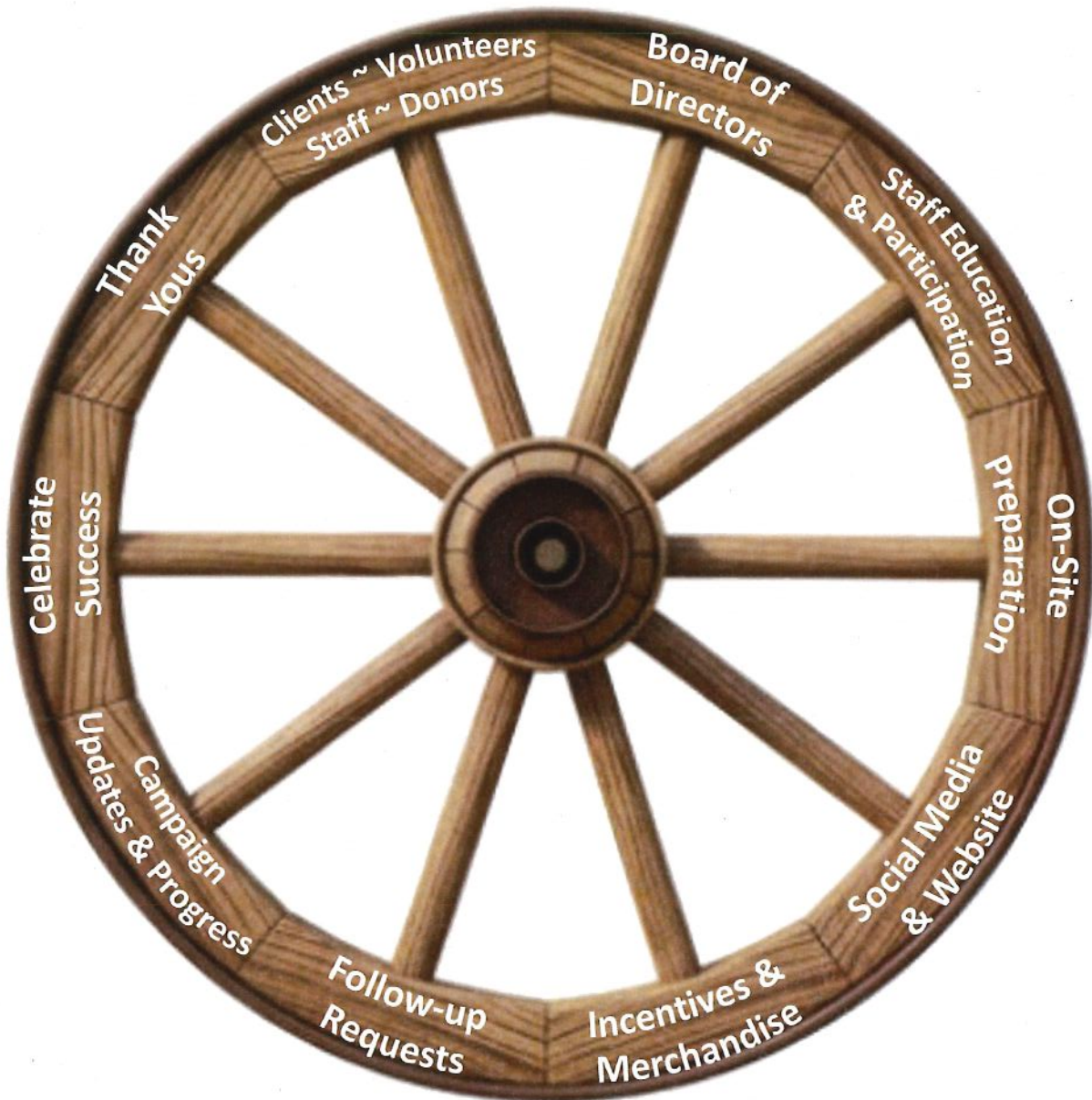




The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# Drive to Ride

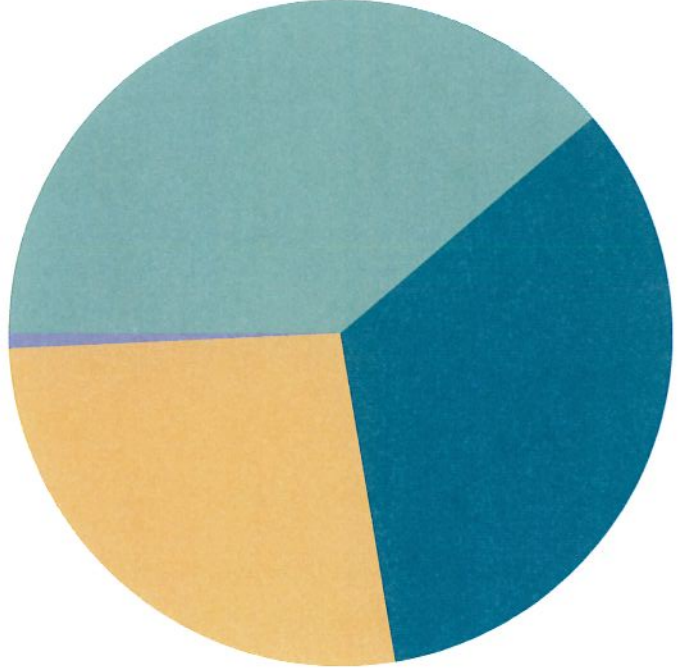
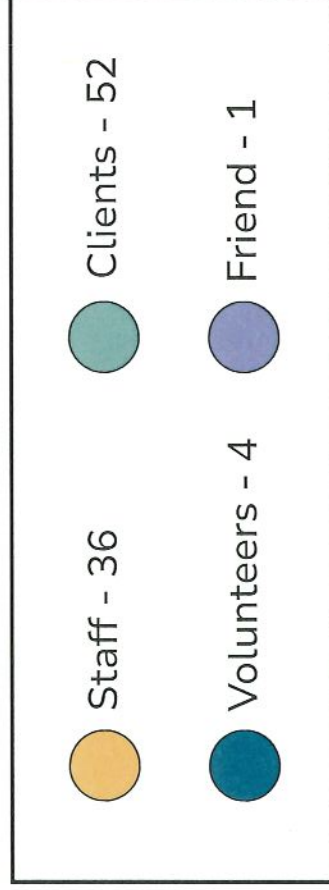
## “Wheel of Success”





