training exercises

Visit [www.equicizer.com](http://www.equicizer.com) for more information.



*'Strider'*

Utilizing the 'Technology grant', we acquired computers, a printer and a camera, updated our website, and installed Wi-Fi at the barn. These improvements, along with enhanced social media engagement, have helped our Facebook platform grow three times over the last year, increasing followers from 1165 to ~ 3,300 and counting! The 'Technology Grant' was provided through a General Grant award from the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation.

Cummins assists us with imperative grounds and maintenance care, providing resources and volunteers for a multi-day cleanup event! We are so grateful for our community support!

**New Riders:** Increased awareness has also helped to expand our rider base, increasing new riders from 34 (FY23) to 54 (FY24). Of those new riders, 6 returned after a hiatus of more than one year.

**Lessons:** In the past year, 1076 lessons (61% to people with disabilities) were given to 104 riders. Thirty-nine of those riders (37.5% of our rider population) are people with disabilities with consistent scheduling of lessons. In addition to lessons, we launched an after-school Horse Club with Ripley students in grades 3-6 as our first participants, which was very well received.



We are also now a Co-Ser partner with B.O.C.E.S., which allows school field trips to be partially reimbursed with State Funding. Establishing more school trips is a priority for us and we continue to encourage schools to schedule field trips/will specially adapted programs to fit each group's special needs.

**Event/Donations:** Donations are a significant part of funding our operations and subsidizing rider fees. Events contribute to fundraising through ticket sales, and also increase community awareness, foster team camaraderie, and encourage on-site donations. For example, as part of our 5K 'Fun Run' fundraising event and a few large donations, we secured enough support to bring in 3 new horses for our programming needs.

All of this has been made possible due to the generous contributions from our **volunteers and staff!**

**Over 2,100 volunteer hours have helped us serve riders, care for horses, complete office work, clean up the barn, and much more!**

Dr. Holly Reslink PT

**Centaur Stride Program Director**

[Holly.reslink@centaurstride.org](mailto:Holly.reslink@centaurstride.org)

Cell: 440-228-0900



# LOOKING AHEAD

The plans for the 2025-26 year are filled with excitement and promise. With community impact grants from both the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation and the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation, we recently hired a new part time instructor, Alison Mitchener, who just completed her Certified Horseman Association Instructor Certification Course. She has volunteered at Centaur Stride for the past six years and is very familiar with our programs. We can now be open more days for scheduling riders, field trips, group activities and plan for the development and implementation of new programs. Funding for instructors is critical to help us offer more hours and expand our reach.

Additionally, we have plans to partner with other organizations to expand our programs offered on site, including Equine Assisted Learning. (i.e. additional groundwork working with the horse to focus more on the horse connection healing mental health challenges, which are affecting a greater number of



people). We are combining efforts with Prevention Works, Chautauqua County Mental Health, and Chautauqua Works to utilize our programs to assist in meeting the needs of the community. We are also networking with other therapeutic riding centers to gain better insight in how to help each other to navigate the hurdles we all share. (High Hurdles, Lothlorien and Hope on Horseback).

Our vision is to utilize our experiences to be one of the leading organizations in Chautauqua County to support families and people with disabilities through programs that actively address the social, emotional and physical health of its participants through inclusion,

integration, opportunities, and experiences in outdoor activities facilitated by the magical healing power of horses and nature.

