

2023 Annual Report



Restoring hope. Transforming lives.



Restoring Hope, Transforming Lives

The Body Keeps the Score, (2014) by Dr. Bessel van der Kolk is a New York Times best seller. This college level textbook, based on Van der Kolk's 30 years of trauma research states "the urgent work of the brain after a traumatic event is to suppress it through forgetting or self-blame to avoid being ostracized. "But the body does not forget" which causes all kinds of issues. "This has profound ramifications for talking therapies and their limits because the rational mind cannot do the repair work on its own since that part of you is

pretending it has already been repaired."

A big idea from his research is that **"Safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives"**.

This may sound simple and even obvious but look at the statistics from recent reports (April 2023) published by the Center for Disease Control. In 2021, Suicide was among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10-64 and **the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-14 and 20-34**. Over 48,000 people died by suicide in 2021. **That's 1 death, every 11 minutes**. To help more in need build safe connections, Peace Ranch is expanding to add intensive retreats and extended therapy services for children and adults. All new programming will focus on helping people to feel safe in their bodies and to learn how to develop and maintain safe connections.

Native Horse gets her Native Name.

The Mustang is a horse native to the U.S., so we reached out to Kenny Pheasant to give her a native name. Kenny is Anishinaabe and belongs to the Wicwemkoong First Nation.

A small group gathered for the naming ceremony. Kenny said after seeking, he knew what her name would be and she confirmed that when he met her. This was such a rich experience, and we are so grateful to Kenny for his investment in the foundation horse for the new Veterans & Mustangs program. **“Wiingash”** translated means “Sweet Grass” which is one of our four sacred medicines and represents the northern direction, and the white color on the medicine wheel. It symbolizes healing and peace. Also called “Holy Grass” it is used for spiritual purification and prayer.



Mustangs & Veterans

What do the lives of Wild Mustangs have in common with Veterans? Instantly, hypervigilance, focus, and a need for confident leadership stands out. Hypervigilance is an “elevated state of constantly assessing potential threats around you;” according to Wikipedia. The very nature of survival.

As prey animals, Mustangs also depend on their keen awareness of their surroundings to determine safety for survival. Veterans often serve with levels of hypervigilance that assist them in deployments, but that asset may become counterproductive causing anxiety and fear when they return home.

Training Mustangs requires a great deal of intentionality, presence from the trainer, and confidence. The horse is looking for a confident leader, which presents the opportunity for its leader to recognize incongruences of their own focus and fix them. The Veteran’s level of confidence will be reflected by the horse’s response. Will it trust you or is there some work that needs to be done to earn the horse’s trust? This process of relationship building is an excellent way to learn practically how to be fully present, focused on the task, and improve communication skills with the horse, all of which transfer easily into relationships with humans.



‘You can’t talk trauma out of the body.’

Peace Ranch retreats will target populations impacted by trauma: veterans, parents/families with traumatized children and people in recovery. The needs of that rests in the body, brain and nervous system. Peace Ranch is uniquely suited to address trauma needs: the natural setting and the neurobiology of horses creates ‘regulation in the body. Relationships are repaired and strengthened. This is critical; relationship (connection) is a key element for healing and a protective factor against relapse. Retreats will provide: these populations all have something in common. They all suffer with

trauma and the resulting isolation. Traditional strategies are limited in addressing a problem.

- Large ‘doses’ of nervous system reset.
- Target the body and nervous system with sensory activities, movement, rhythm and 1:1 time with the horses. Retreats will also offer psychoeducation regarding trauma, providing clients a new perspective on trauma recovery.

