

Teamwork



2017–2018 Annual Report



Dedication

It is most fitting that this year's annual report with the theme of "teamwork" is dedicated to Carolyn Jagielski. After over 35 years of involvement with High Hopes, Carolyn has retired (although we hope to still see her here at the farm.) Throughout her years of service with our programs, she has always demonstrated the true embodiment of teamwork; working with others to bring out the best in every individual.

By integrating her expertise as a physical therapist into her weekly lessons, Carolyn has profoundly impacted the lives of many participants. However, an even more significant impact has been seen through her teaching and mentoring of hundreds of professionals and volunteers. From Carolyn's very earliest entry into the field of therapeutic riding, she gave generously

of her talent and knowledge. Whether astride the horse or learning in the classroom, her caring and considerate approach to each person she interacted with helped them achieve their utmost. Carolyn taught many of us that our partnership with the horse creates the foundation for all we do, and our job as the professional is to understand the impact of the horse's movement and behavior on each participant in order to maximize the benefits of each session.

All of us at High Hopes are grateful for the many years of teaching, sharing and caring that Carolyn has given. She has helped to shape High Hopes into a leader in the field of equine assisted therapy with strong values and an environment of unconditional acceptance.



This year's annual report theme is "teamwork," one of High Hopes' core organizational values; a cornerstone of the work we do every day.

Each Program team of horse, participant, volunteer, and instructor is powerful and dynamic. Each part of these well-trained teams is in tune with the other; anticipating each other's needs without verbal communication. This synergy creates a stronger service and more significant results for our participants.

This core value of teamwork is pervasive throughout all of High Hopes' operations. Our Development team works alongside instructional staff and the Finance office to secure critically needed grants to fund financial aid awards and support new program development. The Barn and Facility team works with the herd and manages our property to ensure program services are safe and of the highest quality. Our Event teams work for months to create and execute incredibly successful fundraising events gaining the support of our broader community.

These teams consist of staff and volunteers working together to achieve common goals. 96% of our workforce is made up of volunteers, so the key to each team's success is communication, trust and strong leadership exemplified by the High Hopes Board. The qualities that make each of our equine assisted activities and therapies impactful for our participants are those that also make High Hopes a model for similar programs throughout the county.

Last but by no means least; we must stress the importance of the team that comprises donors, participants, and High Hopes staff. Without the continued support and generosity of our donors, High Hopes could not serve the 1,519 individuals represented throughout this report. Our partnership with individual donors, corporate sponsors and foundation grant makers forms the groundwork upon which the success of High Hopes, and that of our participants, is built.

We hope you enjoy reading these examples which are just a small sample of what we do every day. We invite you to come to visit High Hopes, watch our teams in action and consider joining our community – Horses and Humans Improving Lives.

Kitty Stalsburg
Executive Director

John Catlett
Board Chair



About High Hopes

High Hopes is a place where people come to heal, to learn, and to make friends that last a lifetime. We strive to provide support and growth opportunities for all of our participants, families, caregivers, and volunteers.

High Hopes Therapeutic Riding, Inc. is a premier therapeutic riding center and international instructor training site. We have served people with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities for over 44 years.

Our year-round programs in equine assisted activities and therapies include therapeutic riding, carriage driving, and unmounted equine learning. We also offer experiential learning through outreach programs, an integrated summer camp, and a variety of volunteer opportunities.

We offer PATH Intl. Approved Training Courses (ATC), and have served over 260 instructor candidates from throughout the U.S. and over 20 countries abroad. We also present continuing professional education and enrichment programs for those seeking lifelong learning. Our training is conducted by highly qualified professionals who are widely recognized in the field of therapeutic riding.



Dynamic Duo & Friends

Every Tuesday afternoon for the last six years, High Hopes has welcomed another exceptional and dynamic team.

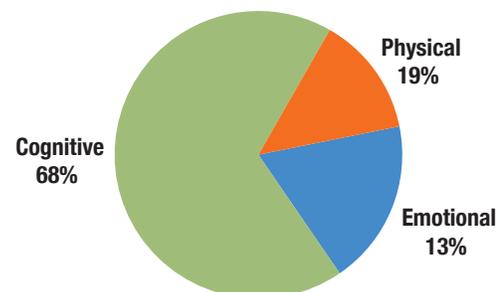
Andrea and Peter were both born with Down syndrome. They met when their older siblings played T-Ball together in Old Lyme. Although Andrea and Peter would go to different elementary schools in the Region 18 School System, they came together at High Hopes when they were four years old through the Region's Pre-School Peer Coop where therapeutic riding is offered as part of their physical therapy program.

