



# WELCOME TO CONNECTED HORSE



Individuals living with dementia and their care partners often face profound changes, yet meaningful connection remains possible. At Connected Horse, we believe those connections can change lives. We are a relationship-based equine-assisted services organization that brings together individuals living with dementia, their care partners, and horses—encouraging acceptance, engagement, and a renewed sense of purpose. Through workshops, sensory engagement experiences, research initiatives, and professional training, we support emotional well-being and belonging while empowering all participants to navigate challenges with connection, compassion, and dignity.

At the heart of our work is the belief that well-being begins with self-reflection and relationships. Equine-assisted services are uniquely positioned to foster the authentic, nonjudgmental and nonverbal communication that opens the opportunity to build resilience, confidence and emotional bonds.

*"For the moment, we let go of our worries and enjoyed being together. All week, I thought about the calm and confidence I felt while grooming the horses. I remembered to breathe."*

—A Connected Horse workshop participant

*"Horses' innate abilities to understand their environment, support their herd, and provide nonjudgmental responses and feedback allow for a rich environment. Combining work with horses and workshop exercises such as mindfulness leads to a therapeutic result, including reducing feelings of depression and anxiety, strengthening coping skills and reducing isolation."*

—Michael Splaine, MA,  
CEO Cognitive Solutions, LLC

## WHY HORSES?

Horses offer something uniquely powerful. Their presence, curiosity and nonjudgmental approach invite authenticity; nonverbal communication; and feedback and emotional attunement. Through gentle, ground-based interaction, participants rediscover a sense of purpose and capability. Participants witness moments of clarity, laughter, and lightness—moments that often feel lost to the progression of the disease.

## RESEARCH-BASED IMPACT

Connected Horse's programs are not only impactful but also based on research. We partnered with Stanford University and the University of California, Davis, on collaborative studies to assess the outcomes of our equine-assisted services. Our participants consistently report improved emotional well-being, including greater social support, reduced anxiety and depression, better self-awareness, and improved sleep quality. These findings confirm that our relationship-based model is effective in supporting those facing dementia and memory loss, including their care partners.

# Our Programs



## WORKSHOPS

Our equine-assisted workshops are at the core of our mission, allowing participants to experience nature activities, receive group support, and engage with horses in ways that promote confidence, and connection. All activities take place on the ground, and no riding is involved. Through these workshops, participants feel a stronger sense of control over their lives, often reporting improved relationships and emotional well-being. The workshops are free of charge thanks to the support of local grants and private donations.

*"The smile on my mom's face and the joy that emanated from her was absolutely priceless."*

—A Connected Horse workshop participant

## SENSORY ENGAGEMENT

Our sensory engagement programs extend the therapeutic benefits of horses to those at home, at day programs, or senior living communities. These programs engage all the senses—through activities with horse brushes, smelling fresh hay, or listening to the sounds of horses moving through a pasture, while activating emotional memories and fostering connection to the present moment. This multisensory experience helps individuals rekindle emotional connections and memories, reducing isolation and increasing engagement.

*"The smells, sights, sounds, textures, and activities that make being around horses so special are all in the kit. These sensory experiences help people step away from the cognitive demands of the day and reconnect. It's great to watch people engage."*

—Paula Hertel, Co-Founder



## CONNECTED HORSE TRAINING INSTITUTE

In addition to direct community-based services, we are committed to training and empowering others to deliver our programs. Through the Connected Horse Training Institute, we offer specialized training programs for barns, individuals interested in facilitation, and senior programs nationwide. Our comprehensive training includes both onsite and virtual courses, providing 16 hours of PATH CEUs, educational resources, coaching, evaluation tools, and recertification.

*"Participants tell us that they feel alive again, they feel empowered to do things and want to move forward."*

—Nancy Schier Anzelmo, Co-Founder