

A white horse with a long, flowing mane is shown from the side, looking out over a vast mountain valley. The valley is filled with dense green forests, and in the distance, rugged mountains rise under a clear blue sky. The scene is captured from a high vantage point, looking down into the valley.

HEROES AND HORSES

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Our mission at Heroes and Horses is to offer combat veterans solutions for reintegrating back into civilian life post-combat by providing them with the tools to redefine their purpose, rediscover their inner strength, maximize their potential, and take ownership of their lives.



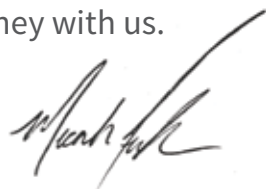
## DEAR FRIENDS, SUPPORTERS, AND COLLEAGUES,

At the beginning of each year, we release our annual report highlighting the outcomes and the work that your resources have allowed us to produce. It is essential to us that what we do at Heroes and Horses is effective (both in the short- and long-term), as we have no interest in existing just for the sake of, well, existing. Our focus has been—and will continue to be—to act as a catalyst for personal and institutional change. As you read this report, keep in mind how we focus on outcomes, innovation, and results. If you're reading this, you know and support us for this reason.

As we recap the successes and events of 2019, I want to thank you for being a part of this mission. This can't happen without our investors (a.k.a. donors), volunteers, and supporters. It takes a community—and ultimately a nation—to begin to make sustainable and strategic change to institutions that are perpetuating a problem and destroying a generation of soldiers and men and women in uniform.

We are proud that over the past year we have grown our capacity, increased our reach, and refined our programming and data capture processes. We have implemented changes that have improved our approach as we learn more about the human condition. Looking ahead to 2020, we have a lot of hard work to do and even more opportunity to truly move the needle—and none of this happens without you.

On behalf of the team here at Heroes and horses, and the veterans we serve, I humbly say 'thank you' for taking this journey with us.



# WHY WE THINK WE SHOULD REPLACE "DONOR" WITH "INVESTOR"

**WE GET IT**—the chances of us getting every nonprofit in the world to stop using the term “donor” probably isn’t going to happen anytime soon, but around our office it’s a term we’ve started to phase out. Why? Because most people associate the word “donor” with someone who is giving something (money, time, etc) without expecting anything in return.

Where we disagree with this definition is that we think that you **should** be asking for something in return—proof of ROI (return on investment). That’s why we like to think of our “donors” as “investors” in our company. Because we want to attract supporters who are investing their time and money into a company and process they truly believe in, and who are also expecting us to create sustainable impact utilizing their resources.

Glancing at a 990 report might give you a small glimpse into what we’re doing, but we’d really like to see more of actual conversations between our investors and our team, where we get to share with you, one-on-one, the impact of your dollar. With that, we encourage you to give us a call, shoot us a DM via social media or write us an email—we’d love to connect with you.

# OUR APPROACH

## **WE TAKE A TRULY HOLISTIC APPROACH TO THE PROCESS**

of facilitating the reintegration of soldiers back to civilian life. We provide our participants with a “tool box” of various strategies and tactics for supporting their physical, mental and emotional health as they work through the process of redefining, for themselves, what their life goals and objectives look like post-combat.

## **OUR 41-DAY PROGRAM CONSISTS OF FIVE CORE MODULES:**

### **MODULE 1. EQUINE ASSISTED ACTIVITIES:**

The horse/human connection is a cornerstone of our program and we have seen, first-hand, the emotional connection and interpersonal skills that are developed as part of this unique relationship. We strategically match each of our program participants with a horse based on specific personality traits and desired outcomes.

**MODULE 2. WILDERNESS EXPOSURE:** The rugged landscape of Montana, while breathtaking, can also be harsh and unforgiving at times, which makes it a perfect “teacher” for our students. Our program consists of two 8- and 11-day pack trips into the backcountry where students are tasked with supporting their fellow students, keeping their animals safe, and reacting strategically to the unpredictable elements in the outdoors.

### **MODULE 3. RESTRUCTURING OF DAILY HABITS:**

**WHOLE FOOD EATING:** Students get meals from the “Whole30” protocol, emphasizing whole foods and the elimination of sugar, alcohol, grains, legumes, soy, and dairy.

**MEDITATION:** Students begin each day with a 20-minute guided group meditation.

**PHYSICAL FITNESS:** Each morning, students go through a fitness routine with kettle-bell workouts, conditioning hikes, and other functional fitness exercises.

**WIM HOF METHOD:** Students participate in this routine every morning which consists of a breathing technique and cold exposure via ice bath. On days that an ice bath is not permissible, participants still engage in the breathing aspect of the method.

