

REINS OF LIFE, INC.

changing lives one stride at a time

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.



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Although Reins of Life isn't rooted in competition, we know how to compete. Therapeutic Riders, Interactive Vaulters, and Therapeutic Carriage Drivers practice during lessons to prepare for some pretty spectacular competitions and shows. Before we gallop too far ahead, let's travel back in time. Reins of Life hosted its very first Dressage Show in 2011. It attracted conventional riders from around the region to show and be judged professionally on their patterns, tests, and levels. Elizabeth and Brooks Grainger and the Michiana Dressage Club helped organize and support the show as a fundraiser for programming for children and adults with disabilities at Reins. The first Reins' riders to compete in the Benefit Show were Katelyn T., who remains in the program, and Shayna F. Nervous and excited at the same time but ready to go, the riders soaked up the competition and experience.

The applause and tears that were shed at the end of their rides no one was soon to forget. In 2022, the first Carriage Driving Show took place at the Michigan City Barn with carriage driving enthusiasts from around the region. Instructor, Amanda Bubb, (pictured above) helped build, instruct, and even introduce the Reins of Life Carriage Driving Team to regional competitors with their first-ever show and performance. The successful show just finished its 2nd consecutive year with a growing number of attendees and competitors. The fun and hard work doesn't stop there. In 2019, Daniele Charriere and Amanda Bubb combined their Interactive Vaulting Teams for their first public performance and demonstration at the Michigan City Benefit Dressage Show. They wowed the crowd with their high lifts and practiced form.



Competition breeds competition, and at Reins of Life, it happens in the best way: empowerment. By focusing on strengths and progressing towards goals, our participants and competitors are here to succeed. At the St. Joseph 4H Fairgrounds, ROL Riders demonstrated riding skills, and they rode through their pattern with their horses and ponies adored and adorned with red, white, and blue ribbons.

In Fall 2023, the ROL Vaulting Team attended their first competition! Six Interactive Vaulting students competed at the Equestrian Vaulting USA Midwest Regional Vaulting Championships. They spent weeks preparing and practicing hard for this event, where they joined about 60 other vaulters of all ages and skill levels, competing in various divisions. The girls beautifully displayed teamwork, flexibility, positive attitudes, strength, and grace; we could not be more proud of them! (pictured right-center)

The 2023 Benefit Dressage Shows hosted in South Bend and Michigan City attracted more ROL Competitors to the schedule.

The Fall Fun Show hosted at the Michigan City Barn was created and held for the very first time in 2022. This show is hosted as a Reins rider-only competition where riders of all levels and abilities strut their stuff in front of parents, family, and friends. Like all the clients at Reins, we keep our eyes looking forward. The 2023 Fall Fun Show will be held November 4th and is set to be a bigger success as we prep for year two!

We couldn't be more proud of our riders, vaulters, and drivers' progress, personally and through their different disciplinary skills. We are grateful for sponsors, families, volunteers, donors, and staff who make our progress and valued extra-curriculum opportunities possible. Competition isn't just about trophies and awards but empowerment and journeys toward greater independence.



JOIN THE FUN + HARDWORK !

PROGRAMMING IS INCLUSIVE AND FLEXIBLE FOR CHANGING NEEDS.

**EXPLORE OUR OPTIONS & LET US
HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT FIT**



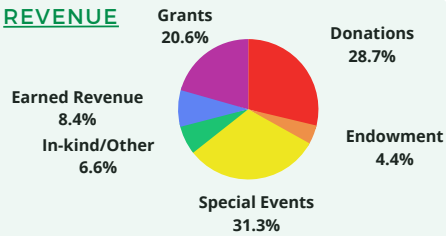
SCAN FOR PROGRAMS



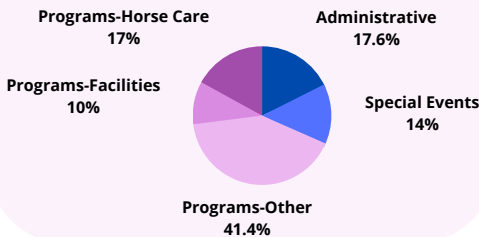
Contact us at **574-232-0853** or email at **staff@reinsoflife.org** to inquire how to enroll today!

2022 FINANCIAL SUMMARY
Annual budget \$900K.

REVENUE



EXPENSES



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Inspire to empower, and empower to inspire – here's to living the mission!

How many can say they know a place where every day something new is learned, where each day brings an empowering story and inspiration despite any challenges of the workday? Our little oasis of hope and hard work, Reins of Life, can be that place for you; it definitely is for us.