# 2026 Drive to Ride Statistics

2026 Drive to Ride Stories  
134 Total Stories



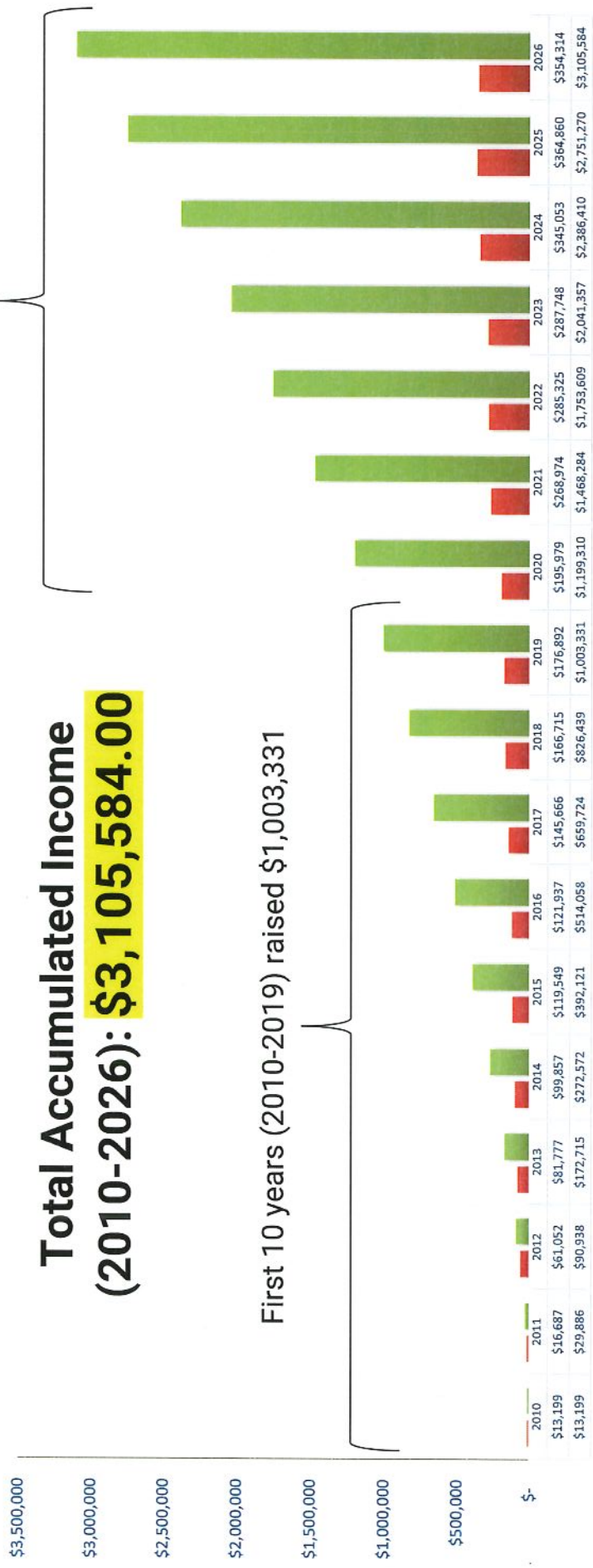
- **\$350,000** Goal
- **\$354,734** Total Raised
- **\$1,750** - Average Raised per Story
- **21%** of Donations from Volunteers



The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# 17-Year Income History

Last 7 years (2020-2026) raised \$2,102,253



■ Annual DTR Income

■ Accumulated DTR Income



# 2020 - 2025 Donor Statistics

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
New Donors	356	398	340	378	364	332
	54.4%	57.6%	46.2%	49.9%	49.0%	46.9%
Returning Donors	298	293	396	380	379	376
	45.6%	42.4%	53.8%	50.1%	51.0%	53.1%
Returning Donors who increased gifts	99	79	105	24	50	67
	33.2%	27.0%	26.5%	6.3%	13.2%	17.8%
<b>TOTAL DONORS</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>708</b>



# Drive to Ride

FEBRUARY 1-28, 2026

## Share your story and help our programs!

Everyone has a story. Share how The Shea Center has changed your life. Please join our clients, volunteers, staff and community partners to **raise funds for client financial aid, horse care and priority programs.**

**Help us reach our \$350,000 goal!**



**Participate by:**  
**Telling your Shea Story,**  
**Sharing a Shea Story, or**  
**Making a Donation**

### Tell your Shea Story

1. Visit [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).
2. Click on "Tell Your Shea Story."
3. Select "Start a New Shea Story" or "Edit Your Existing Story."
4. Follow steps to fill out or update your information and story.
5. Choose/upload your profile picture and photo gallery images.
6. Start sharing your story to fundraise!



To get started scan here

### Share a Shea Story

1. Visit [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).
2. Click on "Support/Read a Story."
3. View individual fundraising pages and choose a story that inspires you.
4. Use icons on the right side to share and help them fundraise!



