



Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc.

December 2, 2022

Dear Family and Friends,

We wish you a wonderful holiday season, full of quality time with those near and dear to your hearts. Whether your loved ones are sitting at your table or making an appearance in your memories, we hope you find comfort & joy this time of year, knowing you and your family make a meaningful difference to our mission.

Thank you for keeping Heaven's Gait Ranch in your prayers, as we pause and reflect on 2022. Because of the solid reputation you've cultivated over the last six years, HGR received more referrals this year than ever, from licensed, mental health care professionals. Due to high demand and limited resources, HGR was not immune to the challenges you faced this year, which is why we embraced a waitlist, narrowed our focus, and enhanced professional development, so that donor dollars would not only strengthen our staff and help our herd, but more importantly, deepen your impact.



After navigating the pandemic and its fallout, you'd think all the bumps in the road would be behind us, and we would be able to steady our sights on the trail ahead. HGR's five year plan still includes earning Premier Accreditation through PATH Intl., insulating the indoor arena, and building an endowment to serve future generations; however, funding for operational costs is still our greatest need. Thankfully, you know that the pandemic changed our world forever, and managing change remains the difficult priority. This is why your renewed encouragement and financial support means the world to our participants and veterans because you determine the quantity and quality of the equine assisted services they will receive in 2023.

From 2021-2022, HGR's programs scaled up and back, striving for the sweet spot in services and staffing. Last year your generosity provided another 1,000 lessons to participants with special needs and veterans with disabilities, and your patience gave us the grace we needed to grow from a small to medium sized nonprofit. Thank you for being the guardian angels to our herd, every day, year after year. Thank you for being the family our participants and veterans need, every day, year after year. And finally, thank you for providing the stability our staff and volunteers need, every day, year after year. You have been — and continue to be — the role models who lift our spirits when we need it most. Your faith, trust, & fortitude encourage us to keep us going when the going gets tough.

It's hard to believe our son turns ten months old today, and I can tell you our prayer list is long at night because it includes each and every one of you who make our world a better place. We love telling him about you — about all the wonderful ways you are generous and kind, simply because you choose to care and continue to share.

We know there are many worthy causes seeking your support this time of year, which is why when you choose to make a gift to Heaven's Gait Ranch we genuinely appreciate making your short list. Your gift really means the difference between providing 800 or 1,600 lessons. Between having two or four certified staff. Between isolation or engagement. Thank you for remembering our mission as we step forward to year seven, and we wish you a happy, healthy new year, full of making new memories!

Sincerely,

Margaret Mary & Brian McClaren

Co-Founders

Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc.
Therapeutic Riding Center

940 S. Main St.
Cedar Grove, WI 53013

P: (920) 400-0628
E: info@heavensgaitranch.org



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2022 Veteran Highlight

Adam Junemann enlisted into the U.S. Army's Delayed Entry Program after his junior year of high school. Raised in Pittsville, WI, he wanted to become a mechanic, but without a license or vehicle, joining the military as a 63M Bradley mechanic seemed like a good idea.

Adam graduated from high school in May 2001, completed basic training at Fort Knox, KY, and graduated from Advanced Individual Training in December 2001. He was on kitchen patrol when he heard the radio broadcast of the attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001. He remembers doing dishes when he realized, "we were going to war."



Once Adam received orders to go to Schweinfurt, Germany, he was assigned to the maintenance team of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division. "They had the 'Bradley' which was an infantry cavalry vehicle," he says. "It was a personnel carrier that had a 25 mm cannon & bushmaster chain gun. You had one driver, a track commander, one gunner, and room for 5-6 scouts with a ramp on the back." Adam wanted to "stay on the ground instead of jumping out of perfectly good airplanes," so he re-enlisted overseas and deployed to Kuwait in 2004.



The 1st Infantry Division only received four weeks of "train-up" before his unit conducted a two day road march into Iraq for OIF2. Aside from recalling the heat, Adam's first impression of Iraq included seeing Iraqi civilians – men and children – walking around holding weapons. "They had weapons for their own protection," he says, "but they also had a lack of weapon discipline: they always had their finger on the trigger." Nevertheless, Adam says he has some good memories of his first deployment. "At the time, U.S. morale was high, and Iraqi civilians were friendly," he says. "If you were kind and understanding of their language, they helped you, and you helped them."

In February 2008, Adam deployed to Iraq for the second time; however, this deployment was different. In fact, he describes this period of his life as "a living hell." From 2008-2009, his home base was in the middle of the Sunni Triangle. For the first six months, his unit was stationed at Forward Operating Base (F.O.B.) Mahmudiyah, Iraq, and for the final six months, the unit moved to Baghdad International Airport (BIOP).



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"After seeing what people can be like to each other... what they can do to you... it shook me up badly. Seeing someone use a civilian as a bullet shield... or a hostage situation... No wonder I have trust issues."

