

# TAILS FROM THE BARN

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



*Edited By  
Miriam Everette*

## Program Update

*By Cindy Howells, Program Director*

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We are pleased to announce we have eight new riders off the waitlist! Please welcome Oia, Reagan, Cole, Jacob, Braedon, Zakiy, Christian, and Daniel. All these riders have been on the waitlist for two years. We are excited to witness their growth and confidence here at Tara's Chance. Oia has had the quickest improvement I have seen in a long time. She is holding herself up longer and longer every week we ride.

We are continuing to see improvement with our riders every week since returning after their long absence. Tianyu's core strength and willingness to participate in his individualized program has improved even in the short time he has been back.

I am pleased to share, Ryan and Murphy are continuing to serve more riders, while lightening the load off our senior staff of horses. Riley says, "It's about time you youngsters."

Oliver always looks forward to visitors and continues to get his exercise chasing the hay wagon.

# What's New?

by Matt Howells, Executive Director

Tara's Chance reopened after the pandemic's winter surge with our less vulnerable riders. Through the Spring, we brought back more students while continuing our COVID protocols of hand washing, mask wearing, social distancing, sanitizing, and more.



Watching our program come back to life after this most challenging year has been magical. Just five weeks ago, our last four riders returned to the saddle for the first time since March 2020. Not only have all our riders returned, but we are actively adding new riders off our 45 rider waitlist.

Our newest riders in the program first joined the waitlist in 2018. Our staff and volunteers are working so hard to expand our program and serve the need for equine therapy in our community. We are so excited to welcome our new riders and watch them flourish on the back of a horse. A special thank you to Carol Geisbauer, the Orange County Community Foundation, and the Murphy Family Foundation for allowing Tara's Chance to hire a Volunteer Coordinator. This position is dedicated to the recruiting, training, and managing of all our volunteers. Having trained and committed volunteers is the largest restraint to growing our program.

Just before the pandemic changed our lives, we began a partnership with My Day Counts. Their mission is to train people with developmental and other intellectual disabilities for success in life and work. The pandemic paused this partnership and we are so excited that on August 8th it returned when two clients of My Day Counts came to Tara's Chance to gain working experience in a stable setting. Tara's Chance is so excited to partner with such an amazing organization.

This year Riding with the Stars will be our biggest event ever! We hope that you and your friends will join us on October 2nd at Tara's Chance. Come see our riders show off their skills during our live demonstrations. We will also have Vinny the Voice, both live and silent auctions, live music, dinner, and plenty of drinks. Come support our riders, parents, horses, and community in the magical arena where our riders inspire all of us everyday. This year's event will be a hybrid event, so if you are unable to attend in person, please join us online. Thank you to our presenting sponsor, the Credit Union of Southern California and US Bank for their continued support of our program, Southern California Gas, Inspirations Gift and Home, and everyone for supporting this event and our mission.



## Board Bits

by Louise Hernandez, Board President

Each day, we make decisions from the minute we wake up, some of which affect us individually and some which affect many. In 2012, an anxious mom decided that she would not stop until she found an equine therapy center that would accept the challenges her young daughter faced. After meeting this mom and her daughter, Cindy and Tim Howells made a decision to resolve this mom’s anguish, and co-founded Tara’s Chance. These two brave decisions spearheaded the success of a nonprofit, which still maintains the promise to promote the physical, cognitive and social well-being of those with special needs.



This leads me to introducing you to the newest members of the Board of Directors – Dottie Jensen and Susan Smith. Our decision to approach these selfless, community-minded individuals, and their decisions to accept our invitations, will undeniably allow us to continue our positive efforts to support Cindy and Tim’s vision. On behalf of the newest and all board members, including Nancy Capel, Miriam Everette, Francine Flores, Carol Geisbauer, Larry Houser, Rudy Lara, Judy Metzger and Leslie Sorrells, thank you for the decision that ultimately connected you to the equine therapy family of Tara’s Chance. To help us continue our mission, please don’t let your decision stop with you...spread the word!

