

A CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

IMPACT REPORT

2025





AND FOR A MOMENT, THE WORLD FEELS KIND AGAIN.

At A Chance of a Lifetime, healing begins in quiet moments. A person arrives carrying invisible burdens. One of our rescued horses steps forward. There are no words. Just presence. Just grace.

In that shared silence, something ancient and true begins to stir. Shoulders soften. Eyes close. A hand reaches out. And for a moment, the world feels kind again.

This is the quiet power of COLT. Our herd offers connection, safety, and the possibility of healing. We are deeply grateful for your support, which makes these sacred moments possible.



Dear Friend,

As we approach the final months of 2025, we pause to give thanks.

First and foremost, the horses. They continue to amaze us with their growing capacity for healing—approaching clients generously and with an uncanny sense of who needs them most. They remind us that the essence of this work is safety—safety for everyone. And so we keep learning how to create that safety, which begins with vulnerability and being seen.

Next, we give thanks to the helpers who make this work possible every day: our board of directors, staff and assistants, horse care team, partner agencies, and the therapists who trust us with their clients. Last month, at S.A.F.E. House’s annual gala in Albuquerque, we stood before 200 guests and heard how much our work means to their clients—a humbling and affirming moment.

Finally, we give thanks to you—our grantors, funders, and supporters. Without you, none of this would be possible. In this progress report, you’ll find a glimpse into our work and its impact. We hope it inspires you to become part of this herd in a meaningful way. Please consider making a financial contribution of any size. Your support sustains this healing ecosystem—and we are deeply grateful.

If you haven’t seen our documentary yet, please [visit our website](#) and watch.

With gratitude,
Joost & Erica

A YEAR OF HEART-HEALING WORK





COMMUNITY & COLLABORATION

This year, COLT **celebrated our second annual Open Hearts Day**—a joyful tribute to the spirit of connection that defines our work.

We also welcomed long-awaited partnerships with **New Moon Lodge, Esperanza Shelter, S.A.F.E. House, and Solace**, expanding our reach to survivors of domestic and sexual violence and trauma across Northern New Mexico.



HEALING & GROWTH

Our programs supported hundreds of clients, with **a growing waitlist that reflects deepening trust in our work.**

We introduced the Medicine Wheel Practice—**a sacred healing approach that engages equine partners, elders, and unseen forces**—and celebrated a milestone as our trainees led workshops independently for the first time, ensuring continuity and growth.

VISIBILITY & RECOGNITION

COLT was honored with the **2025 Behavioral Health Star Award**, presented by the New Mexico Behavioral Health Planning Council at the State Capitol. The award **recognized our trauma-informed programs** supporting survivors of abuse, addiction, and mental health challenges. We're grateful to our community and partners for helping make this healing work possible.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH

With major new grants secured, **COLT strengthened its foundation for growth and sustainability**. We enhanced financial tracking tools and met all compliance standards, reinforcing our commitment to transparency and accountability.

In a process of renewal, our board welcomed **new members** with expertise in social media, mindfulness, and client engagement, bringing fresh energy to our leadership.



ANNETTE'S STORY: FROM FEAR TO FREEDOM



“Each time I come here, I have a little more confidence.”

When Annette first arrived at the ranch, she wasn't sure why she was there. “I wasn't an animal person,” she recalls. “I didn't care for horses. I was scared. I got out of the truck and just started crying. I felt like I was home, but I didn't know why.”

Annette's journey to COLT began with a walk alongside her therapist. Struggling with anxiety, PTSD, and the aftermath of a painful divorce, she was in a dark place. “I didn't want to live,” she says. “I had tried to take my life three times. I was depressed. I didn't want anything to do with the world.”

But something shifted when she met the horses. “My heart just melted,” she says. “I didn't want to leave, and I haven't.” Annette began volunteering at the ranch, feeding and mucking stalls. Over time, she became a workshop assistant, helping set up sessions and even leading meditations. “That's where I get lost,” she says. “I close my eyes, hear the bells, hear the horses walk, and I just get lost.”

