

Annual report 31 March 2024

Tēnā koutou katoa

This year has been one of continued consolidation and growth for Horses Helping Humans, Hōiho Hāpai Hapori (HHH) Taranaki. We deliver and equine assisted life coaching program for young people. Our goal is to empower the tamariki and rangatahi attending our programme to become more effective communicators be aware of their body and learn the language of their emotional responses, moving them towards making healthier behavioural choices. During the year our programme was accessed by tamariki aged 5 to 11 years and rangatahi aged 12 to 22 years. We continue to work with high needs neurodiverse clients and of the 128 clients who attended HHH Taranaki between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 we were able to provide funding for 105 of those to attend free of charge.

The program is delivered with each client pairing one-on-one with a horse and facilitator for a total of six hours. There can be up four clients in each session which can be structured differently depending upon the needs of the client. At the end of the program the client receives colour resources, a trophy and eliminated certificate.

Thanks to the generous support of the Goodin family in the 2023 year we were fortunate to have established a permanent home base for HHH (arena and round pen) on a magical piece of land along the coastal highway on Mirikau Road in Warea. Our focus in the 2024 year has been to improve the facilities available on that land by transforming the existing premises into a purpose-built whare, so we can better present the programme and more effectively meet the needs of the young people attending. We continued also to deliver sessions at the New Plymouth Riding for the Disabled facility and the Egmont Showgrounds in Hāwera to ensure we remained as accessible as possible to the wider Taranaki community spread around our beautiful Maunga.

We wanted the HHH whare to feel comfortable and welcoming, whilst being accessible and functional for all participants when attending our program. The achievement of this goal has only been made possible through the continued work of our trust board, the tremendous support received from the community and the continued energy and passion of our lead facilitator, Laura Menzies and her fantastic crew.

In May 2023 we ran a very exciting and successful crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to renovate the whare which had a previous and far less glamorous life as a farm shed and was therefore in need of an “extreme makeover “! With the support of the public and local businesses we raised a staggering \$34,279 which was beyond our wildest expectations. The aroha and support we received through that campaign was both energising and humbling, even securing a spot on Seven Sharp and Breakfast for our lovely Laura! **Attached** to this report are the details of the various businesses who were campaign match funders and the many others who provided valuable donations to make this goal achievable. The monies raised were put to very good use and we are now well-established with a beautiful, accessible and functional whare to give best effect for our program. Thank you again to all those who supported us during the campaign. We are all very proud of our lovely whare .

Later in the year we were able to join the Centuria Garden Festival (as part of the Goodin neighbourhood) showcasing the programme and our newly renovated whare tucked in behind the Goodin's magnificent garden on show during the festival. The hugely talented and iconic photographer, John Crawford also came on board at this time and with his help and expertise a

stunning gallery of photographs was exhibited during the festival at the Goodin's property as another means of fundraising. John, himself a massive horse lover gave many hours to support this initiative and our whare is blessed with many photographs taken by John of our herd and I acknowledge his contribution and thank him sincerely. The photographs remain available for purchase.

I also acknowledge and thank again all of our funders who continue to make the delivery of our program possible in our community, specifically: the Toi Foundation, the Lottery Taranaki Community Grants Board, the Lindsay Foundation, New Plymouth District Council , COGS, Sport Taranaki, the New Zealand Community Trust, the Taranaki Foundation, Move and the Gattung Foundation. This continued level of financial support enables us to present a program that remains not only remains credible but affords us scope for development and strengthening as we look towards our future footprint. We also acknowledge the support received from the many schools across Taranaki, Oranga Tamariki, Child and Adolescent Health, Tu Tama Wahine o Taranaki, and the Children's FlexiFund authorised through the New Zealand Police, all of which maintained their support for young people on our programme in the 2024 year.

In tracking funded participants, we look at the following outcomes: self-confidence, emotional regulation, assertive communication, self-awareness, awareness of others and mental well-being. From a both a rangatahi and referrers perspective significantly positive outcomes were achieved across the board in all these categories. We also discovered that in the months following HHH, the outcome schools generally continued to be sustained and further improved for participants thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the program in creating measurable, quality and meaningful intervention outcomes.

