



Dear Family & Friends,

Don't blink: summer is flying, and our 10th Annual Hayburner Fundraiser & Silent Auction is right around the corner! You're invited to HGR on Saturday, September 12, 2026 from 1-4 pm! Families are encouraged to attend and make some memories while showing their love and support for our mission. Similar to last year, we are asking for free-will donations instead of charging fixed ticket prices.

How You Can Help

If you can't make it to our fundraiser but still want to support, please consider helping HGR in any of the following ways:

1. Donate a silent auction item: experiences, stays, tickets, gift certificates, or baskets are all welcome! Please email info@heavensgaitranch.org in advance so we can create bid sheets.
2. Advocate and solicit support on HGR's behalf. Do you have a friend or know a business who might be willing to help sustain our mission? Operational support and event sponsors are annual needs.
3. Text-to-Give: 920-315-7551 keyword: horses
4. Donate directly to Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc., and we will allocate funds to where it's needed most.
5. Remember Heaven's Gait Ranch, Inc. in your will or trust. Our EIN is 81-1274623. As a small nonprofit, we will remember you!



Please help us by calling or texting 920-400-0628 to RSVP so that we can prepare food, drinks, seating, and activities for all to enjoy! Closed-toed shoes are highly recommended, and for the safety of all humans and horses on site, please no dogs and no smoking.

All open sponsorships will be posted on our website and included in our silent auction at the Hayburner Fundraiser. If you are a current horse or stall sponsor and would like to renew through 2027, please kindly let us know prior to the Hayburner, and we will include your pledge. Many thanks for your continued dedication and support! Follow us on Facebook or email info@heavensgaitranch.org for more information.



Facility Updates & Community Outreach



After Creative Maintenance Solutions, Inc. made such a generous upgrade to our family room with epoxy flooring, we knew our spectator area in the indoor arena needed some attention. For years, parents, siblings, caregivers, and guests sat patiently on a metal bleacher, close enough to see a loved one ride but far enough to envy the warmth of the horses. Because winter is our slowest season due to inclement weather, we were blessed to contract with local talent who hustled and built a beautiful, temperature-controlled observation area, as well as a new instructor office adjacent to the Program & Volunteer Coordinator's.

Many thanks to Dlapa Construction, Hopeman Carpentry, Nyhoff Insulation, Norris Drywall, Schrueurs HVAC Services, DnD Electric, Wie Be Plumbing, & Creative Maintenance Solutions, Inc. for collaboratively creating such a wonderful space.

Timing of the project's completion could not have been better, as HGR hosted the first PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor Skills Clinic this spring. Our new observation area temporarily transformed into a conference classroom, while PATH Intl. Advanced Instructors Kim Berggren and Melissa Conner led a four day clinic with our staff, horses, riders, and volunteers. HGR participants Violet and Audrey presented about their growth over the years through our therapeutic riding program, and attendees from in-state and out of state received hands-on experience and constructive feedback teaching at a Premier Accredited PATH Intl. Center.

In addition to hosting the PATH Intl. Instructor Skills Clinic, members from the American Legion Melvin Wester Belgium Memorial Post 412 joined us at HGR for their meeting in May. For years, their members have generously supported our Equine Services for Heroes program, not only by attending the March Meat Raffle but also by recruiting support through their annual Packer's tailgate party. While most of our veterans participate in lessons once or twice a week, it was wonderful to have more members from Post 412 visit HGR and learn about the benefits of equine assisted services for all ages.





Finally, our staff and herd were eager to pilot Books in the Barn this summer through the generosity of the Wisconsin Horse Council. Books in the Barn is an innovative literacy opportunity that combines reading with experiential learning in a unique, relationship-centered environment. Designed to support children with diverse learning needs, this program encourages active listening, role playing, reading aloud, storytelling, and connecting literature to real-life experiences alongside our horses.

Participants enjoyed listening to *The Wonky Donkey* written by Craig Smith before meeting our very own Donkey Kong in the indoor arena. They each read a book aloud to Buckley, Frost, Steve, and Lola, ending with treats for all. With a safe and accessible, sensory-friendly barn, we're delighted to promote the love of lifelong learning, in and out of the saddle, where children can develop transferable life skills such as emotional regulation, quiet confidence, verbal communication, and social connection.



Programming & Financial Update:

Half way through the year, we are on track to provide 1,600 lessons to our greater community! Thank you for making that possible by ensuring our facility, herd, staff, and participants are set up to succeed! Because of your generosity, we continue to provide sponsorships and scholarships as resources allow. That said, we still need your help to close a gap for operational support as we prepare for the second half of the year – and beyond!

Nearly 80% of our herd's weekly workload consists of therapeutic riding, and we remain the only Premier Accredited PATH Intl. Center in our rural area. This means appropriate staffing and equine welfare remain top priorities to balance and sustain mounted programming. With six months left of 2026, we are less than half way to meeting our budgeted financial goal for the year, so please don't underestimate your impact. There is still time to make a difference, and we appreciate those who have already donated or pledged a gift before the end of the year!

With burst pipes, furnace repairs, and emergency service calls to fix our well pump this year, your unrestricted gifts continue to be a blessing as we are able to allocate them where and when they're needed most. Funds are not only used for contractors, but they're also applied to staff who pivot and provide daily equine care. Knowing a few part time employees had planned departures in 2026, unexpected but much appreciated memorial donations have also prepared us for staff changes this spring and summer.

While it's bittersweet to watch staff members spread their wings, we are also proud to see where they are heading after working at HGR. Troy took a full time position at an agency advocating for individuals with special needs. Anika pursued an internship at a horse breeding farm out of state, and Taylor will be attending the University of Minnesota to study veterinary medicine. Every week you not only help our riders with special needs and veterans with disabilities, but over time, you also cultivate meaningful work and life experiences for our employees and volunteers.



This summer we're grateful to have already onboarded two new program assistants who have rolled up their sleeves for our busy season: Madi comes to us with experience working on a farm with large animals, while Katie comes to us with experience working as a special education teacher.



Events

Thank you to all who supported Rounds for the Ranch this June! Spearheaded by PATH Intl. Instructor Monica Schaefer and hosted by SoLu Estate, six teams competed at The Highlands Sportsmen's Club to show their support for HGR. David Grand won top shooter with 48/50; the top team score went to Ben & Laura Propson, Dave Jensema, and David Grand with 158/200, and the top flurry score went to Kyle McLaughlin, Patrick Dunphy, Mark Zirngibl, and Brian McClaren with 46/50. Thanks to our station sponsors, West Bend Elevator, Great Outdoors Supper Club, and Customized Bookkeeping Solutions, as well as our flurry sponsor, H.Knox Development, all proceeds went directly toward our equine assisted programs.

With only one more event left to look forward to in 2026, we hope you have a very Happy Fourth of July and enjoy the rest of summer! We can't wait to see you and your family at our 10th Annual Hayburner Fundraiser & Silent Auction on Saturday, September 12, 2026 from 1-4 PM!

Sincerely,

Margaret Mary McClaren

Margaret Mary McClaren

Executive Director