Her transformation has been profound. Once afraid to touch animals, she now confidently halts horses and connects deeply with them. Her emotional growth has been just as significant. “When I first came to the ranch, I was very, very angry—at everything,” Annette shares. “Now, I'm not as angry anymore. I have more patience. I'm not in that place.”

That shift has extended into her home life. “Me and my partner got a dog. That's something new for me. Before, I wouldn't even help with the dog food. Now I do. Feeding the horses gave me a new opportunity to live with a dog.”

Today, Annette is a source of strength for others just beginning their healing journeys. “I see people who don't have confidence, who are afraid to talk. I feel them. I know where they're coming from. I can connect with them.”

Though she still battles dyslexia and anxiety, Annette is committed to growing in her role. “I want to learn to read better. I want to lead workshops. I'm working on having more confidence.” Her story is a reminder that healing takes time—and that COLT offers a space where transformation is not only possible, but inevitable. “Each time I come, I have a little more confidence,” she says. “It's been a blessing.”

S.A.F.E. HOUSE: A KEY PARTNERSHIP



“They heal mind, body and soul.”

As a therapist at S.A.F.E. House, Dylan describes his work as “triage therapy.” He helps survivors of domestic violence stabilize during their 90-day stay, using cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, and other approaches. “My goal is to help clients become as functional and motivated as possible,” he says.

Dylan’s partnership with COLT began by chance—through a conversation at a social event. “We came out to the ranch, and it was amazing. That first visit, we saw impact immediately.”

One moment stands out. A resident struggling with self-worth sat quietly as Chica, one of COLT’s horses, approached. “She spent the entire time with this resident,” Dylan recalls. “At first, the resident was scared—this 1,000-pound creature was right there. But then, you could see the shift. She went from fear to peace. It was like a switch flipped that told her she was worthy.”

The experience was so profound that Dylan jokes, “Why am I here? Just give me a horse in my office!” But he knows it’s more than novelty. “The horses are like filters. They take our heavy energy and give it back as light energy. It doesn’t erase the trauma, but it makes it manageable.”

For Dylan, the workshops are restorative, too. “It’s almost like going to the spa. I get to be a client for a little bit. Natesh is my buddy—he pounds on the rails if I don’t say hi. Even as a counselor, I get something out of this that helps me heal and do my job better.” When asked what makes COLT unique, Dylan doesn’t hesitate: “Peace. Three hours of calm, quiet, and separation from the world. It’s a safe haven of love and nonjudgmental companionship.”

He believes COLT offers something irreplaceable. “They heal mind, body, and soul. It’s an ecosystem—the horses, the people, the environment. I don’t know if it’s replicable. If they could teach a class on how to replicate this, we’d have a lot more healthy people in the world.”

For Dylan and his clients, COLT is more than a partner—it’s a lifeline. “I want COLT to exist as long as we have people who need help and horses who need help. They provide something uniquely amazing.”

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, COLT provided trauma-informed equine therapy to **346 clients**, reflecting the continued demand for healing services across Northern New Mexico.

A major milestone this year was the launch of **trainee-led workshops**, ensuring continuity during transitions and affirming the strength and sustainability of our model.

