

# TAILS FROM THE BARN

*The latest news and updates from Tara's Chance  
"A place where therapy feels like play"*



*Edited By*

*Miriam Everette*

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## New Horse: Expanding the Barn

*by Matt Howells, Executive Director*

We are excited to introduce our newest member of the herd, Kona! Kona is a 9-year old gelding from Napa, CA. He is a Kentucky Mountain horse. These horses are particularly calm mannered and excellent riding horses. Tara's Chance had a need for a larger program horse to serve larger individuals with special needs and expand program services. Kona is a Class A Kentucky Mountain, which means he stands above 14.1 hands. In fact, at 15.2 hands he is the largest horse Tara's Chance has ever had.

The addition of Kona was made possible by a gift from The Picerne Family Foundation. The Picerne Family Foundation created the Vision Initiatives Program to foster, and support accomplished and motivated mental/behavioral health professionals and educators. To implement the program's funding they reached out to local leaders in the nonprofit community.

One of those leaders was Dr. Dallas Stout. Dr. Stout's daughter Dakota rode at Tara's Chance and recently returned to Tara's Chance in the EAR program. With Dr. Stout's help, Tara's Chance was selected as a recipient of the Vision Initiatives Program. Thank you to The Picerne Family Foundation, The Picerne Group, and Dr. Dallas Stout for bringing Kona to Tara's Chance.



# A Word from Our Leaders

by Matt Howells, Executive Director & Cindy Howells, Program Director

It has been a busy quarter at Tara's Chance. This summer we expanded the Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT) program and added 12 additional program spots on Tuesdays. This addition increased the number of riders being served in that program to fifty-two riders weekly. This reduced our waitlist from sixty-two riders to forty-five. It has been amazing to see so many new faces at Tara's Chance and we are all so excited to serve more children. We welcome all the new families and look forward to the expanded comradery within Tara's Chance. It has been a hot summer and we appreciate the dedication of our staff, volunteers, riders, and families who show up despite the heat.

Since the Equine Assisted Riding (EAR) program launched in May, we have expanded the program to serve 12 individuals with varied special needs. Throughout the last four months we have seen amazing progress in our riders. From Bianca and Annie taking their first ride independently to Bao riding on the trail, we have all been inspired by their progress. We are so excited to welcome back two students to Tara's Chance, Dakota and Jason. Both riders graduated from the EAT program more than 3 years ago and are now able to ride in the EAR program.

Tara's Chance now serves 64 individuals with special needs every week. In the last year we doubled our program participants by expanding our staff and volunteers, acquiring more horses, improving our facilities, and developing a new training certification process. This growth would not have been possible without our generous donors, Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, horses, and community. We are so excited to continue to expand our programs and serve the needs in our community demonstrated by our waiting list of forty-five children with special needs.





# Philanthropy - Rudy Lara & The Lara Team

The Lara Team is one of the largest industrial real estate teams in Los Angeles, Orange County, and the Inland Empire. Since 2013 the Lara Team has closed over a billion dollars in sales and leases with the largest sale of 86 million dollars. The team sells and leases commercial real estate which includes industrial warehouses and manufacturing buildings. Like Tara's Chance, this is a family business that doesn't just treat you like family; they do what it takes to earn the trust to be brought into yours. This team is led by Tara's Chance Board Member Rudy Lara. Rudy has worked in the industrial real estate business for over 40 years. He currently serves as the Executive Vice President/Principal at DAUM Commercial Real Estate Services. Rudy, along with his children Andrew, Jordan, Nathan, and Natalie work together in a unique way that sets them apart from other real estate teams, and that's in the intrinsic knowledge they have of each other's strengths.

Rudy is no stranger to hard work and giving back. As a Fullerton resident, he lives only two minutes from Tara's Chance. One morning he was exploring the neighborhood and witnessed Bella getting out of her van and heading down to take her weekly Saturday riding session. His curiosity led him to learn more about the program and he felt a calling to get involved to serve its mission from that day on. Rudy along with his wife of 42 years, Laura, and their children Andrew, Jordan, Nathan, and Natalie have all made a commitment to support Tara's Chance since that day.