Adam began going to "combat stress" (or counseling) twice a week in Iraq, in addition to taking medication, but nothing seemed to help. By April 2010, Adam's body also started failing him: his back and left arm started giving out, so he sought medical attention for both mind and body. Although he hoped to serve 20 years in the military, Adam couldn't re-enlist. He says, "I kept going in for medical, and it just wore me out." On March 13, 2015, Adam medically retired from the U.S. Army as a Staff Sergeant.

Now diagnosed with 100% disability, half is attributed to mental health, including PTSD, ADHD, depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbances due to nightmares. While physical injuries also caught up with him, receiving the official diagnosis of PTSD hit him the hardest. He says, "I felt like I couldn't enjoy anything. I got this diagnosis, and I knew I needed to do something."

Adam's Readjustment Counselor at the Milwaukee Vet Center eventually referred him to Heaven's Gait Ranch, and he's been participating in our Equine Services for Heroes program since 2018. Adam even stuck with us through the pandemic and various surgeries by participating in telehealth services until he could get back on site.

After five years, Adam reflects positively on his experiences at HGR. While HGR's staff has worked to integrate various horses into the herd over the years, Adam has been a huge help in grooming some of the mares into our programs, which is no easy feat. Aside from the physical benefits, Adam also sees the social and emotional impact that HGR provides.

"I see the ranch as an extension of my family. HGR still gets me out of the house and takes my mind away from my injuries. I usually leave a little sweaty, but that's a good thing. I get some exercise; I enjoy spending time with the animals, and I get to talk to other people. I don't have a lot of friends, but people here treat you like a human being, even when you're having a bad day. And the animals will treat you the way you treat them. If you're gentle with them, they'll be gentle with you. And it's nice to be noticed for that." – Adam Junemann, HGR Veteran



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Rider fees covered less than 16% of the actual cost to provide services in 2022; therefore, your commitment to our cause sets the bar for future success. Veterans will always remain 100% sponsored by donations; all other programs are subsidized through partial scholarships.

How You Can Help HGR in 2023 & Beyond

1. Support our Programs — Sponsor a veteran or participant in need for \$1,200 per season.
2. Support our Herd — We sadly said goodbye to two special equine partners this year: Rufus & Mac. While the remaining nine members of HGR's herd are pledged to be sponsored in 2023 for seasonal veterinary care & routine hoof trims, sponsorships exclude the cost of daily care. Financial support for their daily management is much needed & greatly appreciated. The true cost of care extends beyond the increasing cost of raw goods; horses need humans to groom them, feed them, administer medication, and provide dry stalls and clean footing. Please help us provide the best care for our best friends when they need it most.
3. Consider a Corporate Matching Gift — Many businesses offer matching donations. Does your employer care about health and human services, military veterans, or animals? Please ask your employer today, advocate on our behalf, or let us know if this is an option, and we'd be happy to connect.
4. Leave a Legacy & Help HGR Build an Endowment — Planning for the future and creating the legacy you wish to leave is one of the most effective ways to ensure a lasting impact. Making a gift to Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. in your will or living trust, known as a bequest, can guarantee that your legacy endures. Your gift may be a specific dollar amount, stocks, bonds, an estate, a percentage of your estate, or the remainder after all other provisions are specified. If you have named Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. in your will or trust, please let us know so we can ensure your gift is used according to your wishes. Notifying us of your plans will enable us to plan for the use of your future gift. If you prefer to remain anonymous, we will keep your name and gift in strict confidence. Please contact Brian McClaren at 920-400-0628 or info@heavensgaitranch.org for more information. As a growing nonprofit, working hard to make a difference, we will remember you!

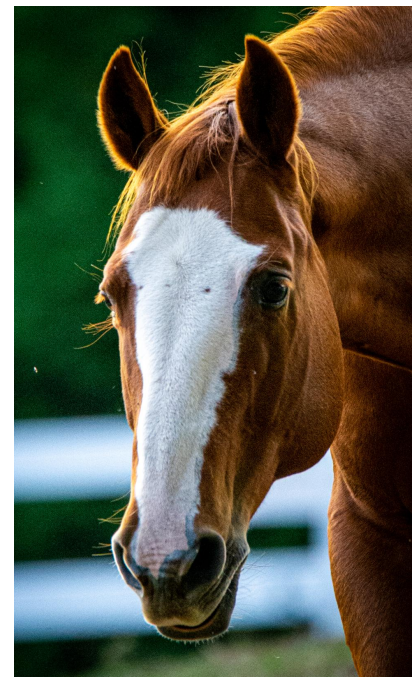


Photo Credit: Mark Carlson

Gifts of any size can be mailed to Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc.
at 940 S. Main St., Cedar Grove, WI 53013.

Text to Give: (920) 315-7551 using the keyword: horses.

When you text "horses" to (920) 315-7551, you'll receive a link to access a secure platform, GiveCentral.

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