



# HEROES AND HORSES

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



A black and white photograph of three men wearing cowboy hats riding horses in a mountainous landscape. The man on the left is looking towards the center, the man in the middle is looking towards the right, and the man on the right is looking towards the center. The horses are in the foreground, and the background shows a range of mountains under a clear sky.

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THIS PROGRAM IS NOT LIKE ANY OTHER VETERAN PROGRAM I HAVE BEEN PART OF. I AM NOW A WALKING, TALKING, RIDING AMBASSADOR FOR THE PROGRAM. EVEN NOW, I THINK ABOUT HOW EVERY CHOICE I MAKE, EVERYTHING I DO, HOW WILL THIS IMPACT HEROES AND HORSES.

TO SAY THAT HEROES AND HORSES MADE AN IMPACT ON ME IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. THEY SAY THE OUTSIDE OF A HORSE IS GOOD FOR THE INSIDE OF A MAN, I WILL ADD TO THAT BY SAYING HEROES AND HORSES IS GOOD FOR HEALING A VETERAN'S SOUL.

-SD, 2017 PROGRAM GRADUATE



## DEAR FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS, AND COLLEAGUES;

Every year since the creation of this organization, I try to recap the process that you all know as “Heroes and Horses”. It’s hard to convey true emotion and experience in a few short words, but since you’re reading this, you probably know what we’re all about. You know that life is hard, unpredictable, and often unexplainable—you don’t need to be a veteran or soldier to understand that. You are, no doubt, facing your own challenges, and yet you chose to extend your only free hand to those who gave their lives for you and this great nation. Thank you. None of this is possible without your support.

At Heroes and Horses, we aren’t afraid to challenge how people think. We have difficult conversations and push to evolve every day. We fundamentally believe that the cure to pain is not found at a liquor store, or in a bottom line—it’s in choices. Do not leave those up to anyone else.

As you read this report, think about every life you played a role in impacting. We are not your run-of-the-mill nonprofit. We are a team on a mission: A mission for change.

My name is Micah Fink. This has been the greatest challenge I have ever faced, and I want to thank you for facing it with me. Goodbye, 2018—hello, new challenges.



Micah Fink



A close-up, black and white photograph of a horse's eye. The eye is dark and reflective, looking slightly to the right. The surrounding fur is dark and textured. The lighting is dramatic, with highlights on the eye's surface and the horse's coat.

## **OUR MISSION**

Our mission at Heroes and Horses is to offer combat veterans an alternative solution for defining and approaching their physical and mental scars—a solution that does not include prescription medications, or traditional psychotherapy, but rather the opportunity to use tools to redefine their purpose, rediscover their inner strength, and maximize their potential by taking ownership of their lives for the first time since leaving service.

## **OUR VISION**

To prove—through the collection and analysis of data—that our program is more effective at treating PTSD than the one-size-fits-all solutions that are currently available to our veterans, and then present this data to Washington, D.C. government officials in an effort to become the catalyst for major veteran policy reform.

A person wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a plaid shirt is sitting on a horse in a forest. The person is looking towards the left. The background shows tall trees and a mountain range.

## DOES "1" MATTER?

A common theme in the nonprofit world is that “more is more.” The more kids you save, the better; the more homeless individuals you help, the better; the more veterans you “serve” the better—but is that always the case? This year, we’ll have 24 veterans in our 40-day program, and next year we’ll have 36. You’re probably thinking, “That’s nothing!” However, we would argue that it is, in fact, something.

At the core of our values is the idea that numbers don’t matter, outcomes do. We believe that one life matters just as much as one hundred, because all it takes is one person to change the world.

Martin Luther King? One person. Gandhi? One person. Mother Teresa? One person.

Do we want to work with as many veterans as we can? Of course. But we made a promise to ourselves that this organization would never scale to a point that would compromise the integrity and efficacy of the program. Because if what we do here isn’t working, we might as well pack up our bags and go home. The last thing this country needs is another ineffective nonprofit. That said, with the correct infrastructure and funding, we have every intention to grow while carefully ensuring that we continue to produce effective and sustainable results.



A man wearing a cowboy hat and a vest is riding a light-colored horse in a grassy field. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. The overall tone is serene and natural.