High Hopes has been a safe place where these two caring and involved families have been able to support their children and support each other. While watching Peter and Andrea each week, their parents have been able to share notes and compare experiences as their children have progressed through the challenges of elementary school. For Peter and Andrea, weekly sessions at High Hopes have built physical strength while improving their communication and social skills – essential for success in school. The confidence Peter and Andrea gained while riding also opened their minds to new experiences and successes. Peter's ability to problem-solve and communicate helped him win a national Invention Convention Award. For Andrea, working on her core strength while riding helped her shine in both swimming and gymnastics, and she has gone on to compete in both sports at the Special Olympics.

Through Andrea's mom, Irene, another team was brought into the High Hopes' community – this time from her employer, Eversource. Over the years High Hopes has benefitted from the hard work of Eversource's employee work groups. They spend a day at our 120-acre farm mending fences, trimming trees, and clearing trails. Eversource was the founding sponsor of the annual Holiday Market, and last year High Hopes received a generous grant supporting our educational programs.

Over the years Peter and Andrea, along with their families, have built a bond that goes far beyond the arena. This fall Peter and Andrea have begun a new chapter as they enter Middle School. Their families and teachers say they have met this challenge as they always have; supported by each other's abiding friendship and bolstered by the confidence and skills they have developed through High Hopes programs.

Broad disability of participants



Teamwork Saves Lives...

Nobody knows this better than a Veteran. And yet, the Department of Veterans Affairs' most recent data shows that around 20 Veterans take their own lives every day – mainly as a result of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

High Hopes has served Veterans through our programs for many years providing practical help to Veterans suffering from PTSD using the healing power of horses. In 2015, High Hopes elected to incorporate an already tried and tested curriculum, The “Equus Effect,” into its offerings. A team from High Hopes was trained to deliver what is now known as ‘The Equus Effect at High Hopes.’ This five-week, one-day-per-week course uses a combination of physical exercises, mindfulness-based meditation, hands-on grooming, and horse handling skills, together with classroom based teaching and group discussion.

Maintaining a steady flow of Veterans and their clinicians into the program has proven challenging at times. High Hopes has again leaned on its core value of teamwork using staff, volunteers and Trustees to define a strategy to grow the Veterans Program. The key has been to raise awareness of the impact of the program and thereby increase the number of organizations steering their Veterans-in-need towards the program and importantly, provide clinical support that differentiates this program from others. The effective teamwork of fundraising and communications at High Hopes is pivotal to ensuring this valuable program grows and prospers well into the future.

In some ways, we have a straightforward story to tell. The benefit Veterans derive from the program is compelling and clear for all to see. Several Veterans

The demonstrated awareness, emotions, and behaviors of the horse as a natural prey animal provide a catalyst for participants to access and talk candidly about their feelings and the challenges of living with PTSD.

Delivering the program involves a significant team with High Hopes staff, volunteers and horses all stepping up to guide participating Veterans successfully through the program. A vital member of this team is an experienced Vet Center Counselor who attends each session and who is already working on a one-to-one basis with many of the participating Veterans. That presence creates a safe environment for the Veterans, skillfully prompts and guides courageous conversations, and promotes improved self-awareness and new insights for participants. In return, our team learns something valuable from each new group of Veterans honoring our commitment to continuous improvement.

who have graduated from the program found it so valuable they have come back to repeat it. We also have received moving letters of thanks from professional caregivers who have seen transformations in the lives of the individual Veterans in their care. We are also blessed to have one Veteran who has been brave enough to share publicly his personal story of living with PTSD and the considerable impact the High Hopes' Veterans Program and his favorite horse, Latino, have had. In Mark's own words his weekly visits to see Latino at High Hopes “helped save my life.” Our reward for great teamwork surely doesn't get any better than this.

Read Mark's Story at www.highhopestr.org/marksstory.





High Hopes lead to Safe Futures

Another example of teamwork is the inter-agency collaborations we build with schools, social service agencies, and other nonprofits. As needs change and funding for participation waxes and wanes, open communication becomes an essential tool in developing these symbiotic relationships. An example is our relationship with the staff and families served by Safe Futures, New London, an agency that helps rebuild lives torn apart by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and trafficking in Southeastern Connecticut*.