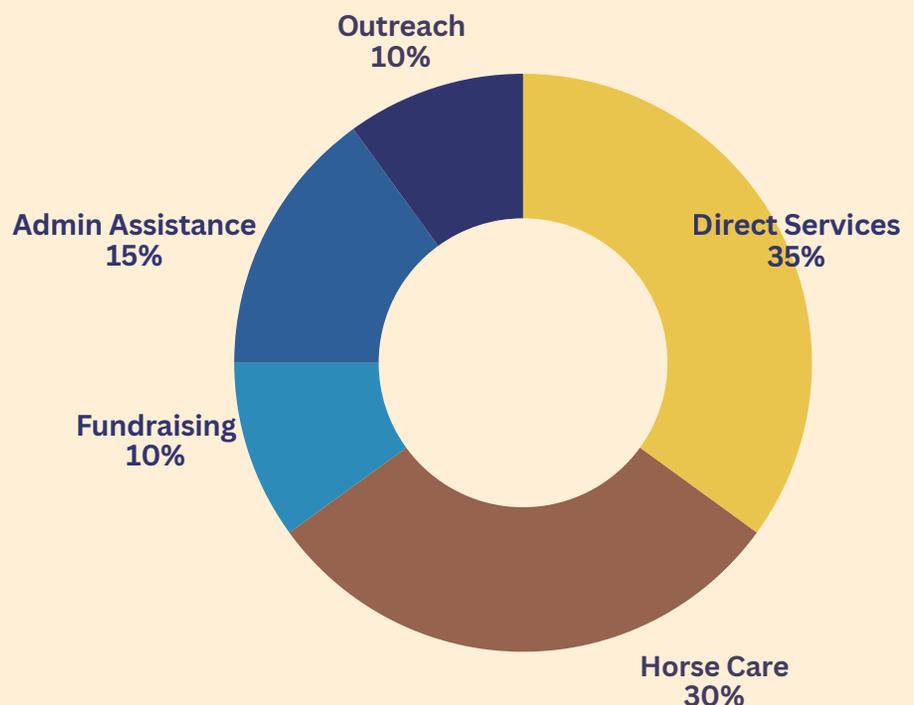
Finally, resources were allocated to ensure strong program delivery and responsible operations. **The majority of funds—75%—supported direct services, horse care, and outreach**, reflecting COLT’s commitment to mission-driven work. Fundraising and resource development represented 10%, while administrative costs remained lean at 15%. This balanced approach helps us sustain impactful programs while maintaining organizational health.

CLIENTS SERVED:

346

WORKSHOPS HELD:

94



GIFT OPPORTUNITIES

Your gift makes our work possible.

Monthly giving helps sustain our operations, but one-time gifts also make a powerful impact. Here's what your support could do:

\$250 – Sponsor a Horse: Covers feed and supplements for one horse for a month.

\$500 – Veterinary Care: Funds an annual dental visit to keep our horses safe and healthy.

\$1,000 – Therapeutic Training: Supports one month of intensive training, helping horses become healing partners for people in need.

\$2,300 – Rehabilitation & Healing: Provides a full year of food and basic care for a horse recovering from trauma.

\$3,000 – Group Workshops: Offers a daylong workshop for six clients, each paired with a horse to build confidence, boundaries, and connection.

\$10,000 – Pay It Forward: Supports paid internships for therapists, social workers, and horsemen—training the next generation while sustaining COLT's mission.

Ready to make a difference?

[Visit us online to give today.](#) Whether you choose a one-time gift or become a monthly donor, your support helps horses and people heal.

THANK YOU

Our Community Partners

The Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation

Dennis Friends Foundation

Esperanza Shelter

Four Corners Equine Rescue

Gale Family Foundation

The Melville Hankins Family Foundation

The William H. and Mattie Wattis Harris Foundation

The Life Link

Meddleton Equine Clinic

The New Mexico Health Care Authority

New Moon Lodge

Santa Fe Community Foundation

S.A.F.E. House

Serenity Mesa Recovery Center

Solace Sexual Assault Services

St. Elizabeth Shelters & Supportive Housing: Casa Cerrillos, Casa Familia Emergency Shelter for Women & Families, Santa Fe Suites

Zimmer Community Fund

Our Board of Directors & Special Advisors

Jonathan Smolowe, President

Carol Rose, Treasurer, Vice President

Meredith Sherman, Secretary

Beth Shapiro, Board Member

Chris Wendel, Board Member

Christy Zuccarini, Board Member

Maria Gale, Special Advisor

Barbara Groth, Special Advisor

Tom Starke, Special Advisor

Kristina Flanagan, Board President Emerita

The many generous individuals who give from their heart to our herd.



a CHANCE of a LIFETIME
healing for horses and humans

Photos by: Meredith Sherman, Barbara Groth, Christy Zuccarini, Annette Madrid, Erica Hess