### Have a Story?

If you have a story, pictures, or something you would like in the newsletter please email them to Miriam

Everette at [info@taraschance.org](mailto:info@taraschance.org)

# Addy's Back in the Saddle

by Jessica and Chris Castillo



When Adelyn Hope was born everything seemed normal. It wasn't until she was not hitting her milestones at about 6 months, that we realized something might be wrong. It took a referral from an ophthalmologist at 1 year, for an MRI, for the doctors to realize she had a rare congenital brain abnormality called polymicrogyria. The folds in her brain did not develop in the way that they should. This meant that she would have global delays- non-verbal, seizure disorder, feeding difficulties, non-ambulatory.

We had no idea what to expect and we were not always given the best outlook by doctors. So our normal shifted to a new normal filled with neurology appointments, seizure meds, hospital stays, therapy sessions- PT, OT and speech. And after years of struggling with feeding and keeping her healthy she had a feeding tube placed.

Five years ago, Addy's older sister was interested in doing a report on Hippotherapy. We knew about Tara's Chance through the Fullerton community and I reached out to Tim to ask if he would do an interview with Kylan, our oldest daughter. I brought Addy along for the interview and Tim said right there that she should start riding. She was only three years old and I thought she was way too small and weak to be able to do it but Cindy wanted to get her on a horse as soon as possible.

Over the past five years we've seen so much growth in Addy. She has surpassed all of our expectations. Her core strength and balance have improved so much. She went from this tiny little thing that couldn't hold her head up to being able to pull herself up and cruise around the house. Her hand eye coordination and fine motor skills have improved as well. Her time at riding is without a doubt the best part of her week.

She gets so excited as soon as we drive up to the arena. She loves her team and is so engaged with them. She loves all the attention that she gets and lights up when people sing to her and clap for her. She is so clearly proud of herself as she rides around the arena. Addy can have some really crabby times during her other therapy sessions, but she is never crabby during riding- that is unless you try to take her rings away from her.





When I say it's the best part of Addy's week, it's truly the best part of our week. To see your nonverbal child express that much joy is truly moving. We know how much Tara's Chance has brought into our lives and are so thankful for every day that she gets to ride.

## Volunteer Spotlight

by Laura Alvarado

Tara's Chance is my happy place! I met Cindy about 16 years ago when I decided to get back into horseback riding. Despite having ridden horses for many years, (including showing and jumping) after meeting Cindy I realized I had a lot to learn about horse basics. I took lessons on her amazing horse Tara, eventually leased and then bought a horse that I boarded at the stables. We became great friends and I admired how she and Tim ran the ranch, mentored people that boarded there, and how Cindy taught people not only to ride, but also the very important basics about horse safety.

Cindy and Tim are the reason I volunteer here. They are the heart and soul of Tara's Chance. They've created a beautiful place for riders, volunteers and employees to come together in a magical way. It's a testament to them that their family is now involved in the program and incredible volunteers/employees continue to come day in and day out to help make the program a great success.

When Cindy and Tim decided to start Tara's Chance I was happy to support the grass roots effort. It was a dream that took a ton of hard work and it's heartwarming to see the incredible program it is today. For many years after the program launched my corporate job and family responsibilities kept me from spending much time at the ranch. About four years ago though I retired and was able to begin dedicating a lot more time to the program. When Covid hit I became a full time caregiver for our grandchildren so I was not able to spend much time at the stables. Now that the babies are in daycare I'm excited to be back!

My primary responsibilities include working with the horses, but I pitch in anywhere I'm needed. I love being at the ranch and watching the students improve with every lesson on these special horses. I'm excited to see the program expand so we can serve more students who need this incredibly special form of therapy!



# Employee Spotlight

by Steve Griggs

Cindy and I go way back...I grew up with Cindy in Anaheim and came to Coyote Hills Ranch in 2007 to do trail riding. I had been volunteering at a horse ranch and was looking for something to do to keep busy as I recovered from kidney disease. At that time, Cindy had a dream of creating Tara's Chance for disabled kids but was still riding her horse, Tara. As the equine therapy ranch developed, I cared for the horses, did sidewalking and assisted with lessons.