The top priority for staff at Safe Futures is to ensure the safety of families while addressing the practical needs of their new lives – food, housing, court support services, and jobs. However, to facilitate a successful transition to a new life, these individuals must also address

often crippling issues of trust, poor communication, and behaviors that could return them to a cycle of domestic violence. It is here that High Hopes joins the team.

While most of the work we do focuses on the family unit, certain activities are geared specifically to children who often do not have the words to express the emotions they are feeling. This is especially true for children whose only exposure to an emotional communication may have been through living in an unhealthy and abusive relationship. It is essential for them to learn appropriate ways to regulate and express their emotions. Over the course of a High Hopes session, we also help the children learn to recognize emotional cues through noticing and responding to their equine's facial and body language, which have a significant correlation to our

Individuals Served 1,519

Number of services delivered 12,000

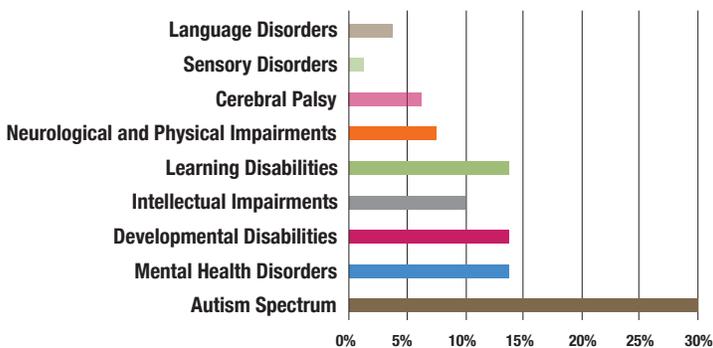
Number of Volunteers 652

Number of volunteer hours 28,635

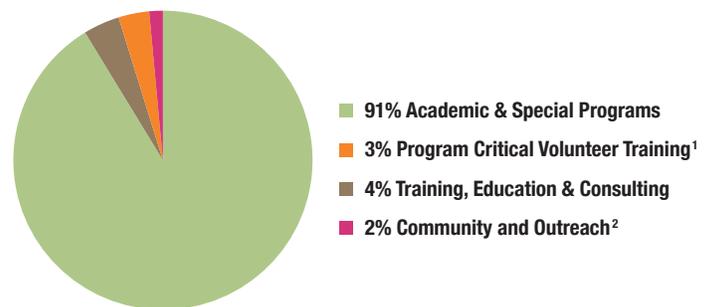
Number of horses 25

Number of staff 26 (13 part and 13 full) in 2017–2018

Primary declared diagnosis



Breakdown of Mission Related Activities Delivered (% of 12,000 activities delivered in 2017-2018)



1. Volunteer Training is a mission-critical activity. 96% of High Hopes workforce is made up of volunteers

2. Community Outreach includes: summer camp, community riding program and outreach education activities aimed at bringing volunteers, participants and donors into the program

facial expression and body language: sad, fearful, angry, excited, alert, happy, content.

Safety Awareness is an integral part of any equine activity and is also crucial in our work with Safe Futures. Many of these children come from situations where their emotional and physical safety was in jeopardy; where they could not be sure when they were crossing boundaries; or what kind of reaction they would receive. These experiences manifest both as impulsive action without consideration of consequences, or unwillingness to act – the fight, flight or freeze mechanism within us all.

Emphasizing the “Safety” reasons for rules regarding behavior around horses during unmounted activities helps build trust as well as providing a life lesson for

establishing healthy boundaries. We practice being in charge by remaining calm and focused, making decisions, and following through when leading and grooming our equine friends. Their size can be intimidating, and it can be tempting to try to muscle and bully them into obedience, however when we treat horses with kindness and respect, they will reciprocate. Grooming also allows a rare opportunity to give love to another without asking anything in return and enjoy the reciprocation of that compassion from our equine friends.

Safe Futures, Inc., whose mission is to save lives, restore hope, and change the future for those impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking in southeastern Connecticut. Services include: counseling, advocacy, and court support; emergency shelter; transitional housing; and Prevention Education programs.