Help our clients, horses and programs in 2026 by supporting the stories shared during Drive to Ride. The Shea Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

### Make a Donation

1. Visit [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).
2. Click on "Make a Donation."
3. Follow options to make a general Drive to Ride donation, support an individual story, or contribute to multiple stories.



## PRIZES



All Shea Stories that **raise \$1,000 or more** will receive one Drive to Ride crewneck sweatshirt.



### Client and Volunteer Incentives:

- Highest earning Shea Story- \$500 Amazon gift card
- Second highest earning Shea Story- \$300 Amazon gift card
- Third highest earning Shea Story- \$200 Amazon gift card
- The client and volunteer with the most donors- \$200 Amazon gift card



**Follow | Like | Comment | Share**

@SheaCenter #SheaDrive



*The* **SheaCenter**

*for Therapeutic Riding*

### Contact information:

Kristiana Gingras  
Donor Relations Manager  
The Shea Center  
26284 Oso Road  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
949-625-7004  
kgingras@sheacenter.org



# Drive to Ride

1-28 DE FEBRERO DE 2026

## ¡Comparte tu historia y ayuda a nuestros programas!

Todos tenemos una historia. Comparte cómo The Shea Center ha cambiado tu vida. Únete a nuestros clientes, voluntarios, personal y socios comunitarios para recaudar fondos para la ayuda financiera de los clientes, cuidado de caballos y programas prioritarios.

¡Ayúdanos a alcanzar nuestra meta de \$350,000!



Participe:  
Contando tu Historia de Shea,  
Compartiendo una Historia de Shea o,  
Haciendo una Donación

## Cuéntanos tu Historia de Shea

1. Visite [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).\*\*
2. Haga clic en "Cuenta su historia de Shea".
3. Seleccione "Comience una nueva historia de Shea" o "Edita tu historia existente".
4. Siga los pasos para completar o actualizar su información e historia.
5. Elige/sube tu foto de perfil y galería de imágenes de fotos.
6. ¡Comienza a compartir tu historia para recaudar fondos!

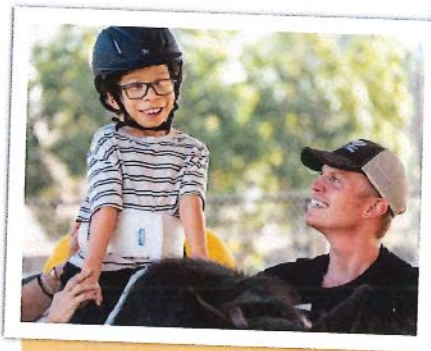


Para empezar escanear aquí

**\*\*¡Asegúrate de traducir la página web en español para que puedas seguir los pasos apropiados!**

## Comparte una Historia de Shea

1. Visite [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).\*\*
2. Haga clic en "Apoya/Lee una historia".
3. Vea las páginas individuales de recaudación de fondos y elige una historia que te inspire.
4. ¡Utilice los iconos del lado derecho para compartir y ayúdelos a recaudar fondos!



Ayude a nuestros clientes, caballos y programas en 2026 apoyando las historias compartidas durante Drive to Ride. The Shea Center se dedica a mejorar la vida de las personas con discapacidad a través de terapias programas relacionados con los caballos.

## Haz una Donación

1. Visite [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive).\*\*
2. Haga clic en "Hacer una donación".
3. Siga las opciones para hacer una donación general, realice una donación para viajar, apoye una historia individual o contribuya a varias historias.



## PREMIOS



Todas las historias de Shea que recauden \$1,000 o más recibirán una sudadera de cuello redondo Drive to Ride.



Incentivos Para Clientes y Voluntarios:

- Primera historia de Shea con mayores ganancias- Tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de \$500
- Segundo historia de Shea con mayores ganancias- Tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de \$300
- Tercera historia de Shea con mayores ganancias- Tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de \$200
- El cliente y el voluntario con más donantes- Tarjeta de regalo de Amazon de \$200



Seguir | Me gusta | Comentar | Compartir  
@SheaCenter #SheaDrive



The SheaCenter

for Therapeutic Riding

## Información del Contacto:

Kristiana Gingras  
Gerente de Relaciones con los Donantes

The Shea Center  
26284 Oso Road  
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675  
949-625-7004  
kgingras@sheacenter.org



The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# Thank you!



YOUR DONATION SUPPORTS  
CLIENT FINANCIAL AID,  
HORSE CARE &  
PRIORITY PROGRAMS

CLIENT FINANCIAL AID | HORSE CARE | PRIORITY PROGRAMS



# Kissing Booth



The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

**GIVE GINGER KISSES  
& TAKE A SELFIE!**



Tag us in your photos: @SheaCenter and #SheaDrive

CLIENT FINANCIAL AID | HORSE CARE | PRIORITY PROGRAMS



The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# Story Incentives

## For client & volunteer stories

- **Highest earning Shea Story-**  
\$500 Amazon gift card
- **Second highest earning Shea Story-**  
\$300 Amazon gift card
- **Third highest earning Shea Story-**  
\$200 Amazon gift card
- **Stories with the most donors  
(client and volunteer)-**  
\$200 Amazon gift card





The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# Information

## ABOUT DRIVE TO RIDE

Visit the Drive to Ride  
Area on the patio  
or visit

[SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive)





The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# SHARE YOUR SHEA STORY

SheaCenter.org/drive



# Raise \$1,000

RECEIVE ONE 2026 DRIVE TO RIDE  
CREWNECK/HOODIE!

