



# Walk On's Annual Report 2023

*Walk On*  
Equine Assisted Activities®

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# Walk On's Mission

Walk On's mission is to provide equine assisted activities to people with physical, cognitive, social and emotional disabilities.



Equine Assisted activities provide motivational, educational, and recreational benefits that enhance the quality of life through interaction with the horse.

The goal of Walk On is to partner with the horse to inspire the participants to reach their highest potential.



# Our Team

## Board of Directors

**Mary Illing - President**  
**Debbie Krukowski - Secretary**

Jan Nestrud  
Maureen Prettyman  
Nancy Schmid

## Advisory Board

Nancy Bellis  
Julie Bicknase  
Sarah Kovach

Bill Kratovhil  
Carolyn Springer  
Pat Yun

## Staff

### Barn



**Mary Illing**  
Program Director



**Kelsey Thacker**  
CTRI



**Christine Bania**  
Barn Assistant

Not Pictured:  
**Ramon Huerta** - Barn  
Assistant  
**Malinda Patterson** - CTRI &  
jack-of-all-trades



**Mary Rachel Taylor**  
Executive Director

### Office



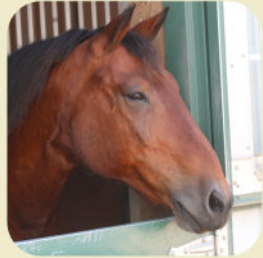
**Lisa Barnett**  
Office Assistant

# Our Herd

## Working Program



**Armani**



**Charlie**



**Kashi**



**Lago**



**Little**



**Star**



**Taco**



**Wilbur**

## Retired



**Rocky aka Rockstar**

## In Training



**Legacy**



**Wilson**



**Zan**

# Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year at Walk On, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication of our community. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones and made a significant impact on the lives of those we serve.

Throughout 2023, we remained committed to our mission of providing adaptive equine experiences to individuals with physical, emotional, social and cognitive challenges. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic, we adapted our programs to ensure the safety and well-being of our participants, volunteers, and staff. Through innovative approaches and steadfast determination, we continued to offer transformative experiences that promote physical strength, emotional resilience, and social connection.



2023 was a year of growth & examination for Walk On. One of the highlights of the past year was the purchase of Legacy. We have high hopes that this young horse will grow into an integral part of both our riding and carriage driving lessons. This purchase would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors, whose contributions have ensured that Walk On's herd & driving program has a bright future.

Additionally, I am so grateful to the Oliver-Hoffmann Foundation for providing us with a grant to replace our indoor arena footing. It's wonderful to find an organization so dedicated to the welfare of adaptive riding programs and the animals that are a part of them. This grant has helped us create a more inclusive and accessible environment for everyone who walks through our doors. We are immensely grateful for their generosity and belief in our mission.

As we look ahead to the future, we are filled with optimism and excitement for what lies ahead. With your continued support, we remain committed to expanding our reach, enhancing our programs, and empowering individuals of all abilities to thrive. Together, we can create a more inclusive and compassionate community where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

On behalf of everyone at Walk On, thank you for your unwavering support, dedication, and belief in our mission. Together, we are changing lives, one ride at a time.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Mary Rachel Taylor  
Executive Director

# By The Numbers



## 1 Programming

- We averaged 26 weekly riders
- 3 residential or day program community partners
- 1 weekly carriage driver
- 1 bi-monthly hybrid riding & driving group

**A Total of 1052 Lessons Given**

**Average Cost to Walk On per lesson: \$115**

## 2 We ♥ Our Volunteers!

- Our amazing barn volunteers put in 1,920 volunteer hours in 2023!
- 72 individual barn volunteers & 3 office volunteers
- Volunteer project days from Omron & BoA/Merill Lynch

According to the Independent Sector Value of Volunteer Time for the state of Illinois is \$30.97 per hour, which means **our volunteers gifted us the equivalent of over \$60,000!**



# Notable Moments



## New Instructor Alert!

Kelsey Thacker passed her Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor certification through PATH Intl. and officially joined our Instructor crew. We're so happy to have her with us!

## Photo Sessions

This year, we had two FANTASTIC photographers graciously donate their talents & time to take photos of our herd, staff, volunteers, & participants. HUGE thank you to [Angel Kruzel Photography](#) and to Laura Duffy (@duffys.lens) for their generosity.

## Brand New Website

One reason we needed new professional photos is we hired Turnkey Digital to create us a new badly-needed website. We hope you will all go check it out if you haven't yet!

[walkonfarm.org](http://walkonfarm.org)

## Legacy



4yo Legacy became the youngest & newest member of the herd when we purchased him from outside Detroit in early December. He is currently in training & will join our program as both a riding & carriage driving horse. We're excited to see him grow!



## Introducing Christine!

Christine Bania joined our barn crew in late 2023 as our weekend barn assistant. Christine comes to us from Iowa farming & she's been a huge blessing. Help us welcome her!



# Grants



Walgreens Cash  
Share Fund

**\$106**

Operating  
Expenses



**DAS**

**\$10,000**

Horse Care



Oliver-Hoffmann  
Foundation

**\$2,770**

New Arena Footing

# Community Partners



# Community Events



## 1 KidFest

Hundreds of Barrington area children (and adults!) at Kidfest 2023 in Citizen's Park were able to take a round on our mini jumps and learn more about Walk On.

## 2 Fox River Valley Pony Club Mini Event

It was our honor to support our local pony club at their mini event in May.



## 3 Volunteer Connection Live

We connected with potential volunteers at the joint Barrington Area Library/Barrington Area Development Council Volunteer Connection Live event.

## 2 Holiday Market 2023

We moved our Holiday Market to the Barrington Hills Country Club and it was a huge success! Our 22 local vendors brought the most wonderful treasures for all your shopping needs.



# Valuable Info



## Ways to Give

### Commit to monthly giving

Your recurring donation provides consistent, reliable support necessary for our programs such as essential ongoing farm repairs, arena maintenance, and continual horse care. Your monthly donation will greatly assist the ongoing needs of our mission, allowing us to continue to provide safe and quality services.

### Leave a Legacy Gift

This advanced planning allows you to create a philanthropic legacy with a future gift that impacts our mission and is important to you.

### Share Our Mission - in every way!

Whether you are browsing our new website, follow us on social media, reading our email blasts, or just wish to voice your support by word of mouth - we appreciate how YOU impact our mission with your conscious effort of sharing.

### Volunteer

The gift of your time has such a positive influence on our programs, horses, and farms. Become a part of a mission driven community and grow your horsemanship through volunteerism. Horse experience is not necessary to join our team!



Scan To Donate



Volunteering at Walk On is a highlight of my week. As a retired social worker, I missed my favorite part of the job, the students. Also I am a life-long horse girl. Horses have a special healing effect on people, it's science! – Cindy Kozlowski, volunteer



## Where to Find Us



@WalkOnFarm



(847) 381-4231



walkon@walkonfarm.org



26665 W. Cuba Rd. Barrington, IL 60010



May 4  
Open House



August 10  
Road Rally Scavenger Hunt



Fall Raffle



November 9  
Holiday Market