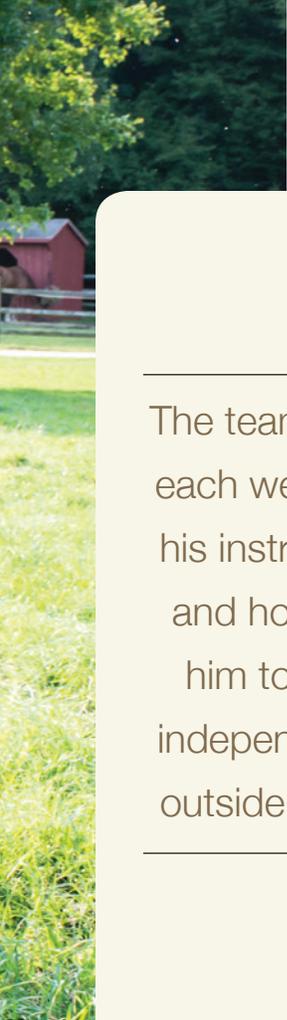


Driving for Independence

An early definition of the word “teamwork” is the way in which a “team” of horses worked together and cooperated as they pulled a carriage or a plow. While High Hopes’ carriages are pulled by one horse at a time, it still takes a team with a determined driver to achieve success.

Maclean “Mac” Sarr motors up the mounting ramp for his carriage driving lesson with a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye. Each week he gets closer to achieving his long-term goal of independence through driving Blessing with minimal help from his instructor and volunteers. Mac was born with cerebral palsy and came to High Hopes in 2016 for the physical benefits that could be achieved by carriage driving. What he has gained is more than physical strength; with the support of his team of family, volunteers, instructor, and horse, he has acquired confidence and a rewarding outlet for his fiercely independent spirit.

Mac’s dedicated team of volunteers include an able-bodied person called a “whip” who rides in the carriage with him and a header who stands at the horse’s head when he enters and exits the vehicle. These volunteers come every week to spend time with Mac and watch him further develop his independent driving skills. However Mac has not just established his independence in the arena. He is now attending Gateway Community College in New Haven where he is taking college courses. Each week, Mac takes the Shoreline East Train from New Haven to Westbrook to meet his mother, Mary Beth, so together they can continue to attend his lesson at High Hopes. “This is, by far, the most parent friendly experience we have ever had,” says Mary Beth. The teamwork executed each week by Mac with his instructor, volunteer and horse are leading him towards greater independence in his life outside of High Hopes and his new dream of completing a four-year college degree, and maybe even a graduate degree.

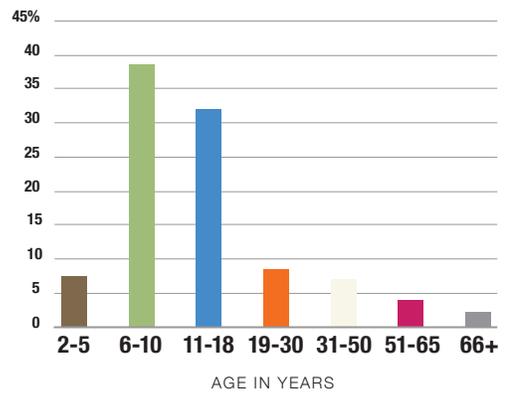


The teamwork executed each week by Mac with his instructor, volunteer and horse are leading him towards greater independence in his life outside of High Hopes.

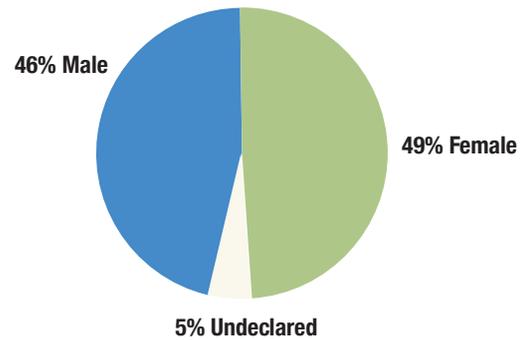
The physical benefits of driving are also apparent for those who knew Mac when he first started at High Hopes. During those first lessons, Mac was not able to trot through corners without losing his balance; relying on the able-bodied whip to help support him. Now in his second year in the program, Mac has learned to activate his core muscles and use them to balance as he drives through corners and at speed. These days Mac spends much of his lesson working at the trot executing ring figures and zipping through a cones course.

Each time Mac drives he keeps his volunteers and his instructor on their toes with his sharp wit and good nature. Each of these positive social interactions with the staff and volunteers at High Hopes strengthen his role as the leader of his own team.

