



2025
Impact Report

Welcome

At Connected Horse, everything we do begins with relationships—between people, communities, and humans and horses. This year, our equine-assisted, relationship-based programs supported hundreds of families and individuals impacted by dementia, expanding access to meaningful, non-clinical experiences that foster connection, calm, and engagement. Through guided interactions with horses, nature-based activities, and shared group experiences, participants found moments of presence and joy that often feel elusive in traditional care settings. For many families, these programs also offered much-needed respite, reflection, and renewed confidence.

In collaboration with community partners, health providers, and caregiving organizations, we continued to expand social prescribing by offering sensory engagement kits and programs that reduce loneliness and isolation while strengthening emotional and social well-being. These partnerships help us reach new populations, remove barriers to participation, and integrate relationship-centered experiences into broader systems of support.

As we enter our tenth year of service, we reflect on a decade of learning and growth alongside the people we serve. Horses are at the heart of this work—their sensitivity and steadiness create opportunities for self-regulation, trust, and connection across all stages of memory change and caregiving stress. Time with the horses invites participants to slow down, engage their senses, and reconnect with themselves and others in meaningful ways.

While outcomes matter, the impact is often felt most deeply in small moments—shared laughter at the barn, a relaxed posture, or a care partner feeling seen and supported. These moments reflect what's possible when care is grounded in relationship.

Thank you for being part of this work and for helping us expand access to connection, compassion, and well-being for those impacted by dementia.

With gratitude

The image shows two handwritten signatures. The signature on the left is "Paula Hertel" and the signature on the right is "Nancy Scherlenbach".

Connected Horse provides innovative equine-assisted workshops and training that inspire **connection** and **engagement** and improve the lives of those impacted by dementia **together with their care partners**. Our path-breaking equine programming is **driven by research** conducted at Stanford University and University of California, Davis and is designed to help those who can attend workshops **in person** at local barns as well as those **at home** or in senior communities and day programs using our engagement kits.

Our Mission

This program gave my parents the chance to laugh together and see one another beyond their declining health. That gift meant so much to our whole family.

DAUGHTER OF A PARTICIPANT
PLEASANTON WORKSHOPS

Our Why

*Connection is not a luxury.
It is essential. Connected
Horse exists to make it
accessible.*

—PAULA HERTEL
CO-FOUNDER, CONNECTED HORSE

Dementia affects over 55 million people worldwide, including more than 7 million Americans. In the United States, 11.9 million family members and unpaid caregivers provide care to someone living with dementia. Nearly 30 percent of these caregivers are age 65 or older, and 25 percent are part of the sandwich generation, caring for both an older adult and a child. Alongside these demands, one in five older adults reports feeling lonely or socially isolated, increasing risks to both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Connected Horse responds to this growing need through relationship-based, equine-assisted programs that reduce isolation, strengthen connection, and support wellbeing for individuals living with dementia and their care partners. By creating spaces for engagement, presence, and shared experience, we complement traditional care and help families reconnect beyond diagnosis.

Case Study

Held by the Horse: Finding Connection Beyond Grief

The Horses, Joan, and Carolyn arrived at a Connected Horse workshop carrying the weight of grief brought on by dementia and changing roles. At the barn, the focus shifted from loss to presence. Through gentle interactions with the horses, they were able to slow down, allow grief to be expressed as its own emotion rather than as anger, and reconnect with empathy through a shared experience. By the end of the workshop, grief had softened. They left feeling more connected, reminded that joy, meaning, and relationship are still possible.

For Connected Horse, moments like this are the mission made visible: Creating safe, wordless connections when language is too heavy, and reminding people that even in loss, they are not alone—and that healing, in its own quiet way, is still possible.