To meet the greatest needs:

Children & Families: In a February 2022, across six Northwest Michigan counties, NLCMH saw 124 children for crisis counseling or inpatient services — triple what they saw in the same month a year prior. Astonishingly, there are no experiential programs that enlist parents as partners. **Peace Ranch is changing that.**

Addiction & Recovery: The incidence of trauma in addiction is documented from 50 to 75%. Munson Healthcare reports that 39.6 percent of patients treated in the emergency department for substance use disorder will return to the ED within 90 days. No programs in our area offer experiential, neuro-sequential trauma services for substance use disorder. **Peace Ranch will change that.**

Veterans: In the five-county region, there are over 13,000 military veterans. Veterans complete suicide at a rate of 22 per day. Offering strength focused solutions is a game changer – most veterans prefer an outdoor setting that plays to their strengths of hands-on activities. **The Peace Ranch team is thrilled to add this in-depth clinical program.**

In **What About Bob?** -the 1991 comedy classic featuring Bill Murray as a psychiatric patient and Richard Dreyfuss as renowned psychiatrist Dr. Leo Marven, Marven's teenage son, "Siggy" - named for Sigmond Freud, throws up his hands while marching off the dock after another unsuccessful diving lesson at the family's vacation home exclaiming-

"WITH ALL THE HORROR IN THE WOLRD, WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE??!!"

Horror (painful and intense fear, dread, or dismay) and Trauma (deeply distressing and disturbing experience) are closely related. Mass murder, fentanyl deaths, sex trafficking, abuse, neglect, violence..... but..... THIS YEAR, despite their personal horror, many have found hope and transformation at Peace Ranch. Here's how it made a difference in their lives.

- This year an adult Asian adoptee experienced attachment and attunement for the first time in their life.
- This year a gang member left lockup, found connection with a horse, and was successfully employed for the first time.
- This year a Native teen, after losing her home and family, discovered her tribe.
- This year an addict connected with a herd of horses and successfully stayed clean to reclaim her children.
- This year a Veteran processed childhood trauma from violence experienced during regime change in Iran.
- This year a frightened boy connected with a frightened mule; Their connection was transformational.
- This year a clergy member sought solace with horses while processing the memories of childhood abuse.
- This year a family experienced profound healing from the impact of generational and sexual trauma.
- This year a professor connected deeply with her past which changed her future.

This year, thanks to your support men, women, and children, with diverse backgrounds, dealing with all manner of complex trauma, FOUND HOPE and resolved their issues SAFELY, SECURELY, AND SUCCESSFULLY. With "all the horror in the world" there is still much to do. This year, please give generously to enable the delivery of hope and healing to all in need and give them a brighter tomorrow.

2023 Highlights

First BLM Mustang: Peace Ranch welcomed our first Mustang in May/2023. Prior to her arrival our staff, volunteers, and board members invited local Mustang Trainer, Sarah Kingsford to share her experience. Sarah has participated in the Michigan Mustang Challenge in which unhandled mustangs go to Michigan Trainers who participate in an event after 60 days to show off their skills. Sarah also helped our team after Wiingash got to the ranch with training support.

Rustic Retreat Property Update: 5 acres adjacent to our summer pasture was donated at the end of 2022 and is being developed for Rustic Retreat services. This year, rustic cabins have been designed and will be built for placing in Fall, 2024. Engineered site drawings are progressing so the property can go through the zoning process necessary for placement and use of the property as envisioned. Meanwhile the property is undergoing clean up of down deadwood, clearing cabin sites and perimeter for installation of fencing.

National Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association (EAGALA) Training: Peace Ranch hosted the Fundamentals of EAGALA Training May 31- June 4th. Participants came from all over the country for the 5-day training which is required for EAGALA Certification. EAGALA is the global leader for equine assisted psychotherapy and personal development.

Professional Consultation Services were provided by our Senior Staff for folks seeking to start an equine therapy program in their area. Together Jackie & Jan will provide clinical, equine, and business (non-profit/for profit) direction tailored to clients as a fee-based service.