Rudy joined the Board of Directors in September of 2021. Tara's Chance is one of his top charitable priorities and as such Rudy has helped transform Tara's Chance into the program it is today. He believes that we can expand our programs to serve all the children on our waiting list and transform the ranch to meet the needs of our riders.

Over the last two years the Lara Team has contributed more than \$30,000 to Tara's Chance. Their philanthropic support has sponsored Tara's Chance therapy horse Riley, which includes her annual feed, care, veterinary, tack, and boarding expenses. This family business loves supporting Tara's Chance because it too operates as a family business and holds trust and accountability as core values. Jordan shares, "It's important to us to serve a small organization that we can make a major impact on. We not only are able to support our local community in Fullerton but also the greater Southern California area because the riders at Tara's Chance.



# Rider Spotlight-Stone & Steel

by Sarah Veltz

My name is Sarah, and this is our story about finding Tara's Chance. Steel was diagnosed with ADD/ADHD combined type and sensory processing disorder when he was three years old. He was then diagnosed with Autism when he was in kindergarten, he's now eight. My other son Stone was diagnosed with Autism shortly after Steel, he is now ten. Steel had been in quite a few therapies, it was so overwhelming for him, and he usually just shut down.

Being a single mother of three kids, it was hard to find time for everything. Steel would have meltdowns almost everywhere we went, especially if we stayed longer than 15 minutes. This was all new for me and all I wanted to do was find something to help my boys where they didn't completely shut down or run away. Then I found Tara's Chance and we were put on the waitlist. During that time Steel was diagnosed with Chiari Malformation 1. It was just another hurdle, especially since he was so active. Steel was restricted from sports, jumping on trampolines and even activities at OT that he loved. Thankfully he was cleared to ride horses. I will never forget the day Matt called me to tell me the boys could come to their first session. We were also given a scholarship which was a huge blessing. In all honesty I didn't know what to expect, but they were recommended to me by Autism Speaks and I had heard wonderful things about them.

Tara's Chance and their amazing staff and Volunteers were an answer to my many prayers. Everyone was so welcoming and kind. The boys have been riding for almost a year now and I am blown away by how much they have grown. They are on opposite sides of the spectrum, so their goals are very different. The confidence Stone has gained is incredible, along with his core strength and communication skills. Steel is able to calm his body and focus, which is amazing and has helped him so much. I was always searching for something to help Steel long term. Something he could do without having to go to OT, something he could take home with him, something he could take anywhere with him in life. Thanks to Tara's Chance, we've found it. The boys are so excited to go every week and make sure I get videos and pictures so they can show their sister and other family members. Steel loves running over to Zeke, the ranch therapy dog, as soon as we get there and cuddles with him until the session starts and again after it's over. He frequently tells me, "You can just leave me here with Zeke." God knew, this was exactly what my boys needed. The staff and volunteers really care, they know your child, and they tailor the sessions to meet their individual needs. Being a part of this amazing program is truly a gift and we have been so blessed by it.





We will be moving out of state in a few months and the hardest part of leaving is saying goodbye to Tara's Chance. The bond that Cindy and Steel have made will forever melt me. I love watching them together. Steel even asked me, "When we move, can Miss Cindy come with us?" Knowing that your child made such a connection with someone in such a positive way is one of the best feelings. Everyone at Tara's Chance became like a second family to us. We will miss them so much but feel so very grateful to have been given this opportunity. We can only pray to find a place so full of amazing, kind, and genuine people on our next adventure. The world is a better place because of Tara's Chance and all the beautiful people who make it special. The world needs more people and places like Tara's Chance. I will always hold a special place in my heart for this second family, as will the boys.