## H&H SNAPSHOT

Our 40-day program—the longest veteran program in the US—utilizes expedition-style horse pack trips (led by experienced instructors, many of whom are veterans and program graduates) to teach self-reliance, teamwork, and perseverance. Combined with a leadership program, required reading, physical fitness routine, and whole food eating, it is a true 360-degree approach to addressing the physical and mental obstacles that our veterans face.

## WHY WE'RE DIFFERENT

Many programs for veterans suffering from PTSD fail when it comes to realistic and sustainable rehabilitation. Common solutions—including over-prescribing medications and shielding from stress-inducing situations—are short-sighted and don't address core issues. Our program does not provide shortcuts or an easy way out. Instead, we give our veterans the resources and direction to create lasting change.

Is it challenging? Yes. Is it intense? Absolutely.

And, perhaps most importantly, our program demands that our participants look within themselves to rediscover their inner strength, confidence, and purpose.

THIS IS #NOTAVACATION

# 2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

## JANUARY

We joined our friends from Filson at their flagship store in Seattle for a private screening of “500 Miles”

We began offering our full-time employees health insurance

## FEBRUARY

The H&H team drove to the Utah BLM to adopt 9 wild mustangs to be featured in our Mustang Legacy Program, then incorporated into our 2018 program

## APRIL

H&H Founder/CEO, Micah Fink, spoke at TEDxBozeman

We hired a COO to join our team and further elevate the organization

## MAY

We raised \$16,706 as part of the 2018 Give Big Gallatin Valley 24-hour fundraising event

## JUNE

This was the first year that we ran 3 classes, putting a total of 24 veterans through our program

## SEPTEMBER

We hosted our first fundraising gala in Bozeman, MT and successfully raised a net revenue of almost \$400,000 in one evening

## OCTOBER

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation awarded us with the second installment of their 2-year capacity grant match

## NOVEMBER

We switched to a new donor management system so that we can create a better user experience for our constituents

## DECEMBER

We ended 2018 with a 99.91% revenue increase over the previous year

2018

## 2018 BY THE NUMBERS

2018 was our biggest fundraising year to date. This financial foundation is allowing us to begin laying the groundwork for scaling our program, as the need is increasing, along with the number of applications we are receiving annually.