**JOURNALING:** Students have time each morning to practice “gratitude journaling” in addition to nightly journaling around topics covered in *The Obstacle is the Way* and *Man’s Search For Meaning* (both required reading prior to attending the program).

**MODULE 4. PRACTICAL APPLICATION:** This module plays an enormous role in the long-term efficacy of our program. Each evening, students dissect chapters from *Man’s Search For Meaning* and *The Obstacle Is The Way*, and we open the floor to group discussions around how the themes in those books can be translated to “real life.” We also bring in a professional facilitator and coach to lead two group goal-setting sessions, where participants are given tools and guidance on how to continue to make sustainable shifts and advancements in their lives once they return home from the program.

**MODULE 5. FOLLOW-ON PROGRAM:** In an effort to provide our program graduates with ongoing support and accountability, each veteran leaves the Heroes and Horses program with a variety of tools and resources including:

**DIET:** Whole30 education, recipes, and shopping lists.

**EXERCISE:** nine months’ worth of custom planned workouts designed by Gym Jones. These workouts will require minimal equipment, and be focused on proper body mechanics and cardiovascular training.

**WIM HOF:** Instruction on how to continue both the breathwork and cold therapy.

**MEDITATION:** A one-year subscription to the HeadSpace mobile app to continue their daily meditation practice.

**GOAL-SETTING & ACCOUNTABILITY:** For those interested, Heroes and Horses will pay for three follow-up virtual sessions with the goal-setting/accountability coach.

**READING LIST:** Readings focused on topics such as resilience, mindset, and healthy habit-building.





# VETERAN STORY

BY TIM SELBREDE

**#NOTAVACATION.** That is what was repeatedly emphasized for weeks—no, months—before I ever stepped foot on the Jumping Horse Ranch in Ennis, Montana. That point was driven home day after day during my time as a student in Class 2 of 2019 for the Heroes And Horses program this past summer. “Not A Vacation” almost sounded like a dare to me. “Oh, you think I won’t enjoy the shit out of this?” In true military fashion, I did everything I could to “war game” the program and try to find out what to expect before I even left Bakersfield, CA, without getting a whole lot of intel. During those 40 days in Montana I would be tested and stressed in ways I hadn’t been since my time in Army Special Operations or the US Forest Service. I frequently found my nerves shot. “Not A Vacation” would be something we would laughingly say to ourselves on good days, and would curse it on the many days that weren’t. We would spend 19/40 days in the Gallatin National Forest, deep in the Lee Metcalf and Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness, riding somewhere between 225-250 miles on Mustangs that were broke only a handful of years prior while leading a team of pack animals made up of mules and other horses. At the risk of sounding sensational, we would battle dangerous storms, hunger, anger, plague levels of biting insects, and at the low points, our fellow students. The biggest obstacle we would face wouldn’t be the elements, or the workload, or the animals, but rather ourselves, and the doubts we carried in our heads, hearts, and spirits.

I had spent my entire Army career in Delta Co, 2nd Ranger Battalion as a medic, and after the Army I worked for the US Forest Service for eight years. I spent my time on Texas Canyon Hotshots, Bear Divide Hotshots, and various Type 3 Engine modules. So, my time in the backcountry/wilderness and my ability to be comfortable being uncomfortable made me feel like I had an “advantage” going in. I had also grown up owning three horses, and spending a lot of my summers as a kid on a cattle ranch in Lincoln, Montana. I thought (incorrectly, as I would later learn) I was already a rider. However, the biggest equalizer between myself and the seven other students in my class was the demons and issues we all brought along with us. We had no idea, but the playing field was even.

Some of us had various degrees of PTSD diagnoses, depression, anger issues, substance abuse, anxiety, etc. Every student had their own reasons for applying. After leaving the Army, I found my home back with the U.S. Forest Service. Being on a type 1 Interagency Hotshot Crew was like being in a Ranger platoon again. It fit, and I absolutely loved everything about it (most days..just like the Army). I didn't care that the money in firefighting was to be made elsewhere, working for LA County or LA City Fire Department. I loved being a wildland firefighter; screw fighting fire in a “box” and going on BAND-AID runs all night. I have always been a conservationist (not to be confused with an environmentalist). I loved taking care of the land

for others to use in the future, the thrill of fire, the complex dance between science and grit, and the tradition.