Connection & Growth



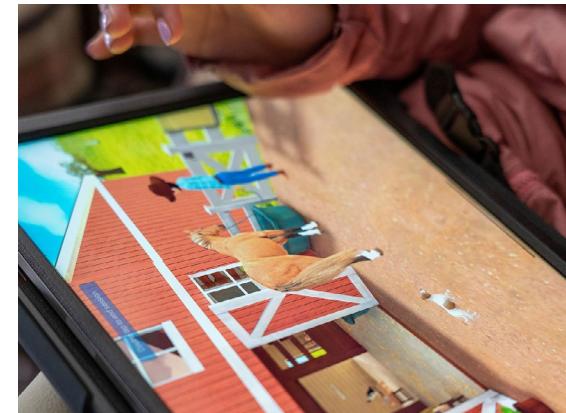
RECOGNITION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Connected Horse has been invited to present its work on the benefits of engagement for care partner well-being at the **37th Global Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International** in Lyon, France. This invitation reflects our mission to strengthen connection, reduce isolation, and advance relationship based approaches that support individuals living with dementia and those who care for them.



EXPANDING TO WEST VIRGINIA – HORSES WITH HEARTS

After attending our spring Facilitator Training, the team at Horses with Hearts recognized the value of our programs and the importance of integrating them into their programming. A group of Connected Horse trainers traveled to Martinsburg, WV, to provide additional hands-on training and support. This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to expanding access to equine-assisted services. We look forward to launching the first Connected Horse workshops with Horses with Hearts in spring 2026.



MEASURING THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGEMENT

Connected Horse has a long-term collaboration with Mentia Health, who designed our first Virtual Barn. This virtual environment extends the reach of our relationship-based programs, offering familiar sights, sounds, and experiences when in-person engagement is not possible.

The Virtual Barn is being upgraded to integrate AI tools to measure engagement and focus as participants interact with core elements of the experience. This work reflects our shared commitment to innovation, access, and meaningful engagement for individuals impacted by dementia.



GROWING OUR HERD THOUGH VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism is at the heart of Connected Horse. This year, we trained more than 35 new volunteers, including retired professionals seeking renewed purpose, National Charity League mothers and daughters connecting through service, and community members eager to give back. Each brings experience, care, and commitment, strengthening the relationships that make our programs possible. Their presence, consistency, and compassion allow us to expand access, deepen engagement, and create welcoming spaces for individuals and families impacted by dementia.



CONNECTED HORSE IMPACT AWARD HONOREES- PAUL AND TAMMY MAIDA

Connected Horse proudly presented its inaugural Impact Award to participants Tammy and Paul Maida in recognition of their ongoing advocacy and deep commitment to reducing the stigma surrounding dementia. Through their work, they have been powerful voices for activation, engagement, and lifestyle approaches that support improved outcomes for individuals living with dementia.

Their leadership and dedication reflect the values at the heart of Connected Horse and inspire our community to reimagine what is possible, never giving up.

Connected Horse gave us a moment of peace in the middle of something really hard. It's the one place where we can be ourselves and be accepted.

—CARE PARTNER
SPRING 2025

Program Metrics

Through our in-person workshops and sensory engagement programs, Connected Horse provided meaningful connections to almost 600 individuals in 2025.

WORKSHOPS

72 persons with dementia and their care partners

36 workshop sessions in three locations

SENSORY ENGAGEMENT KITS

525 attendees living with dementia at adult day programs, senior living communities, or at home

6 on-site locations

TOTAL IMPACT

597 program participants

Connected Horse is a volunteer-driven organization. Our Facilitator Training Institute provides in-depth, hands-on training to develop and nurture our extraordinary team of volunteers. These highly trained facilitators are crucial to our ability to expand our programs.

FACILITATOR TRAINING

24 future facilitators

2 on-site locations

DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

80 volunteers

4050 hours volunteered

Benefits

In order to help measure the success of our programming, we utilize qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools to access participants prior to the start of our program and again after program completion. This data helps us to measure the impact we have in terms of the following criteria:

CONNECTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Trusting relationships, activation, shared giving and receiving, and meaningful group experiences strengthen social connection and belonging.

PRESENCE AND SELF-CARE

Mindfulness, breathing, and self-regulation practices support focus, stress reduction, and emotional wellbeing.

PHYSICAL MOVEMENT

Gentle activity through walking and working with the horses promotes movement in a natural, purposeful way.

