

# 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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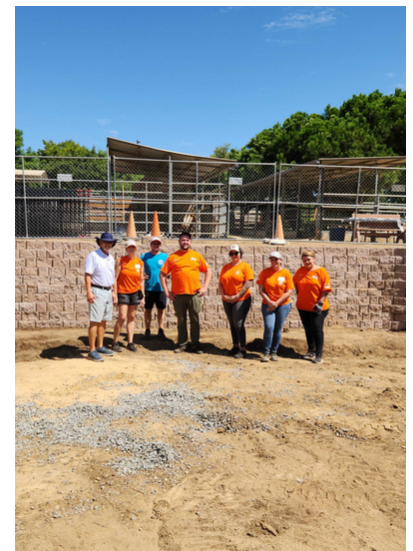
## Program Director Update

by Cindy Howells, Program Director

We completed our expansion on the arena! The addition has been much needed for our horses to exercise and to create more space to serve our riders. There are so many things to consider when taking on a project like this, many changes and obstacles but we are almost there! The extra space gives us room to move when our riders are distracted by outside sounds.

We are able to move away from distractions and change their environment to increase focus. It also gives us more room to play ball with riders, which is one of the most physical, fun, and engaging movements they do. It also helps with safety by keeping the horses more distant during our lessons and being further away from potential sounds that horses dislike. Our horses enjoy the extra space to run in when turned out to play. Before the expansion they only had the opportunity to run more than 100 feet in our lower arena. However, the lower arena is not always accessible due to weather and muddy conditions when it rains. Since this arena is 30 feet above the lower arena it floods less and thus our horses have the opportunity for more exercise more frequently.

Another update is that we have a few new four legged friends to add to our program! I am excited to introduce Big Oliver, who is over 17 hands tall and Patrick and Cowboy who are two miniature horses.



Thank you to the Home Depot & 365 Connect





# Program Director Update Cont.

by Cindy Howells, Program Director

Oliver is a Canadian Warmblood. He was a professional vaulting horse that competed in international competitions. He is 17 years old and is donated to us by the Massaro Family. They wanted to retire Oliver to a loving, caring home. Oliver is a gentle giant that will be great for our larger riders.



Patrick and Cowboy were donated in honor of Mel Shaw. We are so excited to have them as a part of Tara's Chance. Our riders have been getting so much joy from them. They help build confidence and with sensory issues with students that have fear of horses. Riders help with walking, grooming, and helping with the miniature horses needs that in turn helps the riders feel important. Tara's Chance welcomes Oliver, Patrick and Cowboy to their new home!





## 5th Annual Ryan Nolan Memorial Golf Tournament

**Monday May 6, 2024**

**Los Coyotes Country Club-Buena Park**






# Rider Spotlight - Josiah

by Tiffany Montero, Josiah's Mom

I was told about Tara's Chance by my Mom who works in Fullerton and mentioned TC to me. After a little research, I found how extremely beneficial equine assisted therapy is for people with disabilities. Josiah has always had a love for horses, so it was an easy decision to put him on the waiting list.



Josiah started riding at Tara's Chance in October of 2021 and it's been an amazing experience! From his very first ride, he jumped right on Maggie and enjoyed every minute of it! We have seen not only his mobility strengthen but his confidence grow like crazy!

He absolutely loves being at the ranch and showing off all of his skills! He makes riding a horse on his knees while in airplane mode, look like a breeze! We feel so blessed to be a part of Tara's Chance, we really feel like family here and we can't wait to see his future gains!





# Executive Director Update

by Matt Howells, Executive Director

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who contributed to making this year's Riding with the Stars our most successful event to date. Your support allowed us to raise an incredible 65% more than our previous year's efforts. This outstanding achievement ensures that Tara's Chance can continue its vital mission of serving riders with special needs, and we're excited to expand our reach to accommodate the over 90 children currently on our waiting list.

This accomplishment is a testament to the dedication of each and every one of you to our mission. A sincere thank you to those who generously donated through Riding with the Stars and our event sponsors. Special appreciation goes to Dottie Jensen and Louise Hernandez, our co-chairs, for their exceptional leadership and ensuring that everyone had a fantastic time.