The farm setting at Reins of Life offers a unique opportunity for everyone involved to participate in a fun, educational, and therapeutic program. Children, adolescents, and adults change the world one stride at a time in an environment away from a school classroom, work, or therapy office. As participants interact with each other, volunteers, and ROL staff, we see a vast improvement in social and communication skills, confidence and self-esteem, balance, and strength. Volunteers make career choices based on their experience at our facilities and take on new challenges. We have many inspiring examples where participants became volunteers, and volunteers became participants. For interns, the hands-on learning brings a fuller understanding of working in a non-profit organization, serving a diverse demographic of clients, needs, and goals, and, at the same time, discovering connections between professional competencies, theories, and practical applications that empower resourcefulness and independence.

Reins is frequently a perfect outlet to unlock the hidden potential in each person contributing to our success story. The extra time and attention spent noticing someone's abilities, talents, strengths and needs brings a ripple effect. We all know and witness daily that providing the right, safe, nurturing environment can change life's trajectory.

We are empowered to be the best stewards of the supporters' trust in managing their resources (see the pie charts to the left). We are humbled by all of you who cross our paths every day. Thank you for that shared experience and for spreading the Reins of Life vision and mission.

-Dorota Janik, Ph D

“ TIME, TREASURES AND HARDWORK MAKE THE PROGRESS POSSIBLE. ”

WELCOME, DESTINY!
NEW ROL TEAM MEMBER



Starting as a volunteer, then an intern at the Michigan City Barn, and LOOK AT HER NOW! We can't speak highly enough of this young woman, Destiny Nugent. She strives to be the best she can be by gaining experience, education, and instruction practice to reach her career goal in equine-

assisted services (EAS). Destiny is passionate about helping others.

She is pursuing her Master of Social Work and Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning certification. She currently works within equine-assisted programming, benefitting at-risk youth, veterans, and mental health-focused individuals and small groups. She is also a caseworker for group home residents.

Destiny is over the moon to officially be a part of the ROL Staff; the rest of her new co-workers absolutely match her enthusiasm!

Welcome to the ROL TEAM, Destiny!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS:
MARIA CASHORE & CHRISTAN EBY



All Reins of Life volunteers provide hours of heart to make our life-changing programming possible. Two standouts, Maria Cashore and Christian Eby, are passionate about taking their commitment to the ROL mission even further. They embarked on the NEW adventure of pursuing Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning (ESHML) certification to help accommodate growing needs for Reins' services.

Maria has been a member of the ROL Family for 26 years and Christian for six years. They have volunteered in Therapeutic Riding lessons, the K-12 School Program, feeding, fundraising events, leading Miniature Horse Visits, and community outreach as Ambassadors of Reins of Life. Recently, they assumed the role of Assisting Instructors.

Maria is an Occupational Therapy Assistant and sees the benefits of Equine-Assisted Services through the lens of Occupational Therapy and the progress made here at the barn.

As a United States Navy Reservist, Christian has a passion for working with Veterans by both applying her experience and education through her current Master of Social Work program and newly gained ESHML perspective.

We are proud to have such talented and passionate helping hands and look forward to their next steps with their new certifications! Ladies, YOU ROCK!

BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT REINS OF LIFE | TRAININGS OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

Contact us at **574-232-0853** or email at **staff@reinsoflife.org** to inquire how to enroll in our trainings, programs or become a volunteer today!




DISABILITIES: VISIBLE & INVISIBLE

Assumptions can be helpful but also harmful; that's what we teach students as they learn about our herd, their new classmates, and volunteers. This approach of taking time to ask questions and understand a person for who they are and where they are going is a very important part of the vision for our community here at Reins of Life. We have students and riders with "visible" and "invisible (hidden)" disabilities participating in weekly programming. As defined by the National Education Association, "Invisible disabilities are physical, mental, or neurological conditions (that are not visible from outside) that can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities, and can impact that person's ability to learn or work."

We can't necessarily see past trauma participants experienced and their diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Still, our horses/equine partners can feel the emotions and help them build trust again. As friends and family, we can't always understand the overwhelming feeling that a rider diagnosed with Anxiety Disorder experiences. Still, our equine partners can help them practice matching the rise and fall of their breath, feel their warmth, and regulate their heart rate through practicing healthy coping skills.

At Reins, we help people work towards physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral goals that are visible and invisible. We never assume someone's abilities, but we look forward to building greater function, healthy relationships, coping skills, and a better quality of life.

To learn more about visible and invisible disabilities, visit the National Education Association's website or speak with your trusted medical professional. To learn more about others, just ask :).



Susan
ROL Rider
9 Years

“I love the atmosphere and the people at Reins of Life. The horses are just so darn cute!”