ADULT = CREWNECK

YOUTH = HOODIE

CLIENT FINANCIAL AID | HORSE CARE | PRIORITY PROGRAMS



The Shea Center  
for Therapeutic Riding

# Get your Drive to Ride button today!

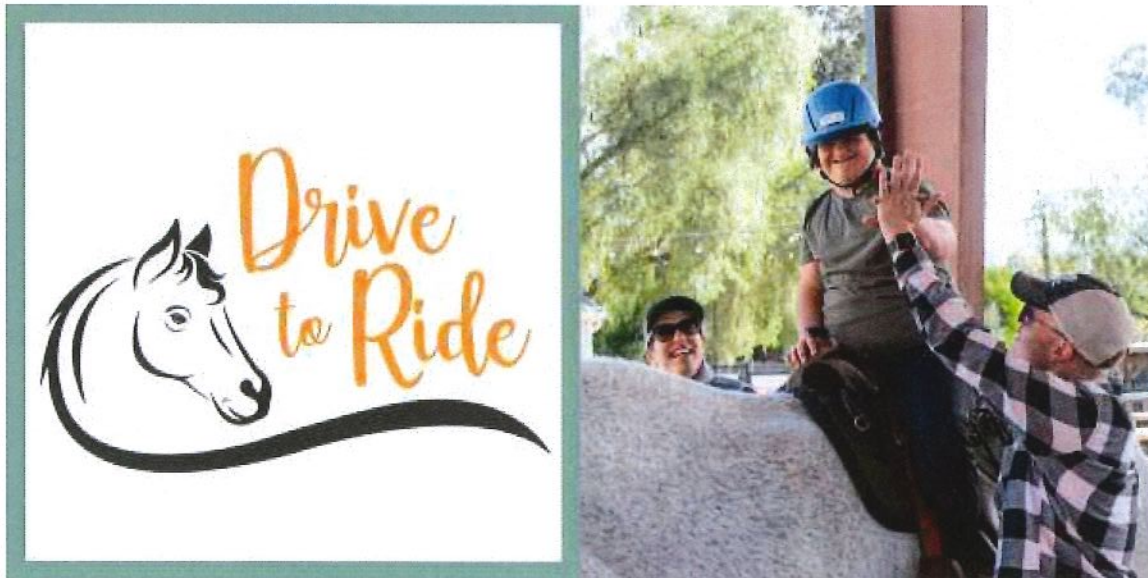


**SHARE YOUR SHEA STORY**  
**SHARE & SUPPORT A SHEA STORY**  
**MAKE A DONATION**

[SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive)



CLIENT FINANCIAL AID | HORSE CARE | PRIORITY PROGRAMS



**The countdown to our 16th Annual  
Drive to Ride Campaign has begun!**

 **February 1–28, 2026**

Hey Shea Clients, Volunteers, Staff, and Friends,

For 16 years, Drive to Ride has been at the heart of supporting The Shea Center's mission. Thanks to your continued generosity, this campaign provides critical financial aid for our clients, exceptional care for our horses, and sustains the programs that change lives every day.

In recent years, nearly 80% of our clients have relied on financial aid—and the need continues to grow. This year, we are once again setting our sights on raising **\$350,000 by February 28**, and we can't do it without you.

**Here's how you can make an impact:**

 **Share Your Story**

Your Shea story matters. Whether you're a client, volunteer, staff member, or supporter, your experience helps inspire others to give. Submit your story at [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive)—

don't forget, you can update last year's story to make the process even faster!

### ♥ **New This Year: First 75 Stories Bonus!**

Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, the first 75 stories submitted will receive \$200 toward their fundraising page—giving your story an incredible head start!

### 👥 **Champion Others**

Support fellow participants by donating to their stories and helping them reach their goals. Every gift strengthens our community and moves us closer to our shared mission.

### **Exciting Rewards Await!**

- **Raise \$1,000 or more:** Receive a limited-edition 16th Annual Drive to Ride crew neck sweatshirt (adult sizes) or zip-up hoodie (youth sizes).
- **Top three fundraisers** (clients and volunteers):
  - 🥇 1st place – \$500 Amazon gift card
  - 🥈 2nd place – \$300 Amazon gift card
  - 🥉 3rd place – \$200 Amazon gift card
- **Stories with the most donors** (client and volunteer): Each earns a \$200 Amazon gift card

Thank you for being part of the Drive to Ride legacy and for supporting our 2026 campaign. Together, we continue to transform lives through equine assisted services—and we can make this 16th year one of our most impactful yet.

Get Started Today!

---

### **Learn more about Drive to Ride in this quick video!**



[MAKE A DONATION](#) | [VOLUNTEER](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [BLOG](#)