**"The horse has an incredible ability to teach us how to be better versions of ourselves."**

**– Unknown**



## April 2024-March 2025 Financials

### INCOME:

Donations: \$32,700

Endowments Named to CS: \$3,000

Fundraising: \$21,200

Grants: \$8,100

Programming: \$43,000

**Total Income: \$108,000**

### OPERATING EXPENSES:

Admin/Accounting: \$3,600

Facility/Equipment: \$5,400

Horse care: \$14,000

Payroll and Wage Expenses: \$65,100

Insurance: \$5,300

Utilities/Misc: \$13,000

Held for horse:(balance) \$1,600

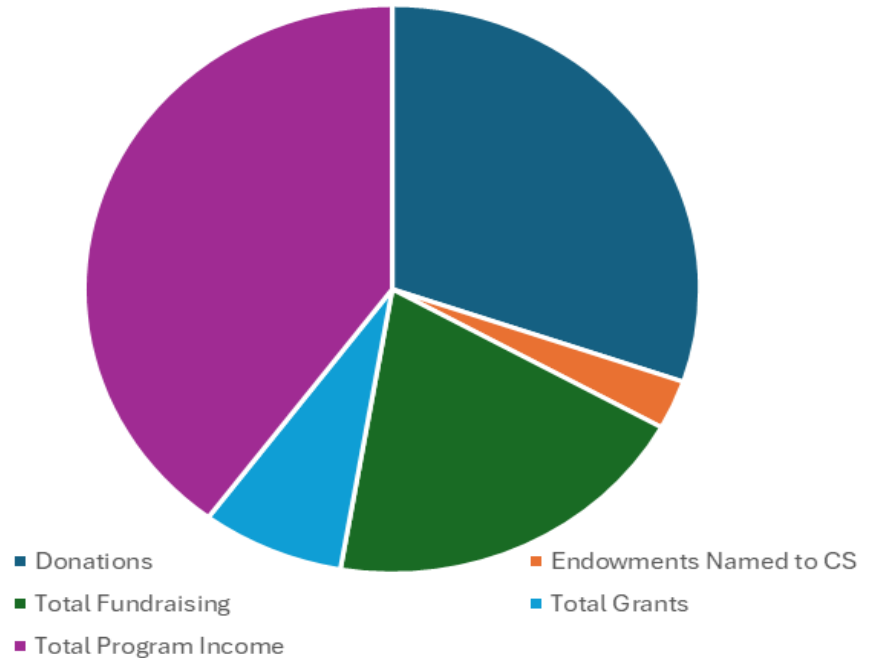
**Total Expense: \$108,000**

### NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:

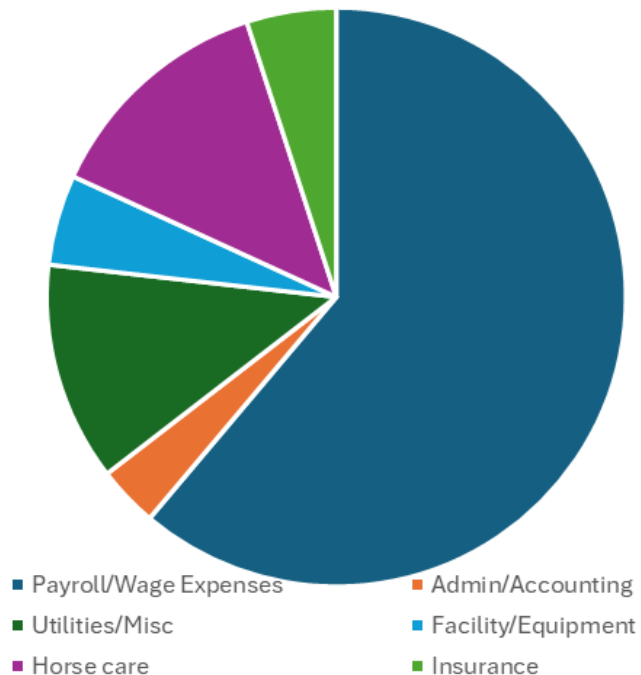
- Numbers were rounded for ease of viewing.
- Total Capital Expenditures: \$10,095 for Equicizer and horse purchase in 2024-25.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### Income



### Expenses



## CONTACT US



If you would like to learn more information about our facility, would like to donate and/or help organize a fundraising event, please contact us at:



Mailing address: P.O. Box 174 Westfield, NY 14787

Barn address: 8488 Jones Rd Sherman, NY 14781



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



<https://www.facebook.com/CentaurStride/>

## **I Saw A Child**

I saw a child who couldn't walk,  
sit on a horse, laugh and talk.  
Then ride it through a field of daisies  
and yet he could not walk unaided.  
I saw a child, no legs below,  
sit on a horse and make it go  
through woods of green  
and places he had never been to sit and stare,  
except from a chair.  
I saw a child who could not crawl  
mount a horse and sit up tall.  
Put it through degrees of paces and laugh at the wonder in our faces.  
I saw a child born into strife,  
Take up and hold the reins of life  
and that same child was heard to say,  
Thank God for showing me the way...

By John Anthony Davies