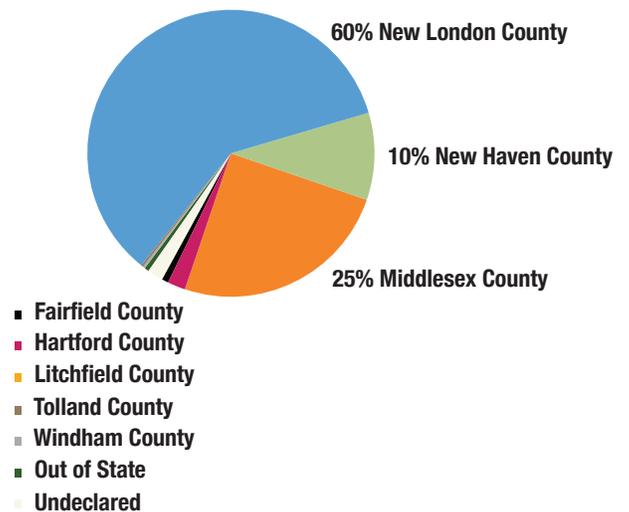
Participant age range



Participant gender



Academic program participant location





Three of the 96% – An Invaluable Team

Ninety-six percent of High Hopes' "workforce" is made up of volunteers.

Some weekly volunteers come with friends or family members; others come as individuals, make friends, and become part of the High Hopes family. Donna, Sharon, and Andrea are three such individuals.

Sharon and Donna have both been volunteers for over fifteen years. They do every job in the barn, from setting up stalls to arranging tack, to bringing in the horses, grooming, and turning them out again when classes are over. Donna takes special care of their feedbags. Sharon lends her sewing skills to keeping the flysheets and masks in good condition.

Andrea has been a High Hopes volunteer for two years. She loves her time in the barn, the smell of hay and the presence of the horses. She values working with Donna and Sharon, "both of whom have shared their knowledge of horses, equipment, and High Hopes' techniques."

Together, Donna, Sharon, and Andrea have become an invaluable team. They share the tasks involved in preparing the barn for the Thursday morning program. They add their work, warmth, and positivity, with each member bringing her unique talents and experience to the team. They enjoy contributing to the program and seeing the progress participants make as they spend time with their favorite horse.

When their volunteer shift is over, Donna, Andrea, and Sharon have made a regular habit of capping off the morning by sharing a congenial lunch in the High Hopes' kitchen where they share recipes and tackle weightier issues of family, health, and community. They are an irreplaceable team that provides strength and support to both High Hopes and to each other.

Teams from Across the World



There's "no I in teamwork"
"learn from the best group of instructors"
"combined wealth of knowledge"

These are all quotes that exemplify the way in which High Hopes training, development and leadership contribute to the therapeutic riding profession across the world. Equally, the way in which incoming trainees work in teams with our staff and volunteers enriches our program, and through it, our community.

From near and far, Instructor-in-Training Candidates learn from the High Hopes' community as they experience the impact that teams of professionals, volunteers, horses, families, and supporters have on the lives of our participants. Armed with that experience, education, and their certifications, new PATH Intl. Instructors have returned home to join, build or lead their horse and human teams to success.

Tracy Sturtevant from Brisbane, Australia.

Teamwork...there truly is no "I" in teamwork. I am lucky to head up a wonderful, hardworking team of riding coaches at the McIntyre Center Riding for the Disabled Center in Brisbane, Australia. This past year I was also fortunate to be a member of the High Hopes family during my mentored teaching "residence." High Hopes excels in bringing passionate learners together, as well as setting the example for demonstrating how a staff that is a genuinely cohesive team can smoothly, effectively, and joyously provide so much opportunity for those with challenges that limit them in other environments.

Nejra Pinjo from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

High Hopes became a place where my dream came true and where I started creating new dreams and friendships. I am pretty blessed to have been able to learn from the best group of instructors who were unselfishly giving me support. All I can say is thank you for helping me help my country and all the voiceless people whose needs are [over]shadowed by all the other problems my country has to face each day.

Erin Cardea from Westport, MA.