*The* **SheaCenter**  
*for Therapeutic Riding*



**The mission of The Shea Center is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.**

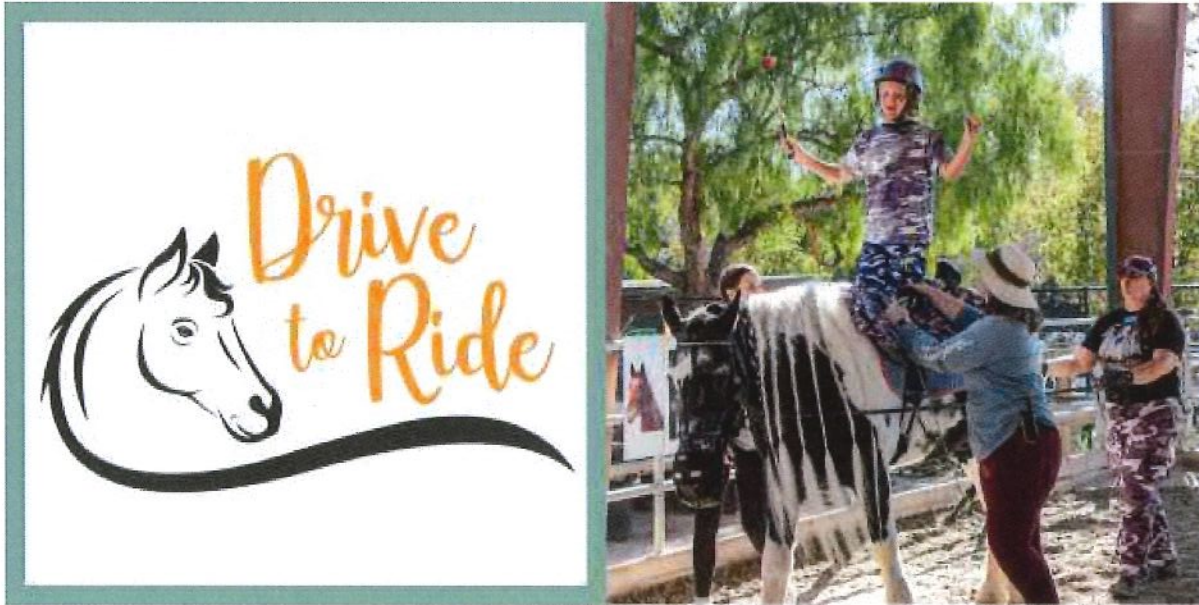
J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center  
26284 Oso Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

SheaCenter.org | (949) 240-8441 | info@SheaCenter.org  
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*The Shea Center*  
for Therapeutic Riding



Dear {{Recipient.FirstName}},

The moment is here — our **Annual Drive to Ride Fundraiser** has officially begun, and you're invited to join us! 🐾💖

At the Shea Center, we provide **equine assisted services** that empower individuals with disabilities to thrive. Drive to Ride is our online fundraising campaign that brings our community together to support what matters most: **client financial aid, exceptional horse care, and priority programs**

### Here are three easy ways you can get involved:

- **Write and share your Shea Story** — a personal experience or connection with Shea
- **Help spread the word** by sharing a favorite Shea Story with friends and family
- **Make a donation** to support our programs and horses

#### 🌟 Exciting incentive!

A generous board member is helping kick things off by bringing the **first 75 stories closer to their goals with a \$200 donation to each one!** That means you'll be even closer to earning your **exclusive 2026 Drive to Ride hoodie/crewneck** 🎉

Visit [SheaCenter.org/drive](https://SheaCenter.org/drive) to write your story, share a story, or make a gift. **No matter how you participate – writing, sharing, donating, or cheering us on – every action helps.**

**Need guidance?**

Watch our [short video](#) and review the [How-To Guide](#) for tips on getting started.

Together, we're working toward our **\$350,000 goal by February 28th** transforming lives through equine assisted services and empowering individuals with disabilities to thrive.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible community. Your support truly makes a difference.

With gratitude,

*Betsy*

**Betsy King**  
Drive to Ride Chair



*Kristiana*

**Kristiana Gingras**  
Donor Relations Manager



*Sonya*

**Sonya Violette**  
Donor Relations Director



Get Started Today!

*Please note: Onsite Drive to Ride activities will begin Tuesday, February 3.*

Learn more about Drive to Ride in this quick video!



[MAKE A DONATION](#) | [VOLUNTEER](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [BLOG](#)



*The Shea Center*  
*for Therapeutic Riding*



The mission of The Shea Center is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

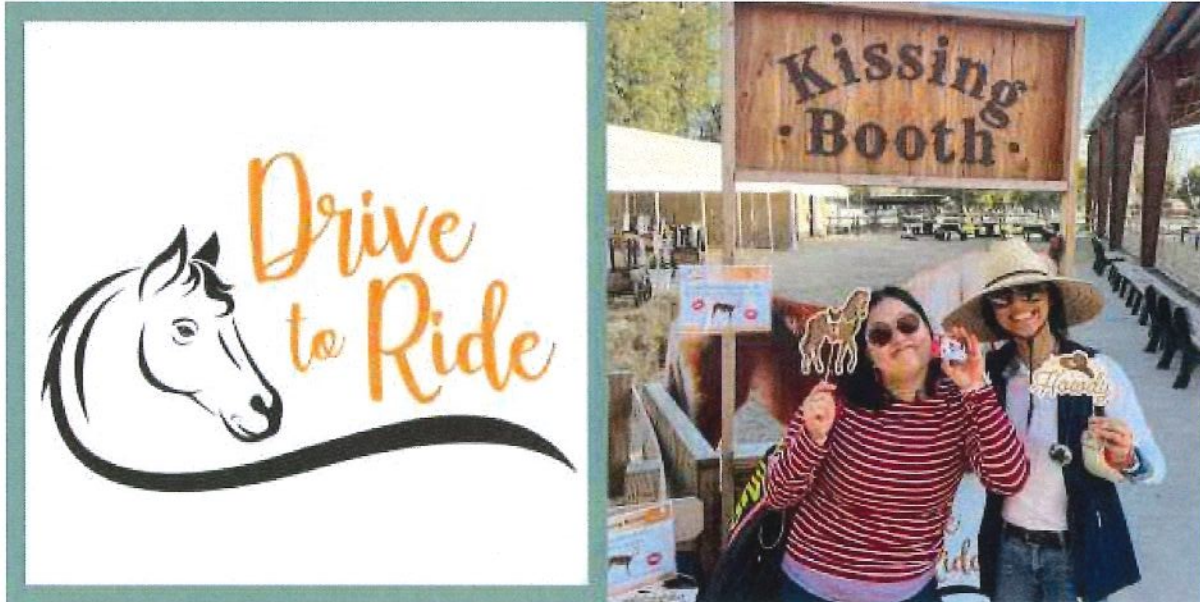
[J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center](#)  
[26284 Oso Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675](#)

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*The* **SheaCenter**  
*for Therapeutic Riding*



Dear <<First Name>>,

This is it — the final week of Drive to Ride.