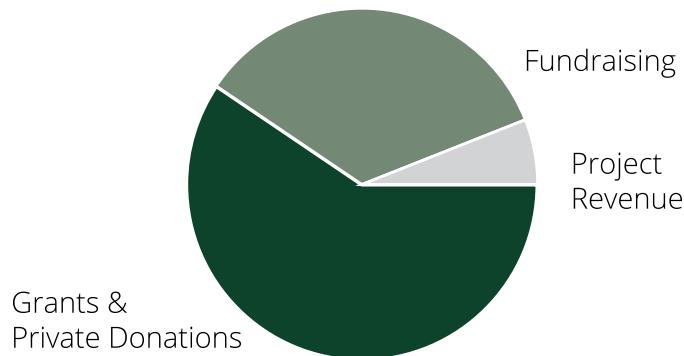
CONFIDENCE AND DIGNITY

Trying new activities and using nonverbal communication builds confidence while reducing shame, stigma, and traditional caregiving roles.

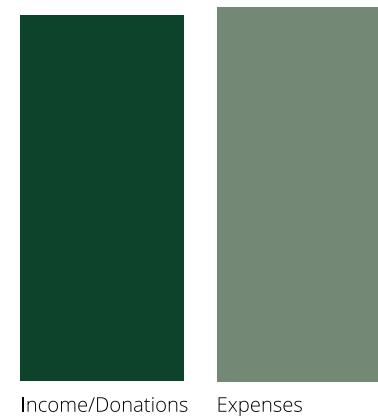
Financial Summary

Connected Horse is committed to responsible and transparent financial stewardship. As a volunteer driven organization, we rely on donations, grants, and fundraisers to sustain and expand our no cost programs across the country. We are intentional about using every dollar to directly support our mission. Eighty percent of all funds raised go toward direct services, including equine assisted programming, volunteer and facilitator training, and the continued expansion of program development and research.

SOURCES OF REVENUE



INCOME VS. EXPENSES



ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

80% of all donor income goes to direct program expenses

Fundraising

THIRD ANNUAL LASSOS WITH LOVE FUNDRAISING EVENT

Lassos with Love is Connected Horse's annual celebration and a cornerstone of our ability to continue serving individuals and families impacted by dementia. Bringing together sponsors, attendees, volunteers, and community partners, the event honors the relationships that make our work possible and celebrates a shared commitment to connection and wellbeing.

This year, more than 150 guests gathered at the barn to experience the heart of Connected Horse through time with horses, meaningful conversation, and moments of joy. The generosity of our sponsors and attendees provides critical support helping ensure continued access, growth, and innovation.

During the event, we were proud to honor Tammy and Paul Maida as the recipients of Connected Horse's first Impact Award, recognizing their ongoing advocacy and promotion of lifestyle approaches that improve outcomes. We were also honored to welcome Carla Preyer, star of the documentary *Facing the Wind*, as a special guest. Tammy, Paul, and Carla are all participants in Connected Horse programs, reflecting the deep and personal connections that define our community.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, attendees, and supporters whose belief in our mission makes this work possible. Lassos with Love is more than an event. It is a celebration of community, compassion, and the collective effort required to sustain Connected Horse.



Our Supporters

None of our work would be possible without the dedication of our incredible volunteers, generous community donations, and financial donations from our supporters. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$100,000 in 2025, allowing us to continue offering no-cost equine-assisted workshops and sensory engagement kits for those impacted by dementia.

While nonprofits everywhere are navigating a difficult fundraising landscape, your generosity reminds us that this work matters. With your continued support, we are confident that we can move forward, serve more individuals, and strengthen the connections that define Connected Horse.

24/7 Nightingale Home Care
ABC Construction
Adrienne & Pete Machi
Alan & Barb Parker
Alexa Schlepp
Algis Leveckis
Alison Day
Allen Flores Consulting Group
Amir Kia
Amphora Nueva
Amy Siu
Anuta Portillo
Appellation Wine & Roses
Resort
Artful Aesthetics
Audrey Lord-Hausman
August Health
Barsotti Family Juice Company
Belmont Village
Bernard Wheeler-Medley
Beverly Preslik
Beverly Sanborn
Bill & Ellen Sardella
Blue Moon Capital
Boys Team Charity
Bradford Portraits
Brant Watson
Buehler House Orinda
Canyon Club Brewery
Carefield Senior Living
Carly Marasco
Cassandra Keith
Cecilia Salomon
Center for Elder Independence
(CEI)