I would like to give special acknowledgement and recognition to the board members of HHH and thank them once again for their continued commitment of time, energy and resources to enable our charity to continue operating. Thank you also to Janet Wrightson-Lean our dedicated record keeper who has given so generously of her time and energy to keep us on track and in proper order! We are very fortunate to be joined by a new board member, Gemma Chambers deputy principal of Coastal Taranaki School and welcome her aboard. In the coming year ahead there will be a few of us who are moving on by the time of our annual general meeting (August 2024) having been on board and part of the program now for the past several years. Thank you to Scott Ireland and Chrissy Eggar who are due to depart and have been vital to ensuring the success and accountability of our program and its development over the past several years-you will be greatly missed. This will also be my final year as Chair and trustee. It has been an absolute privilege to be part of HHH and I have learned a lot in the role, particularly about horses and their inherent nature which qualifies them as wonderful therapeutic communicators for our most at risk young people. But more particularly its has been a real delight to work alongside such a dedicated and interesting and down-to-earth group of trustees who have served and continue to serve our board and our community so well. Thank you.

Final thanks must go to Laura Menzies our passionate facilitator whose endless energy, dedication and commitment to the young people, our programme (and to the horses) has enabled it all to work so effectively for another year in our community. I think the final word must be left to those who have attended our program and provided feedback, the proof being surely in the pudding:

"I heard about HHH soon after my 11yr old son, A, was diagnosed with Social Anxiety. A had missed 50% of the previous school year due to his anxiety. I was concerned about his low self-

esteem & the fact that all through primary school, he struggled to form friendships. I was determined that this year, his first year of intermediate, would be a happier time for him. I reached out to Laura with the hope that the programme would help him deal with his anxiety so he could grow in confidence - and boy, what a difference it made!

With the support of ngā kaiako Laura and Austin, A formed a close bond with the beautiful Lily (pony) & learnt techniques on how to calm himself when feeling nervous/anxious and how using confident body language can help him in various situations such as setting boundaries.

Since completing his 2x3 hr sessions, A has gone from refusing to wear his school jersey to school because he was embarrassed that he hadn't achieved any badges to sew onto it yet, to earning his first badge AND receiving it on stage, at a full school assembly! He was even EXCITED, leading up to this day! There's NO way he would have made it to school in the past if he knew he would be having to go up on stage for something! He now wears his school jersey with pride. Speeches were another no-go in the past, but a couple of weeks ago he delivered his speech in front of his class, without a worry in the world! The requirement was a minimum of 3min & he happily entertained the class for over 9min!

His confidence is blooming, he's loving school, he's made a bunch of great friends and his teacher is often reaching out to me, raving about the positive changes she keeps seeing in him. I'm so thankful for HHH, Laura, Austin and the funders who make this amazing programme possible! It's made a dramatic difference in my boy and for that I'll be forever grateful". Shayna 13/9/23

"Since completing the course, both boys have learned skills that they use frequently in different settings. I have personally witnessed one child using the "star breathing" technique to calm himself, and the other has had a huge confidence boost in his own ability to learn; this is translating to more success in the classroom, which in turn feeds their improved self-belief" Beccy Muggeridge, Acting Principal, Rāhotu School 5/9/23

"The report I received from Austin and yourself was incredible - it blew our minds - so much information was noted and the level of observations made were wonderfully insightful....I felt my daughter was truly seen in all her glorious wonderful sparkling uniqueness - she was not a number being churned through a programme, but really SEEN." - Angela 5/5/23

"I really love animals, and when I heard about Horses Helping Humans and how it might help me with my emotional regulation, I was keen to try. I thought it would be easy, and I didn't have high hopes. Straightaway, Reggie, my assigned horse, had way more "personality" than I expected. It was amazing how much he reacted to my emotional state. Because I was frustrated, he pushed back hard. I tried to give up, and I asked why I had been assigned this horse. Laura was amazing - she explained why Reggie acted the way he did, and how much control I had over the situation if I only first controlled myself. She gently coaxed me back to the pen, and got me to focus on my posture and breathing. It was like flipping a switch! Reggie responded to my internal changes instantly. I got him to do things that I didn't think I could get him to do after our rocky start. Backing up between obstacles, circle walking, jumping, and more. I really had to earn his trust, and I could see why Laura chose him for me. The confidence

and techniques that I learned at HHH have stuck with me. I have managed to stop medication and can deal better with my day to day challenges. Thank you Laura and crew!" - 18yo

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'B' followed by a long horizontal line and the letters 'GO' at the end.

Bridget Burke

Chairperson