We want to start off with a big THANK YOU for all the support we have had so far! From everyone who wrote their Shea story, made a donation, or shared about the campaign, we could not have done it without you. We have already raised **\$285,613** this month, and we are making progress every day. However, we must reach **\$350,000 by the end of the month**. That means we have just a few days to close the gap — and we truly need you now more than ever.

Every dollar given this week will directly determine whether we meet our goal. This campaign ensures clients can continue gaining independence and confidence, keeps sessions accessible for families, and helps fuel the care of our horses.

If you've been meaning to give, please don't wait. If you've already given, would you consider making one more gift or sharing the campaign with someone who believes in our mission?

And there's more: the Kehle Family has generously committed to a **\$15,000 matching gift**. Every dollar donated right now will double the overall goal until the match is met — accelerating us toward \$350,000 even faster!

Please help us cross the finish line strong.

Donate [here](#) today and double your impact!

With gratitude,

*Betsy*

**Betsy King**  
Drive to Ride Chair

*Kristiana*

**Kristiana Gingras**  
Donor Relations Manager

*Sonya*

**Sonya Violette**  
Major Gifts Officer



Donate Today!

Note: The \$15,000 match applies to the overall Drive to Ride total, not individual story totals — but every single gift helps unlock those funds.



[MAKE A DONATION](#) | [VOLUNTEER](#) | [EVENTS](#) | [BLOG](#)



*The* **SheaCenter**  
*for Therapeutic Riding*



**The mission of The Shea Center is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.**

[J.F. Shea Therapeutic Riding Center](#)  
[26284 Oso Road, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675](#)

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# Blakesly Grilione

## Blakesly's Shea Story



### Shea Client Story

Hi, my name is Blakesly and I am 6 years old. I am on the autism spectrum, and my parents have worked hard to find therapies that help me communicate and grow.

I discovered my love for horses when I was 4 years old after watching my aunt ride for the first time. I was immediately excited to try, and something special happened — I began talking more. From that moment on, horses became my passion and a big part of my progress.

I'm not one for sports or large group activities, but with horses I feel comfortable, confident, and happy. I have been riding at The Shea Center since September, and I go every Tuesday without missing a week because it is my favorite day of the week.

My horse, Murray, and my occupational therapist, Missy, make every ride fun and meaningful. We go on trail rides, do scavenger hunts, and play games on horseback. When I ride, I talk more and express myself in ways that are harder for me elsewhere.

In December, I even received the "Yeehaw Award" because "yeehaw" is my favorite word to say while riding!

Therapeutic riding has made a real difference in my life. Your donations help fund the horses and support The Shea Center so more children like me can experience the joy and benefits of therapy in a fun and supportive environment.

Murray and I would truly appreciate your donations and support.

  
Donate Here!





# Sonya Violette

## Kenny Loves To Help!



### Shea Staff Story

Hello Friends!

My name is Kenny and each year I write my story to help my mom raise funds for a very special campaign called Drive to Ride.

**What is it and how can YOU help?** Well, Drive to Ride is The Shea Center's grassroot month-long campaign that supports financial aid and horse care. Did you know more than 77% of our clients receive and depend on it to ride? The goal this year is **\$350,000** and together I know we will do that and more!

It also supports my horse buddies in the barn, making sure they have all their needs met and receive the very best care possible, including yummy carrots and apples.

The month of February is dedicated to raising funds and the way to do so is by writing your Shea story and sharing how The Shea Center has made a positive impact on your life or someone you know.

Another way to support this campaign is to donate to my story or one of the many that are featured on the home page, OR you can simply share a story that moves you with your friends and family.

I have a BIG goal this year but I have a lot of fans because I have been at The Shea Center for 17 years! I was in the program for 13 years and loved my job, all my clients and volunteers so much. Now that I am 26 and retired I love to hang out with my mom (Sonya) and friends, we take fun photos with costumes, I can tell it makes people happy!

I also love when people come for tours and I get to give them a massage, they tell me I am really good at it, come see me I will show you but be warned I will get slobber on you!

Please help me and my mom raise funds for these amazing clients, together we can ensure that The Shea Center programs are here forever! ANY amount really does impact the lives of our clients and their families.

Happy Trails,  
Kenny

  
Donate Here!





## Betsy King

Then and Now and Going Forward



### Shea Volunteer Story

My journey at The Shea Center began about 26 years ago with friends and family at the Shea BBQ. It was a magical event for all of us and led me to volunteer and be involved with this incredible family of passionate supporters! Forty-five years ago there were portable offices, open arenas, an uncovered barn - now look at us! Our growth is exponential with so many contributing to the Center. I am thrilled to be a part of the experience, growth and development of The Shea Center! Whether time, talent or treasure - it all improves the lives of people with disabilities and together we make a difference.

Every time I am at the Center, whether as a volunteer or at a meeting or just stopping by, I look at the happy faces all around and find such great joy. These faces are of our clients and their families and the volunteers and staff that encourage each other and lift each other up to levels we never thought we could reach on our own. If you need a dose of encouragement, support and love - just stop by The Shea Center.

Again, I am honored to be a volunteer and a member of the Board and this year's 2026 Drive to Ride Chairman, celebrating our 16th year with this wonderful fundraising campaign!