Becoming a Registered Instructor with PATH Intl. was a significant accomplishment in my professional career. High Hopes has a well-organized program that engages many of the instructional staff as mentors. Their combined wealth of knowledge and experience guided me and my class of ITC students as we navigated the challenges of teaching in a therapeutic setting. I valued the camaraderie I shared with the other candidates as we immersed ourselves in the world of therapeutic riding. Erin has since joined the High Hopes staff as a part-time instructor while she continues in her full-time role at Johnson and Wales University as an Assistant Professor in the College of Arts & Sciences.

PATH Intl. is the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International; the accrediting body for our industry.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2018

Assets

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$357,329
Pledge and Other Receivables	650,380
Prepaid Expenses	525
Unconditional Promises to Give	14,000

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS \$1,022,234

Property and Equipment – Net \$1,573,331

LONG-TERM ASSETS

Investments 4,081,389

TOTAL LONG-TERM ASSETS \$4,081,389

TOTAL ASSETS \$6,676,954

Liabilities and Net Assets

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$47,718
Accrued Expenses and Deposits	14,261
Advance Fees for Services	41,691

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES \$103,670

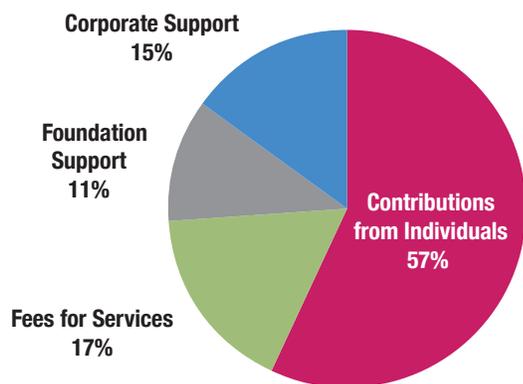
NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$2,123,851
Temporarily Restricted	2,029,397
Permanently Restricted	2,420,036

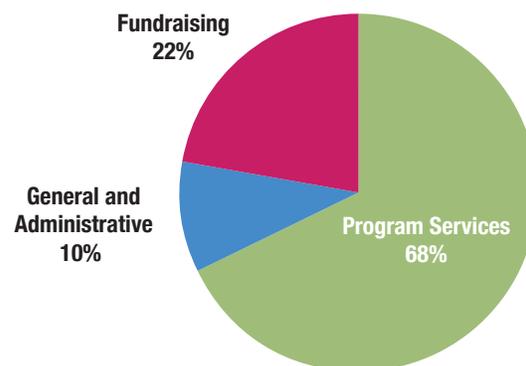
TOTAL NET ASSETS \$6,573,284

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$6,676,954

Support and Revenue



Functional Expenses



THE INITIATION OF AN ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN HAS IMPACTED REVENUE AND EXPENSES.

Staff 2017-2018

Barbara Abrams
Diana Artilles
Tomi Beck
Trudy Burgess
Erin Cardea
Sarah Carlson
Patti Coyle
Sarah Crisp
Imanol Echeverria
Megan Ellis
Lauren Fitzgerald
Karena Garrity*
Pennie Garvin*
Rachel Golden
Liesl Grigerek
Kerrie Guarino
Carolyn Jagielski
Shannon Kelly*
Anna Lennard*
Marie Manero
Kate McCormick
Makayla McPherson
Laura Moya
Lesley Olsen
Juanita Paris
Sara Qua
Cole Sargent
Susan Shulman*
Kitty Stalsburg
Holly Sundmaker
Stephanie Trafka*
Amy Tripson
Carrie Wind

*staff changes during 2017-2018

Trustees for the Fiscal Year 2018-2019

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Mary K. "Sis" Gould †

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Jackie Kangley, Vice Chair
Scott Douglas, Vice Chair
Jeff Ridgway, Vice Chair of Development
Katherine Gibson, Secretary
Deborah Welles, Treasurer

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Sarah Hill Canning
Hannah Metcalf Childs
Mark Fader
Laurie LaTerza
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Barbara Kashanski †
Judith F. Lightfoot
Pete Pierson †
A. Rives Potts
Jeffrey Ridgway
Roger M. Smith
Anthony C. Thurston †
Kelvin N. Tyler

† Deceased

Thank you to: The families and individuals who have been willing to share their stories of Horses and Humans Improving Lives; Michael Fanelli, parent and volunteer, whose photography and layout brings the High Hopes' story to life; and the High Hopes volunteers, Judith Cohen and Jeremy Crisp, who have contributed their writing to our 2017-2018 Annual Report.

Audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2018 was performed by MahoneySabol. Copies are available on request.

