

## In the Spotlight...

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**Our Mission** – Our mission is to transform lives through the powerful interaction with horses. Whether through therapeutic or recreational activities or Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) and Equine Assisted Team building, our goal is to augment in a new way the wellness and vitality of our community. To that end, our seven-acre ranch serves as the backdrop where horses facilitate change.

**Our Background** – Berkshire HorseWorks™ (BHW), a 501(C)3 nonprofit corporation, was launched in 2013 to provide Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association) services specifically for those with mental health and behavioral challenges and for organizations with strategic goals in the workplace. The nonprofit has evolved to incorporate both mounted and nonmounted activities. During the pandemic, families and children came to the farm to escape social isolation and to enjoy recreation including trail ride lessons, horse painting, meditative hikes with equines, free range donkey play, yoga, art classes, and therapeutic mentoring. This programming ran along with Equine Assisted workshops for first responders and essential workers who needed a supportive outlet during the pandemic. Funds from recreational activities, corporate team building, and other corporate social responsibility initiatives (CSR) were earmarked to help those at-risk in the community. The Equine Assisted Model has been utilized by over 5000 certified practitioners in 50 countries and Berkshire HorseWorks' Executive Director introduced the practice to the Berkshires.

**Our Blueprint for Success** – As BHW celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a nonprofit, the key to its longevity is operating as a business and understanding its client base. The introduction of new programming such as its Ranch Life 101 series – for children, couples and families – seeds a volunteer base and is adaptable to both those in the community looking to become part of a bigger initiative that gives back while also providing visitors an authentic Berkshire experience. In the post-Covid world, people who faced social isolation need to get outdoors, connect, and be in the presence of horses. The loss of the most basic life skills such as building relationships and expressing oneself is pervasive and debilitating. To reach those most in need, BHW collaborates with various organizations such as the Berkshire County House of Corrections, Brien Center, Lenox Community Center, YMCA, Soldier On, 18 Degrees, DCF, Elizabeth Freeman Center, the District Attorney's Office, Berkshire Psychotherapy Network and the public-school districts.

### **Contact Information – Berkshire HorseWorks**

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