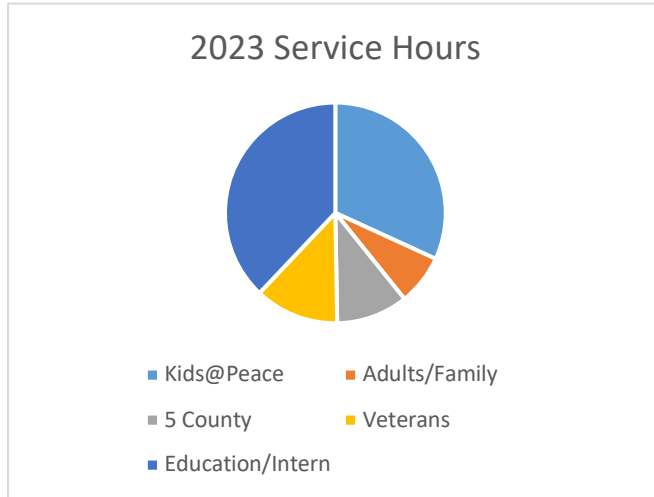
Major Milestones

Succession Plan Year 3 of 10: Executive Director Transitioning Role

In 2023 we began to take the next step in our 10 year succession plan- hiring of a new Executive Director, a role held by founder Jackie Kaschel since 2009. The Board of Directors formed a Hiring Committee tasked with developing the job description for a new ED. The committee worked closely with the existing ED to develop the job description and plans to publicize and hire in the first quarter of 2024. Jackie will continue with Peace Ranch in a new role that is still under construction.

The Board also met with Ed Girrbach, retired Entrepreneur, Business Owner (Pangea Pizza and Great Lakes Potato Chip Co), and Penny Shuff, a professional fund developer for discussion about the needs of the organization in the areas of fundraising, marketing, and media.

2023 Service Stats



Total Therapy Hours: **815**
 Education & Internship Hours: **498**
 Total Therapy & Education: **1,313**
 Number of People Served: 349
 Number of Unique Clients: **252**

Category	Population	Source	Funding	Hours
Kids@Peace	Kids in Crisis	Agencies	Grants	418
Community Community	Family/adults Kids in Crisis	5 counties	Sliding Scale Contracted	97 138
Veterans	Combat	Statewide	Grant/donated.	162
Education/Training	Interns/Pros	University/varies	Donated/contracted	498
				1,313 Hours

This year 97 Volunteers donated 1560 hours!!



Volunteers helped this year with horse care, facility maintenance and in programs like the summer Leadership & Resilience program for kids. Volunteers also staffed, board, all committees and prepared for all events.



The Good Sporter™ Award, our annual service is given at our year end gathering put on by our Board for staff and volunteers to recognize the volunteer that most exemplifies the Spirit of Volunteerism demonstrated by

Erwin P. Sporte. This year, the **2023 Good Sporter™ Award** went to **Meghan Nicoles** for her **exemplary service, leadership, and consistent positive attitude.**

On Deck 2024/2025

- New Staff: Executive Director & Media Team 2024
- Rustic Retreat Property Development Complete with fencing & cabins. 2024
- Property Improvement to support Rustic Retreat and Mustang Program
 - Access Improvement- cement sidewalk from parking lot to central area by Weston Cabin through Ezekiel Garden. The garden will also get new raised beds for easy access. 2024
 - Weston Cabin improvement will include new patio space out sliding doors to expand options for meals and gathering. 2024/25
 - New Covered Round Pen & Event Gazebo. This new construction will take the place of the existing round pen for mustang training, but the metal gated sides will be removeable for event and gathering use. (completion-2025)
- Rustic Retreat Fall Pilot: 2024/25
- Stable Moments Youth Program: 2 Instructors trained. 2024
- Stable Moments Youth Program Fall Pilot 2024

It is important to note that our successes this year, as every year, are the result of hundreds of people giving their time, talent, and resources to make a difference in the lives of others. We couldn't do it without you and, as always, it is an honor to serve with you.

~Respectfully Submitted by Jacquelyn Kaschel, Executive Director