### OVERVIEW

**\$1,271,533.66**

REVENUE

+99.91% FROM 2017

**\$860,984.36**

EXPENSES

+31.73% FROM 2017

**\$406,439.30**

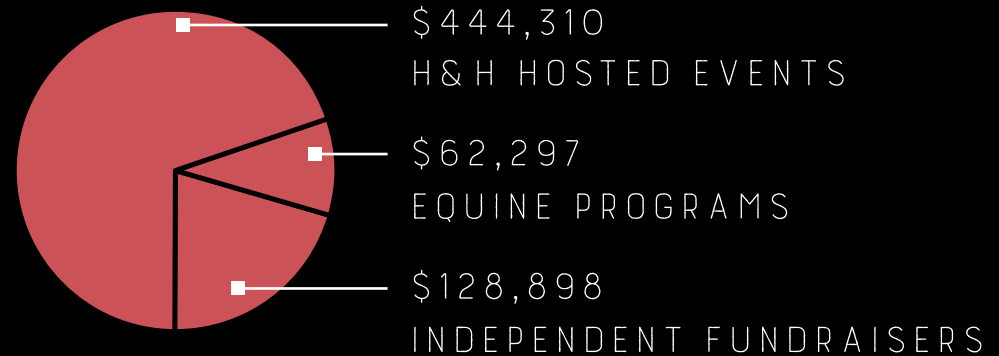
NET REVENUE

+2414.18% FROM 2017

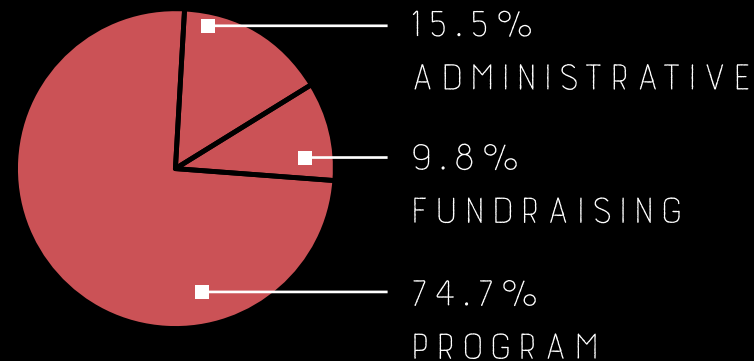
**\$795,535**

NET ASSETS

### FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS



### EXPENSE SUMMARY





## 2018 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

At Heroes and Horses we are constantly assessing and shifting our program in order to remain innovative and effective because, at the end of the day, it's all about outcomes and results. In addition to running the classes in 2018, we also incorporated the following:



WHOLEFOOD-BASED  
EATING PLAN THAT  
MIRRORED THE  
WHOLE30 APPROACH



40-DAY LEADERSHIP  
PROGRAM WITH REQUIRED  
READING OF "THE  
OBSTACLE IS THE WAY"  
BY RYAN HOLIDAY, AND  
"LEGACY" BY JAMES KERR



DAILY PHYSICAL  
FITNESS REGIMEN  
WHICH INCORPORATED  
A MINDFULNESS  
PRACTICE

Why did we add these additional components? Because we believe that you can't just "treat" one part of a person—you have to address what is happening in the mind, body and soul in order to make a true shift. This is an unprecedented 360-degree approach that we are taking, and we have seen profound changes happen as a result of making these additions to our program.

Our team also collected before-and-after interviews with each individual who went through the program, and this data is being compiled into short videos that will be released throughout 2019.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead to 2019 and beyond, we're launching new events and programs to help make Heroes and Horses even stronger for our participants, employees and supporters.

### PROGRAM UPDATES

- We are excited to announce that we will be leasing Jumping Horse Ranch in Ennis, MT to be utilized as the home base for our 2019 program;
- In 2019 we will launch a fundraising initiative to purchase our own ranch, which will allow us to further scale our program;
- We continue to fine-tune our program, and further develop our 360-model to address the mind, body and soul;
- We will adopt a handful of ex-bucking horses in 2019 as part of our goal to repurpose horses and mustangs for use in our program;
- In 2018 we conducted "before and after" interviews of all participants which will be released to the public as a 2019 video series entitled "Uninterrupted Data."

### STAFF WELLNESS

→ In an effort to support our high-functioning and hard working staff members, we will initiate a company-wide Wellness Program, providing our employees with a monthly stipend to sign up for any type of physical fitness classes that they choose.

### OUR EVENTS

- We will host three fundraising events in 2019:
  - A co-branded event in Austin, Texas with YETI,
  - A rodeo in Laredo, Texas, and
  - Our annual Fundraising Gala in Bozeman, MT

### NEW COURSE

→ In 2019 we'll launch the Heroes and Horses Equine Apprenticeship Course, which will be available for a select number of program graduates. Participants will further sharpen their equine skills and, upon completion of the program, they will be eligible for job placement with various ranches and outfitters around the country and/or seasonal employment within the organization.



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: COLE CHANDLER

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

→ Upstate New York

WHAT IS YOUR OCCUPATION?

→ Student at Norwich University

WHEN HAVE YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR HEROES & HORSES?

→ 2017 and 2018

WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER FOR HEROES AND HORSES?

→ Being part of an organization that legitimately makes an impact and helps the lives of our veteran community has been amazing. I've been able to watch the transformation of these men first hand and combining my interests in a way that gives back has been incredibly rewarding.

WHAT IS YOUR BEST MEMORY VOLUNTEERING?

→ Meeting and getting to know people who share a common goal and mindset. Everyone is there for the right reason and I will never meet more selfless individuals. Also, AJ, Zane and myself have always had some pretty adventurous times to the Chico Hot Springs.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A VOLUNTEER?

→ Life changing. Volunteering for Heroes and Horses isn't like your typical volunteer experience. I've been fortunate enough to stay for extended periods of times both years and it's been nothing short of incredible. Every day brings a new challenge and something to look forward to.