Chancellor Health Care
Cheryl Martin
Chris Carter
Claudia Paez Notary
Claudia Sonder, DVM
Clean Masheen
Clearwater Senior Living
Concord Feed
Connie Dahl / Three Horse Farms
D & D Jewelers
Dagmar Spichale
Danielle Jirsa
Danit McBride
Dara Douraghi
Darius Mojahed
Darlene Marasco
Darolyn Jorgensen-Kares
Dave Batoy
Dave Chen
David Cohen
Deb & Stu Kirsch
Deborah Godt
Deina King
Denise Berghorn
Diana Honig
Diane and Mike Archer
Douglas Pancake Architects
Dover Saddlery
Dr. Elizabeth Landsverk
Elaine Chan
Elena Remus
Elissa Goldman
Elke & Bawer Telkin
Exceptional Senior Placement

FitLab Lafayette
Five Star Equestrian
Flamingo Resort & Spa
Forge Pizza
Francesca Vogel
Frank Mellon
Glen Eckols
Gloria Passarella
Grand Pacific Resorts
Grassini Family Vineyards
Handwritten Cellars
Heather Harrison
Heather Rosnow
Heffernan Insurance
Hillendale Home Care
Iron Horse Winery
Isabel Soloaga
Jackie T Triner
Jamie Sloane Wines
Jane VanDyke
Janet Fitch
Janie Eddleman
Janna O'Sullivan
Jared Randolph
Jason Lucero
Jennifer Cook
Jennifer Coons
Jennifer Freedman
Jennifer Pierce
Jessup Cellars
JM Homecare
Joel Goldman
Johana Segura
Johnny Vuong
Josh Allen

Judy Vared
 Juleen Laporte Photography
 Julia Riller
 Julie Derby
 Kansas Carradine
 Kathleen O'Regan
 Kati Knox
 Katy Hertel
 Kay Barkwill
 Kendra Scott Jewelry
 Kensington Senior Living
 Kreative Dance
 Kristina Deluna
 Krysta Mae Ceramics
 Laura Finnerty
 Leah Feliz
 Ledson Winery
 Lennon Girdlestone
 Liat Romick
 Lindsey Healy
 Lisa Galliani
 Lisa Pieretti
 Liz Carringer
 Locando Positano
 Lori & Rob Chan
 Lynda Deschambault
 Lynn Kriegbaum
 Marci Greenfield
 Margaret Pidd
 Mark Ettefagh
 Mark Lojacono
 Marna Mohr
 Mary Taylor
 Matson Logistics
 Maureen Wright

Megan Willdorf
 Mentia Health
 Micheal Pope
 Michel & Shirley Augsburger
 Michelle Bea
 Mickey & Collette Gray
 Monterey Garden Hilton
 Moraga Fire Dept
 Moshin Vineyards
 Mt. Diablo Business Women
 My Sustainable Table
 Nancy & Tom Anzelmo
 National Charity League
 Nicole Yuen
 Niles Canyon Railway
 Nina Fitch
 Oakmont Management Group
 Pampered Chef
 Pamela Roberts
 Paula Hertel
 Paula Lemkuil
 Peju Winery
 Penny Sinder
 Pier 39
 Positano
 Rachel Chaudhary
 Randy Levandowski
 Rare Society Steakhouse
 Rebecca Manning
 Rene Rael Stylist
 Renee Hamilton and Ernie Castiaux
 Rhoda Larner
 Rob & Lori Chan
 Robert Tornoe
 Rosalind Bloom

Rosanne Arquines
 Safe Foundation
 Safeway
 Sally Michael
 Samantha Wilson
 Sandy Brady
 Santa Barbara Zoo
 Sarah Maze Hair
 Senior Alternatives
 Senior Community Learning
 Senior Doc
 SF Kebab
 Sharon Doi
 Sharon McGinnis
 Shira Lompa
 Shirley & Barry Kaminsky
 Spirit Living Group
 Stacked Skin Care
 Stamping Up
 Stephanie Wedge
 Steve Barklis
 Stoneridge Creek
 Supervisor David Haubert
 Susan Filice
 Susan Naclerio
 Tammy & Paul Maida
 Tenfold Senior Living
 Thomas Mangelsen Gallery
 Thrive Market
 Tiffany Tomasso
 Tineke Jacobsen
 Tom & Kathleen Addison
 Tova Moore
 Tracy Feldman
 Tracy Shapiro