My last fire season was on Texas Canyon Hotshots on the Angeles National Forest in Southern California. I had waited my entire firefighting career to finally land a spot on TC,

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I WAS RUDDERLESS. MAYBE I WOULD  
FIND “ME” AGAIN THROUGH THE  
HEROES AND HORSES PROGRAM...**

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and in spring 2015 I got my transfer. I have to say it, my first and only season at TC was somewhat of a bust. I didn't do as well as I knew I could have, should have, and wanted to. I didn't perform at the level TC had come to expect of its firefighters. I was the crew's “okayest” Hotshot. I was dead set on making sure my second season on the crew went better. Then on December 12, 2015 I was in a motorcycle accident that effectively ended that chance. Devastated isn't strong enough of a word. My spirit was crushed.

My whole identity disappeared. I was going to be a “30-year guy,” and that was now gone. So my drinking, which was already higher than was healthy, increased and now I had a new partner in misery: pain pills, and a LOT of them. I will

also admit that from 2015–March 1, 2018, many things are a blur. I completely lost myself and my grip on things. I did terrible things. I betrayed friends, brothers, family, myself. It was like a very long out-of-body experience that only got incredibly worse in 2017. But I didn't tell anyone, of course. I had NO clue who I was anymore. I was rudderless. Maybe I would find “me” again through the Heroes and Horses program...maybe. One of the first things I had to do was finally get sober. So on March 1, 2018, I put the bottle down, and at the time of writing this article, I have not picked it back up. But that is a story for another time.

I almost didn't get on that plane to Montana for the Heroes and Horses program. You're damn right I was afraid. I was just waiting for something to happen at the 11th hour so I couldn't go. I'm embarrassed to say that, but it's the truth. I had real reservations/nerves about going. Am I taking someone else's slot who needs this more? Am I REALLY someone that needs to be in this program? Is this the best thing for my future family and me? What are others going to think of me when they find out I went? That I'm going? Do I tell anyone? What are they going to think of me? Is there something that these folks saw in my application that warranted me getting a slot over someone else? What was I going to find there? Should I be here?

But, I did go—and I'm so glad I did. One of the biggest takeaways for me comes down to this phrase: “Turn the

chessboard.” This was a statement that was uttered often during the program. It was all about perspective. If you change your perspective on things when they are going poorly, a learned and practiced skill, you might be able to see things you couldn't earlier. It's something that has been echoing in my head ever since. You have to turn the chessboard and observe it from a different angle, and you might see something you couldn't see before: Opportunity.

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**THE OUTSIDE OF A HORSE, IS GOOD  
FOR THE INSIDE OF A MAN  
—TEDDY ROOSEVELT**

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I believe in this program down to the very whiskers on the face of Parrot (one of the H&H horses). This program changes lives. It absolutely does. The horse is one of the greatest teaching tools out there. Coupled with being away from home for 40 days where you're only focused on the specific tasks at hand...this is the only way to get this level of results. I miss everything about that place and I hope to one day return and help others and continue the message. I found something out there. I'm still not sure what the words are to describe what it was that I found, but I found something. I suppose, in many ways, I found my way home.