## VETERAN STORY

My name is Jimmy Rogers, but most know me as “Doc.” I am 67 years old and have struggled with PTSD for the better part of my life. I have been treated by the VA extensively since 1978 when my symptoms first appeared. Over the years I have attended counseling sessions almost every week, and sometimes as much as twice weekly depending on the severity of symptoms i.e., rage, anger, depression, hypervigilance, intrusive thoughts, and flashbacks. I was not comfortable around people, crowds, in any public spaces, and I suffered anxiety and panic attacks. After the death of my second wife, I became despondent and suicidal and was hospitalized in the PTSD Ward at Coatesville, VA for three months. Needless to say, I was discharged from there heavily medicated—not cured or improved, but simply controlled by meds.

A friend suggested I check out this program in Montana founded by a former Navy SEAL. I looked it up, and forgot about it, figuring it was just another bullshit “feel good” program. My symptoms over the next year became much worse, critical I would say. I thought about suicide daily. I was paging through Instagram, and something about this program popped up. It was called Heroes and Horses, and it was the same program I had heard about before.

By this time, I had decided that suicide was my only option; I had a plan and a timeline. The only thing that held me back was that I have never quit at anything and suicide would be quitting. So, I decided to apply to Heroes and Horses as my last chance. I applied almost as soon as the application process opened for 2018. I was worried that due to my age and medical history they would not even consider me. Time slowed that winter and spring until I finally got the acceptance letter.

Each and every day of the Heroes and Horses program I was physically, mentally and spiritually tested, and somewhere along the way changes started to happen.





I began to feel differently. For the first time in my life, I was proud of my service, and I took responsibility and accountability for everything that had occurred in my life. I recognized where I had done things wrong with my family and friends, and resolved to make amends. I felt emotion again, crying on a daily basis, laughing again and hugging my brothers with abandon. I was grateful to be alive and wanted to live.

I graduated the H&H program a polar opposite version of the man who arrived. The process works. I can't describe the 'how,' or the 'what'...it's mystical like the mustangs and the mountains, but each play a part in the healing. Thank God for this program; it saved my life and has saved so many of us. I came home with a new resolve to repair the past damage with my family. That mission is accomplished, and my relationships continue to improve every day. I now have purpose in my life, and will continue to help my brother/sister veterans in every way possible.

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THANK YOU IMMENSELY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY THIS SUMMER. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HAVE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. YOU ALL HELPED ME WORK THROUGH SOME TROUBLED TIMES AND MEMORIES IN LIFE TO HELP WITH HOW I INTERACT WITH THE WORLD FROM THE INSIDE OUT. I CAN'T WAIT TO VOLUNTEER NEXT YEAR. THIS HAS AFFECTED ME MORE THAN ANY SINGLE THING POST SERVICE.

-CM/2018 PROGRAM GRAD

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

→ **Become a volunteer** our volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Each year, people from across the U.S. come together with one goal: to make our program run smoothly and efficiently.

→ **Sponsor via our Adopt-A-Horse Program** Our horses and mules are our most valued team members—without them, our program wouldn't exist. It's a huge responsibility to make sure that they remain healthy and happy year-around, and our Adopt-A-Horse members make that possible.

→ **Purchase a much-needed item from our Wish List** As a nonprofit, we rely heavily on in-kind donations. It's not often that we can simply buy what we need. On our wish list, you can view the specific items that will allow us to serve our combat veterans as efficiently as possible.

→ **Host an independent fundraiser** Our Independent Fundraisers play an enormous role in supporting our organization. In 2018, we raised approximately \$129,000 solely as a result of H&H Independent Fundraisers deciding to dedicate time and resources to support our organization.

→ **Make a Donation** All donations—big, small and in-between—make a significant impact on our ability to continue to run the most innovative and effective veteran program in the U.S.





# THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION



**MICAH FINK**  
CEO/FOUNDER



**RICK FRANCO**  
COO



**CIERA KRINKE**  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING



**MACKENZIE FINK**  
FINANCE MANAGER



**BRIAN ROBERTS**  
EQUINE MANAGER



**IZZY SCRANTOM**  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

We'd like to extend a special 'thank you' to every person, company, and organization that donated time, gear, funds and energy into making 2018 a hugely successful year for our organization. We are on a mission to make true, sustainable change, and none of that is possible without your support.



**HEROESANDHORSES.ORG**