Thank you for your support and helping me reach the overall goal of \$350,000 that will directly support rider financial aid, our Special Military and Mental Health Programs and and care for our amazing horses like Cap'n Jack! (Yes! he is still at The Shea Center and living the life!)

Much Love and Happy Horses,  
Betsy

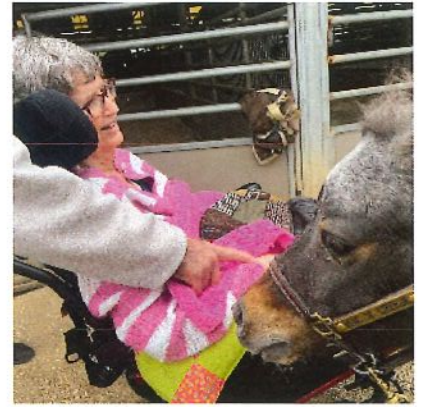
  
Donate Here!





# Kristiana Gingras

For Kathy



## Shea Staff Story

Last August, I lost my Great-Aunt Kathy to ALS.

Kathy was a Shea Center supporter in every sense of the word. No matter how difficult her own journey became, she always showed up for me, especially when it came to Drive to Ride. Even while living with a progressive, debilitating disease, she never missed a year of donating. She believed deeply in the work we do at The Shea Center and in the life-changing power of our programs.

Although Kathy's ALS had progressed too far for her to personally benefit from therapeutic riding, she was still able to visit The Shea Center several times. She watched lessons, met our horses, and experienced the environment firsthand. Every time she visited, she left with the biggest smile - an image I will hold onto my entire life.

Kathy taught me how to stay positive despite the worst circumstances. She showed me how to hold onto hope when the future feels uncertain and gray. Most importantly, she lived every moment as fully as she could, reminding me that time, connection, and purpose matter more than anything else.

Drive to Ride raises critical funds for client financial aid, horse care, and programs that ensure individuals of all abilities can access the life-changing services at The Shea Center. When you support my Drive to Ride campaign, you're not just funding lessons, you're creating moments of joy, dignity, and hope for people and families who need it most.

My 2026 Drive to Ride story is dedicated in Kathy's honor. Her belief in this work continues to inspire me, and I hope it inspires you to join me in making a difference.

Thank you for helping carry her legacy forward.



Donate Here!





## Greg Talbott

Jericho - A Gentle Giant Built To Serve



### Shea Volunteer Story

I'd like to introduce you to Jericho, a 19 year old Thoroughbred/Friesian cross and wonderful member of The Shea Center herd. While Thoroughbreds can be "high-spirited", Jericho exhibits more the Friesian characteristics of being "willing, active and energetic but gentle and docile". As a weekly lesson volunteer at Shea for the past 8 years, I've had the opportunity to work with Jericho, and even ride him briefly, and I can attest that the Friesian description above fits him to a tee. Jericho's height can make it a bit challenging for "vertically challenged" people like me to get him tacked up for lessons, but Jericho does his best to cooperate and he always takes wonderful care of his rider clients and everyone around him.

  
Donate Here!



Taking wonderful care of our rider clients and transforming their lives, the lives of their families and bettering our community, is the foundation for everything we do at The Shea Center. Our commitment to doing so is deeply ingrained in all of our horses, staff and volunteers. The glue that binds all of us together, and is vital to everything we do at Shea, is the support of our generous donors. Client fees at Shea are assessed on the basis of ability to pay and those fees fund less than 15% of our \$8+ million annual operating budget. As a result, we rely heavily on your generosity to enable us to continue our life transforming services.

Please consider partnering with all of us at Shea to continue to support the transformative, life changing services we provide through a donation to our Annual Drive to Ride Campaign. Your generosity is extremely impactful and greatly appreciated!

Gratefully,

Greg



## Christine King

Grateful for Remi



### Shea Volunteer Story

2026 marks my third year as a Shea volunteer *and* third submission to the Drive to Ride fundraiser.

Although it seems impossible that I could squeeze any more joy or pride out of the hours I volunteer, I have found a way to exceed my own expectations.

  
Donate Here!



This past October, I became a horse sponsor for the first time to Remi. I found my way to sponsorship through an unexpected event when my sister, Terry, suffered a stroke. For nearly 8 weeks, Terry's prognosis declined until she passed away. I did not have a chance to see her as she lived on the east coast. However, during those dark and difficult two months, the one thing that gave me some respite was serving the clients at Shea a few days a week. Terry loved hearing about my volunteer work with the clients and horses these past three years; she had a digital picture frame in her house that I uploaded dozens of photos of the horses to. She knew many of them by name and personality traits. Terry was always afraid of horses, likely due to their size - she stood barely five feet tall and weighed just 100 lbs. I thought the perfect horse to sponsor in her memory would be Remi, who is rather delicate, himself. I have told Remi all about Terry and I know he would have liked her.

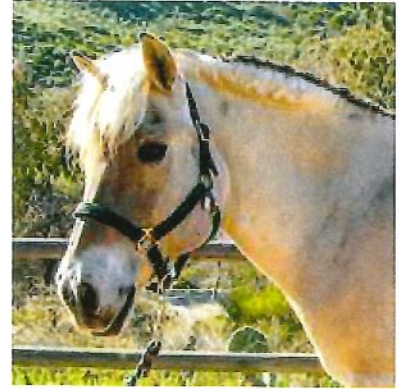
So, this year, in my Drive to Ride story, I would like to share my gratitude for Remi, who has helped me honor the memory of my beautiful sister.

With gratitude, Christine



## Darin Murphy

Darin's EFP Journey



### Shea Client Story

Hello, my name is Darin Murphy. I have been riding at The Shea Center for over 20 years, and I am currently 26 years old.