# FINANCIALS

## FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

### OVERVIEW

REVENUE

**\$1,346,300**

EXPENSES

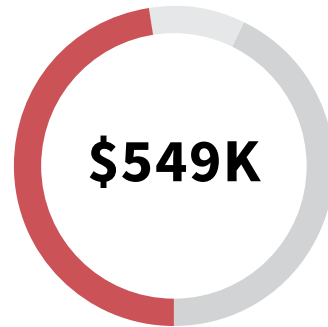
**\$1,077,000**

NET REVENUE

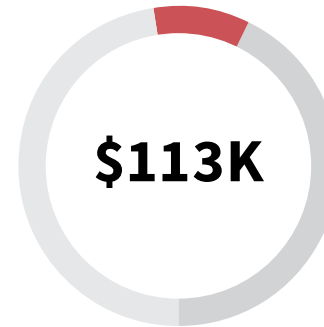
**\$269,300**

NET ASSETS

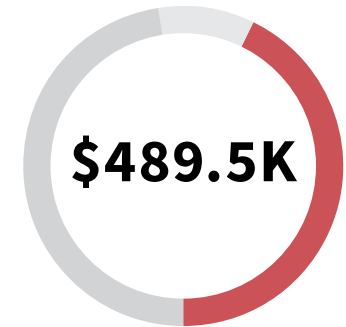
**\$1,103,300**



2019  
FUNDRAISING GALA

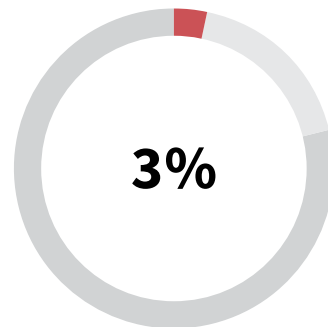


INDEPENDENT  
FUNDRAISERS

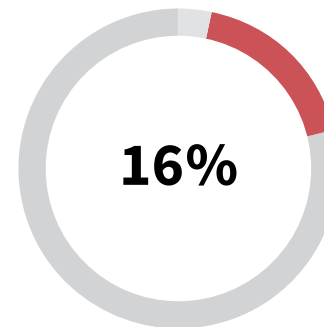


UNRESTRICTED  
REVENUE

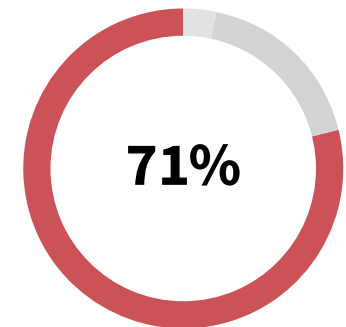
## EXPENSE SUMMARY



ADMINISTRATIVE



FUNDRAISING



PROGRAM

# 2019 HIGHLIGHTS



## **THE RELEASE OF "UNINTERRUPTED DATA":**

Collecting data about the efficacy of our program is critical and in 2018 we decided to do something a little different than simply asking participants to fill out questionnaires. Instead, we conducted in-person, recorded interviews with each student on day 1 of the program, and again on day 40 of the program. We used their first-person accounts of their experiences to create a series of videos to showcase the transformation that happens during the program. So, why the name "Uninterrupted Data"? Because everything in these videos is the participant's own thoughts, experiences and feelings—their answers aren't interpreted, guided, or influenced by us...it's completely raw and uninterrupted.

**STAFF AND BOARD ADDITIONS:** We welcomed former Heroes and Horses program participant, Chris Bova, to the H&H team as our new Program Manager, and Joel Leadbetter to our Board of Directors.

## **A RECORD-SETTING ANNUAL FUNDRAISER:**

Thanks to our incredible supporters and investors, we raised over \$535,000 at our Annual Fundraising Gala in November. All event proceeds go towards funding our 2020 program.

## **CAPACITY GRANT AWARD FROM ARTHUR BLANK FAMILY FOUNDATION:**

At the end of 2019, Heroes and Horses was awarded a four-year \$687,000 capacity "challenge" grant. The funds will be used to grow our team to include a Director of Development, a Development Assistant, and a grant writer. Filling these roles will lay the foundation for the launch of a \$15 million capital campaign to build our own program facility.

## **CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP CULTIVATION:**

We continue to strengthen our strategic partnerships with brands like YETI, Tecovas, Angel Wings for Veterans, Kenyon Noble, SITKA, and Hippy Cow Beef (to name a few).

# WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2020?

## **DATA CAPTURE WITH VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE:**

We are proud to be working with MAJ L. Janelle Gornick, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor of Psychology from Virginia Military Institute) to identify and create a detailed process for ensuring the short-term and long-term efficacy of our programming through the use of data collection. We have been working with Dr. Gornick and her team since April 2019 to define the individual modules of our program, identify what type of data we need to capture to ensure our programming is working, and then determine how we will capture that data.

In 2020 we will be launching our new data-capture process which will include pre and post program surveys, in addition to 1-year follow up surveys, specifically designed to measure the desired outcomes goals for each module of our program.

**SECURING A HOME BASE:** In an effort to minimize overhead costs and increase efficiency, our fundraising efforts will be strongly focused around securing a home base for Heroes and Horses in 2020. Having a home base—one that would house not only our offices, but also our horses and equipment—will play a huge role in our ability to further scale and innovate our program.

**HIRING A NEW COO, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT:** We believe that our veteran program is only as strong as the foundation it's built on—and that means investing back in our organization to build out our team. This year we will be hiring a new Chief Operating Officer, a Director of Development and a Development Assistant—to assist in taking our organization to the next level.

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**MUSTANG LEGACY PROGRAM:** On Jan. 12, 2020, our team drove to the Burns, Oregon BLM to adopt ten wild mustangs to train and integrate into our herd. We wanted a unique way for our supporters to get involved in the process, so we created the Mustang Legacy Program. This program gives our supporters the opportunity to virtually “adopt” our new mustangs and watch—through curated content—the process of training and integrating these animals. Thanks to the following investors, we are excited to announce that seven of the ten wild mustangs have been “adopted”: Agenda Show, Taylor Singmaster & EQ Wellness, Waylynn Lucas, Paula Gibson, John Isham, Daniel Welch and Jaime & Byron DeWitt.

### **ADDITIONS TO OUR 2020 PROGRAM:**

**HEADSPACE GUIDED MEDITATION:** Students begin each day with a 20-minute guided group meditation utilizing the Headspace app.