Brena & Harper
ROL Riders & Sisters
7 Years & 1 Year

“Reins of Life has become a second home for us, where we feel an overwhelming sense of welcome and comfort. This organization has left an indelible mark on every facet of our children's lives - from communication skills and concentration to sensory development and more.”



Lauryn
Lesson Volunteer &
ROL Rider
2 Years

“Every week I look forward to coming to the barn. Being there is awesome for me. I love the smell of the barn. Reins of Life is like a second home to me.”



Luke
ROL Rider
2 Years

“Reins helps me with people!”

SPOTLIGHT RIDER STORIES & VIDEOS AT WWW.REINSOFLIFE.ORG

SCAN & WATCH NOW!



VERSATILITY: OUR KEY TO CARE & SUCCESS

Did you know that cross-training isn't just for people? Utilizing the use of different riding disciplines and driving helps therapy horses stay not only physically fit but also mentally fit. Let's face it: doing the same thing over and over can get boring. It is our job as barn managers and instructors to prolong the longevity and mental health of our horses to provide continued success in the arena with clients. We were able to ask both trainers that come to our two facilities "what crossing training for the therapy horse meant to them."

Elizabeth Grainger, Grainger Dressage LLC of South Bend, IN, and Nicole Adams, Copper Leaf Farm of La Porte, IN, are trainers for ROL staff and horses to keep our equine partners mentally and physically strong. Elizabeth Grainger states, "Utilizing Cross Training in dressage, over obstacles, and trail riding helps preserve the longevity of the foundational superstars of therapeutic riding programs. The positive training addresses the horses' physical and mental wellbeing. Developing muscle strength, balance, and proprioception, as well as, learning new movements/skills builds growth, confidence, and sustains happiness. The overall goal is to have each horse thrive in his daily work while expressing harmonious correct basic training derived from cross training activities." Nicole Adams continues, "Cross training helps to maintain stability and provides valuable flexibility for horses and riders. Cross training increases engagement and a collaborative partnership between the horse and rider; as a hyper-focused horse and rider can become ridged and over time have a harder time syncing. Thus, cross training makes the team more agile, flexible, and in sync."

Mary D.

1 Year

Feeder Volunteer



I've always been fond of Reins. As a pediatrician I referred patients here. When I retired I knew I wanted to spend time at Reins. The work and fun at Reins is invaluable both to the clients and to all who work there.

Drew M.

1 Year

Lesson Volunteer



It's important to me because I can see positive changes in the students/friends who participate in the Reins of Life program. I want to continue to volunteer to help this organization bless others through this program.

My adult kids and friends thought I was nuts not ever being around horses but I could learn right? Every bit helps. Reins of Life helps so many with their healing regardless of age. I'm proud to be a small part of it.

Sophie K.

5 Years

Feeder Volunteer



Bryce K.

11 Years

Lesson & Project Volunteer

I enjoy working with the horses and helping with projects. I love seeing the kids and people grow as they learn how to ride.



**YOU'RE A GIFT!
GIVE YOUR WAY**

**SCAN OR VISIT WWW.REINSOFLIFE.ORG TO
EXPLORE ALL THE WAYS TO GIVE**



EXPERIENCING EDUCATION

LEARNING WITH EQUINES

"I didn't think I could!" is something we often hear at the barn. Interacting with horses for the first time can feel a bit scary, but as the confidence and engagement of our students grow, so do their smiles and connection to learning. Horsemanship, fractions with horse grain, reading to four-legged furry friends, science experiments with lemons, and horse vision adventures were just some experiential learning that happened. Whether special education classes, at-risk youth groups, or home-schooling groups, everyone benefits from equine-assisted programs and finds learning with horses interesting. And there is much learning to experience at the barn. During the 2022-2023 school year, over 250 students participated in K-12 programming. Students earned themed merit badges for leadership, teamwork, communication, first-aid skills, and many more; we all had a YEE-HAW time!



MEASURING PROGRESS WITH ICF

Internal Classification of Functioning (ICF), a World Health Organization-approved classification system that focuses on an **individual's current abilities**, considers a person's level of functioning as a dynamic interaction between their health conditions, environmental factors, and personal factors. Identifying and re-evaluating ICF scores will assist in collecting quantitative data on progress made through our Equine-Assisted Programming. In most students, we observed improvement in at least one area. Students with physical disabilities demonstrated better core strength, balance, coordination, and endurance, which can translate into increased confidence and social skills. Students with an emotional and behavioral diagnosis have become more engaged, advocated for needs, and developed deeper awareness and self-regulation of their emotions. At ROL, we look forward to working even more with our riders' medical teams by adding this measure to the Physician Statement Form (part of the annual paperwork). Inclusion of ICF will provide a better and fuller picture of the magic that happens at the barns! Stay tuned for more information and results to come!