Now if anyone is expecting me to write about my horseback riding, I am going to enjoy throwing a curveball and talk about my lessons with Leeanna Rice. I have had the honor and the pleasure to be a part of the Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy program led by Leeanna for over 2 1/2 years now. As a child growing up with a disability you can go through a lot not all of it good and some of it can come from school. I grew up around a controlling and emotionally abusive father which left me with serious and long-lasting trauma from years of abuse. I cannot put into words what working with Leeanna has done for me. When I first started with Leeanna, she understood without me putting into words that I had to trust her before any of the real work could begin.

Alright well enough about me; whatever you are going to therapy to work on, nothing compares to seeing your emotions and/or behavior mirrored in a 1,000 lb. horse. This is because when our behaviors / emotions are mirrored in 1,000 lb. horse you are simply forced to confront the issue. To see the horse accomplish something that is seemingly impossible in your eyes you discover it gives you a new undeniable strength.

As I wrap up let me leave you with this final thought. I often go home upset or even angry with Leeanna. What makes Leeanna unique as a therapist and a person is her belief that if her clients don't go home upset or angry with her on occasion, she had not done her job as a therapist. Keep in mind that I am still working with Leeanna to this day and I am so grateful.

  
Donate Here!





# Robert Middleton

## A Home for Veterans



### Shea Volunteer Story

I am a retired disabled Veteran. I got involved with The Shea Center about two years ago with the VetCenter doing equine therapy centered on issues related to reintegration to civilian life including symptoms of PTSD, depression, and anxiety.

So much has happened since then and my relationship with Shea has grown so much that I feel that I need to post a little more about me and the absolutely HUGE impact The Shea Center has made in my life... not to mention the changes I have seen it make in other's lives.

I retired from the military in 2017 after 26 years active duty. I deployed to Iraq once and Afghanistan twice. On my first deployment to Afghanistan I was a platoon leader for a Distribution Platoon. Daily we traveled the roads of the eastern half of Afghanistan taking small arms fire as well as mortars and RPG fire. Until a month before we were to leave we had never taken any damage or casualties. The battalion that I was there with lost 13 during that year. Then we had our first "real" IED attack when my vehicle was hit by a bomb placed in a culvert under the road. If that detonation been a second later we would have suffered casualties. Only I had suffered minor injuries to a recently injured ankle as well as further damaging an already injured back due to a lifetime in the military. That deployment had an effect on my long term mental health. Just prior to retiring I was diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

That deployment along with a very bad marriage set me down a dark path. When I retired I couldn't find a job. Maybe it was the market, the block checked "disabled" on applications, or just bad luck. Three years later COVID struck and people were stuck in their homes and the job market became non-existent. My marriage deteriorated and my self-esteem plummeted. Eventually we decided to come here to California in 2021. We thought it would be a new start and things would get better. That would not be the case. Six months later after a huge fight, I tried to take my life. I spent three days in a coma and another month in the hospital. I didn't know why I was saved. Surely things would get better. Why else would I still be here? In late 2022 I entered a six month VA residential PTSD program that saved my life and ended that marriage.

A series of God provided events brought me to my love, Laura, and I moved to Orange County. I got therapy from the VetCenter and found The Shea Center. I fell in love with horses and the mission of The Shea Center. Shea has provided me with something I had lost along the way – my sense of purpose and given me a love for horses. I became more involved with Shea - especially the Veterans Program - and found my calling. I take lessons and have actually learned to ride. I'm told I'm pretty good although there are days I

  
Donate Here!



feel like it's the first time I've been on a horse. I volunteer as a leader and side walker between my lessons and assisting with the military program. Now I am on the path to be a Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor so I can give back more to The Shea Center and Veterans. As Shea's Military Ambassador I attend events to raise Veteran awareness about the benefits of equine therapy and how it has helped me. We've had two Open Barn Days to give Veterans a taste of what we offer here. About fifty Veterans have seen the wonderful things that happen within these gates. I hope to see the Military Program expand tenfold in the near future. I hope to see it grow so that Shea must expand to be able to meet the need.

There are many equine programs that provide services to Veterans. They share similar characteristics: a love for the military, a desire to help Veterans, and the impact horses can have on lives. Some serve homeless Veterans or those with substance abuse issues. Most operate without charge to the Veterans. This is important as many Veterans have a difficult time adjusting to civilian life after 20+ years at war. I reach out to you to be generous to grow our military program to the same level that Shea has grown over a very short time. Help the Veteran community. There are many that have went down the very same road I did but did not come out on the other side. Let's make The Shea Center the place that Veterans of all walks of life can come to find their life again and maybe, just maybe, save a life along the way. You may think I'm exaggerating a little, but the tears running down my face speak a different story.

I am setting my goal high this year. My challenge is that we dwarf this number. Shea needs horses, land, staff, and a million things I don't even know about to affect real change in the Veteran Community. Let's make it happen. Let's make The Shea Center Veterans Program impact the community the same way that it has helped thousands of lives already. Let's see it have the same growth. Let's make it so that money is not an issue for the Veterans that truly need our help.



SUPPORTS RIDER FINANCIAL AID, HORSE CARE  
AND PRIORITY PROGRAMS AT THE SHEA CENTER

Trish &  
Nichole



Help support my Drive To Ride story!



*The* **SheaCenter**  
*for Therapeutic Riding*

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## Sample Drive to Ride "Business Card"

**We made a set of 10 cards for each person who wrote a story so they could hand out to their community, friends, or family.**



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*Improving the lives of  
people with disabilities  
through therapeutic  
horse-related programs*

*www.sheacenter.org*



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**Contact Info for Drive to Ride Questions**