## Volunteer Spotlight - Gail

Gail is a retired elementary school teacher who has always loved horses. As a teenager one of her favorite hobbies was to go horseback riding with her girlfriends along the riverbed. On every childhood vacation she would be sure to find a horse ranch so that she could ride horses with her family.

After retirement she started to volunteer in radiology at CHOC. Her husband, Steve DiTolla is a member of the Fullerton South Rotary Club with Tim Howells and a member at Alta Vista Country Club where he started to learn about Tara's Chance. After attending Riding With the Stars with the Fullerton South Rotary Club four years ago, and hearing so many wonderful things from Steve about Tara's Chance, Gail contacted Cindy and said she was willing to do anything needed. Gail began volunteering when Tara's Chance resumed riding following the pandemic and has been doing whatever it takes since! She cleans stalls, helps Cindy sandbag during heavy rains, assists with the Gala, the Ryan Nolan golf tournament, and feeding and grooming horses. She's now a sidewalker and is learning to lead Riley and Ryan. We thank Gail for all of the dedicated hours she contributes as a Tara's Chance!



# Board Bits

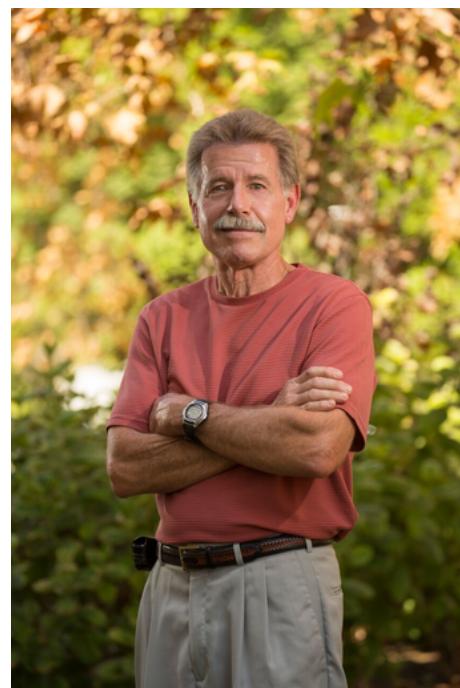
“Your life does not get better by chance, it gets better by change.”

Jim Rohn

by Louise Hernandez, Board President

The change for me came in 2018, when I was invited to join the Board of Directors for Tara's Chance. Fast forward four years and my term as Board President will end with elections in September. In reality, this isn't goodbye to Tara's Chance but an opportunity for me to explore other avenues of service within the board—a chance to get better by change. I have thoroughly enjoyed representing a distinguished group of individuals. Their selfless attitudes and can-do spirits have been awe-inspiring and a constant source of encouragement to me. The mission of Tara's Chance brings us together as a team; the outcome is success.

Another change for the best is the addition of Paul Miller to the Board of Directors. Paul brings over 40 years of experience in the world of our special needs community, ranging from support services to education to training. He is a Founding Director of numerous programs, including Ability Counts, which offers vocational training and employment opportunities for adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities. We welcome Paul with open arms and anticipate an enduring source of valuable counseling going forward. On behalf of all board members, including Nancy Capel, Miriam Everette, Francine Flores, Carol Geisbauer, Larry Houser, Dottie Jensen, Rudy Lara, Judy Metzger, Paul Miller, Susan Smith and Leslie Sorrells, it is an honor to applaud our founders, Cindy and Tim Howells, for the chance they took in 2012, and celebrate all the lives they have changed for the better.



Come join us every 1st Tuesday of the month at 5 pm here at Tara's Chance for Yoga taught by Cristal Drake. It is a donation based class and free for all volunteers and staff!



## Yoga at Tara's Chance

In the Arena  
The First Tuesday of Every Month  
5:00 PM - BEGINNERS WELCOME!

Cristal  
yoga



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Annual Dinner & Rider Showcase

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