

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023-2025



HEART LAKE FARM

Living, learning and healing with horses

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FOCUS:

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING, HEALING, AND CONNECTION THROUGH POWERFUL HUMAN-HORSE RELATIONSHIPS

This document represents our best thinking on how Heart Lake Farm can continue to offer and grow its service to the community over the next three years, 2023-2025. It channels our focus on delivering high-quality programming and developing an expert and independent team. The focus on program quality speaks to our unwavering commitment to providing opportunities for learning, healing, and connection in the community, through powerful human-horse relationships. Our focus on developing the team is the next step in evolving both farm and program management.

Through the implementation of this strategy, success means we are:

- offering consistently excellent programming that meets real and unfulfilled needs in our immediate community
- a confident, passionate & expert team able to independently manage the farm and its programs
- a trusted partner for impactful learning and healing work across the community

As we pursue the strategies outlined on the following pages, it is important that their pursuit is done in alignment with a set of ever-evolving commitments that we hold dear.



AS A TEAM, WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

Being of service to our community through programs that encourage and elevate.

Creating an environment where all can shine.

Being outdoors, in connected and respectful relationship with the horses who rely on us.

Helping others access and engage in experiences with horses.

Learning more about what is possible in horse-human relationships.

Staying open to emergence and the creative process.

Upholding the highest standards, continuously learning and improving.

Making reparations with those whose ancestors the land was taken from.

Minimizing our ecological footprint to avoid causing harm while doing good.

WHERE WE'RE GOING

It is our intention to uphold these commitments as we pursue the following six strategies, recognizing that how we go about making our services available is as important an expression as the services themselves. The strategies are all equally important and their order does not denote a hierarchy.

STRATEGY #1

Find the needs in the community that we can meet and create the programs to meet them

WHAT WE WILL CREATE:

A repertoire of several meaningful, replicable, and customizable programs that are easy to access and participate in.

The impact this will have:

Participants experience a sense of confidence, community connection, personal well-being, engagement, and purpose, while building relationships with the horses.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Develop a community advisory committee that guides our program fit to community need.
2. Continued relationship building with First Nations in the region.
3. Invest time and resources into program innovation.
4. Ensure participation in our programs is as barrier-free as possible.
5. Document program adaptations and innovations.
6. Ensure the safety of our guests and resilience of our programs through ongoing emergency planning.

Signs of success:

- Proportion of participants who come to us via referral.
- Participant evaluations of programs.
- Partner agency evaluations of programs.
- Achieving a minimum number of annual programs.
- Achieving a minimum number of annual participants.

STRATEGY #2

Articulate and communicate our purpose and offerings



The impact this will have:

Increased visibility in the community and improved partnerships, which will in turn create better program-participant fit, better attendance rates and higher-impact programs, as well as greater team alignment in how to communicate our work externally.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Define our ideal partners and program participants.
2. Outline a recruitment strategy for finding and on-boarding new partnerships.
3. Develop a communications toolkit and strategy that includes digital and print assets.

Signs of success:

- Partners are finding & accessing our programs.
- Partners are referring us to other great partners.
- The team can clearly and consistently articulate our work to others.
- The team and services are known in the community.

STRATEGY #3

Continue to develop the skills, capacity, and well-being of our human team



WHAT WE WILL CREATE:

A strong team that can independently, confidently and joyfully manage the farm in alignment with the founders' vision.

The impact this will have:

Modeling of the connection, awareness, and balance we help others to find, as well as fulfillment in working towards the goals of this strategic plan.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Determine the capacity of our current team is in terms of program & participant maximums.
2. Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure, for all staff and boarders.
3. Outline our learning and development plan for the team.
4. Create a contingency plan in case of multiple absences.

Signs of success:

- Team cohesion, resilience & cross-functionality.
- Flexibility and adaptability in meeting emergent community needs.
- A healthy workplace environment for our team.
- Job satisfaction and staff retention.

STRATEGY #4

Continue to develop the skills, capacity, and well-being of our herd



The impact this will have:

Our approach will provide a successful example of an observant and responsive form of care that is unafraid to challenge the traditional paradigms of herd and horse care when necessary, as well as horses who are able and willing to participate in our programs without compromise to their overall health or happiness.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Include our horses as equal partners.
2. Carefully and knowledgeably meet the health and well-being needs of each individual member, ensuring that each of the Five Freedoms of Horse Welfare are met.
3. Continuously monitor and accommodate the capacity of our horses in terms of program & participant maximums.
4. Maintain positive working relationships with our herd care professionals such as veterinarian, farrier, bodyworkers.
5. Grow our skills and knowledge and maintain supplies for first aid and routine health care.
6. Ensure continuity of care by documenting our herd care practices.
7. Develop plans and maintain supplies needed to address emergencies.

Signs of success:

- Herd & individual horse well-being.
- Minimal curative treatment required.
- Horse care integrated with our approaches to ecological sustainability.
- Farm free of hazards

STRATEGY #5

Enhance our environmental sustainability at every opportunity

WHAT WE WILL CREATE:

An operation that is knowledgeably integrated into the local ecology.

The impact this will have:

Our ecological footprint will be minimized, allowing us to provide our service without causing harm to the environment.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Include in our learning and development plan opportunities to increase our knowledge of the local ecosystems and ways in which agricultural land can be managed to mitigate broader environmental challenges such as climate change and loss of biodiversity.
2. Account for care for the local ecosystem while caring for the herd and running our programs.
3. Develop an approved list of suppliers who share our commitment to environmental sustainability.
4. Plan and prepare for emergencies that threaten our environment.

Signs of success:

- Efficient use of farm resources.
- Waste reduction through re-use and recycling.
- Local ecosystems that are diverse, vibrant and thriving.

STRATEGY #6

Be a model for other Equine-Assisted Services

The impact this will have:

Pride of place in all who share time at the farm in any capacity. A spirit of openness and contribution of knowledge to our broader community of equine-assisted service providers.

Some steps we'll need to take:

1. Maintain our impeccable facility and program supplies, including emergency supplies.
2. Document and freely share our program innovations and best practices.
3. Share our herd care practices through thorough documentation.
4. Network, inspire and learn with other like-minded organizations.

Signs of success:

- Healthy, beautiful, and organized physical state of the farm landscape and equipment.
- Manuals for our programs that allow us to transfer skill and knowledge to other team members and other farms.
- Supportive and non-competitive collaborations with peer organizations.

WHAT WE WILL CREATE:

A place that is intentionally and expertly managed and cared for, and lovingly shared.