Trisha Sanyal
 Valerie and Fred Nevarez
 Versailles Jewelers
 Vicki Clark
 Vinarosa Resort & Spa
 Whole Foods Lafayette
 Wicked Sheets
 Willis Wah
 Wood Family Vineyard
 Wrightway Polo
 Zahra Boutique Salon
 Zeke Griffin

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate our tenth year of service, we do so with deep gratitude for the relationships that have shaped Connected Horse and with genuine excitement for what lies ahead. The past decade has shown us what is possible when care is grounded in connection, presence, and community.

In the year ahead, we look forward to:

COLLABORATING ON RESEARCH that explores the impact of engagement, social connection, and wellbeing for individuals living with dementia and their care partners.

PUBLISHING OUR SENSORY ENGAGEMENT KIT MANUAL, expanding access to tools that bring the Connected Horse experience into new settings.

TRAINING ADDITIONAL BARNs AND PARTNERS, extending the reach of our relationship-based, equine-assisted programs to more communities.

As we enter our next decade, our commitment remains clear. We will continue to grow with intention, deepen partnerships, and expand access to connection for individuals and families impacted by dementia.



At Connected Horse, we rely on a dedicated team of volunteers to make our programming possible. Whether you are supporting participants, facilitating our workshops, helping with our horses as a seasoned equestrian, or supporting our day-to-day operations, we welcome your input and participation. You do not need horse experience to volunteer at our workshops or engagement programs. Our vibrant and vital team helps with fundraisers, workshops, and community events.

Join Us

I just so enjoy making the connection with the families and the horses—and seeing how they transform over time. It is so wonderful to have a program that allows the caretakers, as well as the individuals, to participate and to see those changes occur.

LINDA BLOOMFIELD
VOLUNTEER HORSE HANDLER

Get Involved

Whether you contribute your time, money, or expertise, your support makes a critical difference in someone's life.

Your support is vital to our mission. We would be honored if you would consider making a gift to Connected Horse. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference.

DONATE TODAY



Your tax-deductible contribution will fuel the work of Connected Horse and allow us to offer some of the only equine-assisted services and programming in the country that brings people facing dementia and their care partners together.

DONATE ONLINE

Visit our website (www.connectedhorse.org/donate) to make a one-time, annual, or monthly tax-deductible donation.

DONATE STOCKS

Maximize your donation's impact. Gift stock or donate long-term appreciated securities including stock, bonds or mutual funds directly to Connected Horse. We receive the full value from its sale and you have the potential to eliminate capital gains exposure and increase your gift and tax donation—a win for everyone.

PLANNED GIVING

There are many creative and flexible giving options to achieve your unique charitable vision. By making a bequest or other estate gift to Connected Horse, you will support our work to bring healing and hope to families facing dementia.

Please contact us at **415.377.0934** or at info@connectedhorse.org with any questions about how you can make an impact to our important work.



Reach Out

Please contact us to learn more about our programs and how you can become involved today.

Connected Horse is a 501 (c)(3) organization. TAX ID 81-1502726.

phone: 415.377.0934
email: info@connectedhorse.org
online: www.connectedhorse.org



PHOTO CREDIT: LINDA SOLOMON

I believe Connected Horse is really onto something. Theirs is an organization that provides therapeutic equine therapy to those experiencing memory loss and dementia, along with their families and communities, to bring compassionate care and healing between people and horses. Please join me in supporting this worthy organization.

ROBERT REDFORD
ACTOR, FILMMAKER, ENVIRONMENTALIST
(1936—2025)

CONNECTED HORSE IS A 501 (C)(3) ORGANIZATION. TAX ID 81-1502726

2351 SUNSET BOULEVARD, SUITE 170-143
ROCKLIN, CA 95765

WWW.CONNECTEDHORSE.ORG