**WIM HOF:** Students participate in this routine every morning, which consists of a breathing technique and cold exposure via ice bath. If an ice bath is not permissible, participants still engage in the breathing aspects.

**GOAL-SETTING, COACHING, AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** A professional facilitator leads students through two group goal-setting sessions, providing tools and guidance on how participants can continue sustainable shifts and advancements in their lives once they return home.

**FOLLOW-ON PROGRAM:** In an effort to provide our program graduates with ongoing support and accountability, each veteran will leave our program with a variety of tools and resources to take what they have learned and experienced during the H&H program and apply it to “real life.”

# THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION



**MICAH FINK**  
CEO/FOUNDER



**CIERA KRINKE**  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING



**BRIAN ROBERTS**  
EQUINE MANAGER



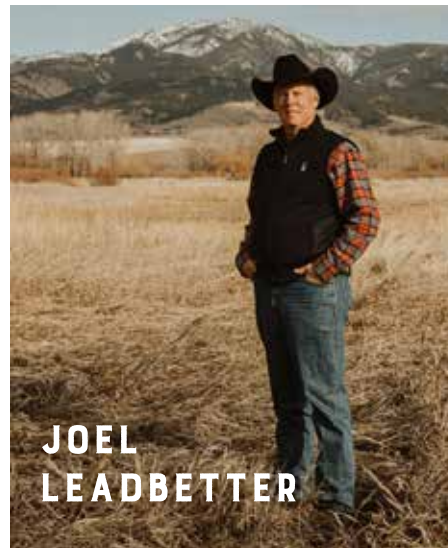
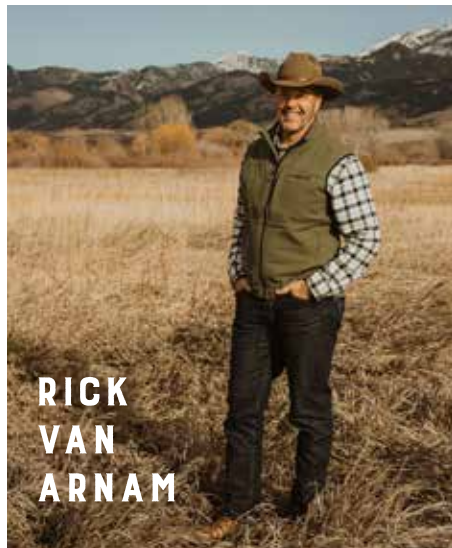
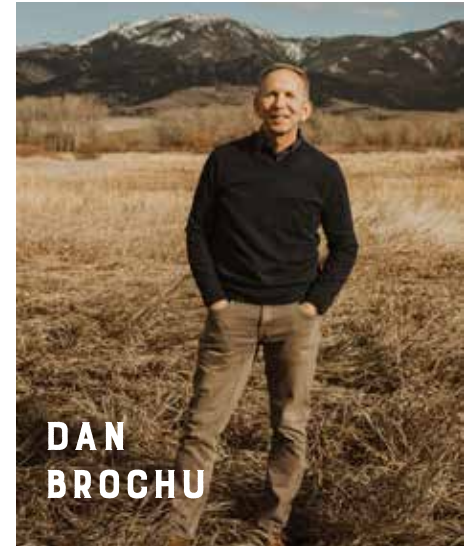
**CHRIS BOVA**  
PROGRAM MANAGER



**KARYNNE CABRAL**  
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS





# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**A SPECIAL "THANK YOU"** to every person, company, and organization that donated time, gear, funds and energy into making 2019 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.

## **BECOME A HEROES AND HORSES VOLUNTEER:**

Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Every year people from all over the United States come together with one goal in mind: to help make our program run smoothly and efficiently. [Become a volunteer →](#)

## **SPONSOR A MEMBER OF OUR HERD THROUGH 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.

[Adopt a horse →](#)

## **PURCHASE AN ITEM FROM OUR "WISH LIST":**

As a nonprofit, we rely on in-kind donations—it's rare that we can just buy what we need. On our "wish list", you can view the items that will allow us to serve our combat veterans as efficiently as possible. [View our wishlist →](#)

## **HOST AN INDEPENDENT FUNDRAISER:**

Our Independent Fundraisers play an enormous role in supporting our organization. [Host a fundraiser →](#)

**MAKE A DONATION:** All donations—big, small, and in-between—make a significant impact on our ability to run the most innovative and effective reintegration veteran program in the United States. [Make a donation →](#)





HEROES AND HORSES

[HEROESANDHORSES.ORG](http://HEROESANDHORSES.ORG)