We extend our gratitude to all the volunteers and in-kind donors who played a crucial role in making the event a resounding success. The hundreds of volunteers who selflessly give their time make it possible to keep event expenses below 20% of the funds raised. A special thank you goes to Jean-Luc, Jude, Addy, Olivia, and their families for sharing their inspiring stories, showing us what is possible at Tara's Chance.

This event felt like a heartwarming gathering of friends and family at Tara's Chance. We feel incredibly blessed to have a supportive community that believes in our mission of providing equestrian therapy for those with special needs. Riding with the Stars became a celebration of the remarkable work accomplished at Tara's Chance throughout the past year. Seeing so many special individuals who contribute to making Tara's Chance extraordinary come together was truly heartening. Thank you all for being a part of this incredible journey and for your unwavering belief in the transformative power of equestrian therapy.





# Vinny & Mia Jiu Jitsu

by Vinny Lopez and Pauline McWatt

Three years ago I met the incredible, vibrant, Mia with a gorgeous smile on her face. I had the privilege of meeting Mia at our annual, Riding with the Stars Gala for Tara’s Chance and I immediately fell in love with her enthusiasm and amazing energy and personality. This last gala she surprised me with the news that she was moving to Arizona so I instantly told her, “I’m teaching you jiu jitsu when you get to Arizona”. She gave me the biggest smile and now I’m honored to share that Mia is three weeks into her jiu jitsu journey and is doing incredibly well! She is very strong, willing to learn, but most importantly, she is having fun. Mia, thank you for being so brave and trying something new and intimidating. I am so proud of how well you are doing and I’m blessed to be your jiu jitsu professor.

-Vinny The Voice Lopez



Tara’s Chance will always hold a special place in our hearts. They’re family to us now, so when we moved to Arizona in October, one of the hardest parts of leaving was saying goodbye to them.

It was through Tara’s Chance that we met Vinny the Voice, another very special person. When he found out that we were moving to Arizona, he asked if he could teach Mia jiu jitsu. Well she just finished her third lesson with Vinny and absolutely loves it. It was tough for Mia leaving Cindy and everyone but thankfully she now has something to look forward to every Monday. Vinny has been doing his own research on the best ways to teach Mia and has been doing a great job. We can see this being another great therapy for her, making her stronger, building her confidence and helping to keep her disciplined. Thank you Vinny and thank you Tara’s Chance.

-Pauline McWatt





# Board Update

by Susan Smith, Board President



We are beyond thrilled with the generosity of our community in supporting Tara's Chance over the last fiscal year (November 2022- October 2023). With your help, we have been able to expand access to services, develop new programming, and open Board discussions on meeting the needs of the future. When you meet the clients we serve, you feel an immense sense of satisfaction that through equine assisted activities and therapies Tara's Chance is improving the quality of life for those we serve.

With your support and the leadership of our Board of Directors and staff, Tara's chance is in an excellent position to move forward in fiscal year 2023-2024 toward even greater success. During the Tara's Chance Gala, we shared our incredible appreciation to Larry Houser who just completed six years of service on the Board of Directors. Larry will be missed but his legacy of dedication and service will be carried forward by the current Board of Directors. The leadership of our governing Board is essential in making the strategic decisions that will continue us moving forward. I'd like to express my gratitude congratulations to the following individuals for their election as officers and Committee Chairs for the Board of Director's for fiscal year 2023-2024. These individuals, along with our Board members will no doubt have a profound impact on the continuing growth and development of Tara's Chance.

Susan Smith, President

Paul Miller, Vice President and Chair, Program Committee

Leslie Sorrells, Treasurer

Judy Metzger, Secretary

Louis Hernandez, Chair, Donor Stewardship Committee

Dottie, Jensen, Chair, Finance Committee

Dr. Dallas Stout, Chair, Board Development Committee

Nancy Capel, Board Member

Carol Geisbauer, Board Member

Miriam "Cookie" Everette, Board Member and Newsletter Editor

On behalf of our Board leadership, thank you for your belief in the Mission of Tara's Chance. With your support, we will continue promoting the physical, cognitive, and social well-being of those with special needs through equine assisted activities and therapies. Together we can make this a place where therapy feels like play.