Working at TC has been a blessing since I have had such flexibility in my schedule which I needed due to my health conditions. Throughout Covid I helped maintain the horses. I love being around the kids and my years of experience now, have helped me to grow and learn so much about the kids, horses and expand my responsibilities at the ranch. Being with the kids, seeing their pleasure and physical and cognitive growth, has helped me to keep positive about myself and my own health issues.

As difficult as it's going to be, I've decided to move on. My TC experience has kept me going and productive for all these years, however I'll be coming back to visit these amazing kids and retired Willow and Ryan who I am very attached to!



# My Day Counts

by Kinsley Brittain

We are so proud to tell you about our partnership with Tara's Chance. My Day Counts, is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to training adults with intellectual and other developmental disabilities for success in life and work.

Our two organizations met at an Autism awareness event in 2019 and have been breaking down barriers often associated with individuals with disabilities ever since. Our adults are providing high quality maintenance to the arena, cleaning out the stables, and assisting with repairs and amenities that make the ranch safe and enjoyable for everyone. Most of our participants haven't had the opportunity to be around horses prior to coming to Tara's Chance, making this location a favorite training site. We are thrilled that they are learning transferable job skills, which can be used in a variety of occupations.

This partnership serves as an inspiration and model of a true community partnership! You can catch the My Day Counts crew every Wednesday morning at Tara's Chance! For more information about how they are providing life-empowering programs and services to adults with developmental disabilities, please visit:

[www.mydaycounts.org](http://www.mydaycounts.org).

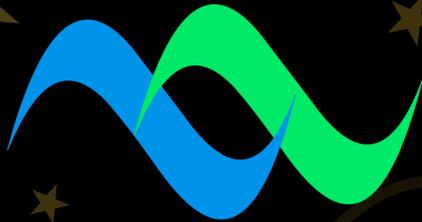


10 / 02 / 2021

TARA'S CHANCE

# Riding with the Stars

PRESENTED BY



Credit Union of  
Southern California

ANNUAL DINNER AND RIDER SHOWCASE

HYBRID EVENT



**VIRTUAL EVENT**

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/BDBD4XGR3HQ](https://youtu.be/BDBD4XGR3HQ)

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

**IN PERSON EVENT**

219 E CLAIRE AVE  
FULLERTON CA 92835

5:30 - 8:00 P.M.

FOR TICKETS & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES  
VISIT [TARASCHANCE.GIVESMART.COM](http://TARASCHANCE.GIVESMART.COM)

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# Tara's Chance Calendar Events

## September 2021

- 9/14 Horse Leading Training
- 9/18 Volunteer Appreciation Movie Night
- 9/15 Check In training for Gala
- 9/21 Check In training for Gala
- 9/18 Summer Semester Ends
- 9/22 Fall Semester Begins
- 9/26-10/09 Two week break in Program

## October 2021

- 10/02 Riding with The Stars Gala
- 10/10 Fall Semester Resumes
- 10/12 Horse Leading Training
- 10/19 Horse Leading Training
- 10/30 Open House

# Tara's Chance Volunteer Opportunities

Tara's Chance is in need of a few different types of volunteers in the next coming months. We are in need of volunteers to help with horse leading during our riding days. If you would like to volunteer for this please reach out to Katherine at [office@taraschance.org](mailto:office@taraschance.org).

At our annual gala on Oct 2, 2021 we will be needing some extra hands on deck.

Volunteers are needed in:

- Check In
- Food Servers
- Drink Servers
- Bartend
- Parking attendants
- Set up
- Break down

If you are able to volunteer for any of these positions please fill out the form below <https://forms.gle/JTA1piWbqVo57m1s8>

Thank You for your continued support of Tara's Chance!

# Thank You to Our Sponsors

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