With sincere appreciation,

Susan B. Smith, President, Tara's Chance Board of Directors



# Volunteer Highlight

by Katelyn Ripley, Volunteer

My dad introduced me to Tara's Chance. He met Matt through Fullerton Rotary who explained what the program was all about. I'd been interested in working with people with special needs and disabilities, so he suggested looking into the program. I have volunteered every week as a side walker since the summer of 2021. Everyone at Tara's Chance is incredible to work with and seeing how much of a difference they make for each student makes me want to keep coming back to volunteer for as long as I can!

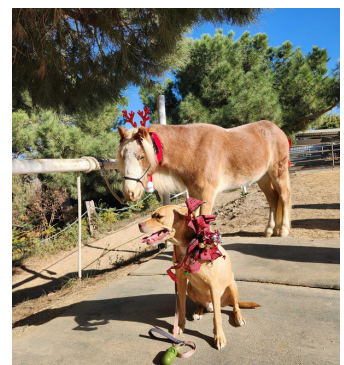
I go to school online part time and I'm studying psychology and child development. I'm currently running a small crochet business!

We truly appreciate Katelyn and love having her here at Tara's Chance! Thank you Katelyn!



# Movin' to the Holidays

Our Board member Miriam Everette hosted a Movin' to the Holidays at Tara's Chance on December 3rd for TC riders and their families. There was a dog parade and a horse parade, both dressed in their finest holiday outfits. As well as a visit from Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus! Riders and their families enjoyed moving to holiday music, visiting with Santa, pictures with Ryan, and special treats. Thank you Miriam for hosting this wonderful party!





# Thank You

Wilson W. Phelps Foundation  
KNOC OC Chapter Charities  
Murphy Family Foundation  
Fullerton South Rotary  
US Bank  
Inspirations Gift & Home  
John and Jeanette Svet

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Amigos de los Niños  
Woman's Club of Fullerton  
The Lara Team  
Frank Nigro Columbian Fd.  
Dhont Family Foundation  
ALPHA  
Laura and Kurt Alvarado

Credit Union of SoCal  
Gable Tax Group  
Yorba Linda Woman's Club  
Judy's Joy  
The Summit House  
Kristoff Family  
YMI Jeans

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Orange County Community Foundation  
Kimberly Ann Williams  
Guez Family  
Eagle Print Dynamics  
Eddie Israel Team

Ebell Club of Fullerton  
OC Elder Law  
Carol Phelps  
Flam Family  
John H. Grace Foundation

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Butler Pediatric Dentistry  
Azria Family  
Simsolo Family  
Twisted Vine  
People Partners Foundation  
Elizabeth Camp

Kyle Kehner  
Carol Geisbauer  
VIP Rubber  
Weidner Family  
King Off Road Shocks  
Oliver Family

La Habra Police Dept.  
Yorba Linda Sunrise Rotary  
A3 Properties  
Furton Family  
Hyundai Motors  
Salma Bushala-Hamud

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Century 21 Discovery  
Fullerton Rotary Club  
McWatt Family  
Chad Holland  
Chris Koorstad  
Martinazzi Family  
John Wedge  
Overholt Family  
Lamppost Pizza  
McKinley Family  
Capel & Associates

Hutchison Family  
Bob & Elizabeth Jahncke  
Theo Posch  
Turissini Family  
Photo-Sonics, Inc  
Page Family  
KF Professional Group  
Todd & Jana Williams  
Susan & Gary Smith  
Gonzales Family  
Rojas Family  
Pacheco & Pacheco

Tricia Eagan Ojala  
Quayle Family  
Barbara Eller  
Ellen Skaggs  
Dave Paynter  
Topline Veterinary  
Doug Chaffee  
Christine Snowberger  
Bobbett Family  
The Smart Fit Method  
Watts Family