WE ❤️ OUR 2022-2023 INTERNS

Hi! I'm Ta'Nyi!
Purdue University
Animal Science,
Entrepreneur &
Innovations

Howdy, I'm Leslie!
Indiana University SB
Social Work

Hi, I'm Camille!
Holy Cross College
Psychology

Hey, I'm Rachel!
Indiana University SB
Social Work

Hi, I'm Maggie!
Indiana University
Business & Law

Howdy, I'm Brooke!
Holy Cross College
Psychology

Hey, I'm Aaron!
Purdue University
Social Work

Hey, I'm Leann!
Purdue University
Northwest
Social Work

Hi! We're Jessie & Desiree!
University of Southern Indiana
Occupational Therapy Assistant

Howdy, I'm Michael!
Holy Cross College
Liberal Art Studies

Hey, I'm Cara
Bethel University
Psychology

Hey, I'm Katie!
Purdue University
Animal & Psychological
Sciences

Not Pictured: Philomena Kampe
Holy Cross College
Biology | Environmental Science



So far, our 2023 events have been fun, memorable, and very successful! In January, we held the 25th Annual Kelsey Marie Meekhof Memorial Dinner and Auction at the Armory in South Bend. It was a record-breaking year with nearly 320 attendees, over 100 auction items, and more money raised than ever. Mark your calendars for the 2024 Dinner and Auction happening on February 3, 2024!

In March, we hosted guests from all over the country for the PATH Intl—Equine Specialist in Mental Health and Learning (ESMHL) Workshop. Twenty participants, including six staff and three volunteers from Reins of Life, gained knowledgeable experience in the safety and well-being of an equine participating in a mental health or educational setting with unmounted participants. It helps us increase our serving capacity.

We also hosted a PATH Intl—Interactive Vaulting Workshop this spring at our Michigan City Barn. Nine participants, including one from Reins of Life, completed the training required to become an Interactive Vaulting Instructor.

Our annual Benefit Dressage Shows at the South Bend and Michigan City barns were events to remember. The highlight of the shows was watching twelve Reins of Life Riders demonstrate all their hard work in front of the judges – some of them earning ribbons for the first time! The Driving Show at Michigan City barn brought unforgettable moments for our driving students and volunteers alike.

In July we held the annual Golf Outing at the South Bend Country Club. It was our biggest outing to date with 34 teams registered to play! We could not have asked for a better day – the weather and the course were beautiful and so much fun was had by all.

The support we have received from our community has been overwhelming. **Thank you to all** who make our events so successful!

Powerful Gifts

We rely on contributions of all kinds to carry on our impactful programs. Consider making a gift to help Reins of Life positively transform someone's life. Through your generosity, you can empower many. Whether through a donation of cash, stock, a tax-free Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA, or planned gifts; no matter the type or size, **you will impact** everyone who receives our services now and in the future. **Your legacy** could **change the world**, our world. Include Reins of Life in your conversations about Charitable Estate Planning with your tax accountant, estate attorney, or financial planner.

Visit www.reinsoflife.org/give for more simple and confident ways to help change lives at Reins of Life.



WRANGLING SCHEDULES WITH 'WRANGLR' APP

Reins of Life has recently upgraded to a web-based volunteer management system called Wranglr! Wranglr was created for Therapeutic Riding Centers just like ours, and although there was a learning curve, we are so happy to have made the transition!

Wranglr allows volunteers to be in control of managing their schedules by setting their availability, adding vacation days, canceling shifts, and signing up for open shifts. The best part is that all of this can be done when it is convenient for the volunteer!

As Reins of Life continues to grow, so does the amount of time it takes to manage our wonderful volunteers. Currently, Reins of Life manages an average of 400 volunteers per week between the two barns! Wranglr is a great tool to help us be more efficient with our processes, which, in turn, allows us to serve more individuals!

STRIDES MAGAZINE REINS OF LIFE MEGA FEATURE!



With 12 ROL vaulter and driver photos featured, plus the inclusion of a five-page article, "Vaulting to Success with Adjustable and Appealing Lesson Plans" (contributed by Reins instructors Amanda Bubb and Daniele Charriere); PLUS the cover photo, we are over-the-moon about the Spring 2023 Strides publication. Strides is a PATH Intl. quarterly magazine with educational features, inspiring stories, and informative articles regarding equine-assisted services distributed around the world.



Check out the full issue here!



Reins of Life, Inc.

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South Bend, IN 46619

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2024 Kelsey Meekhof Legacy Award

nominate here!



Thank you to all supporters, donors & volunteers who helped make the 2023 event season a record-setting year to remember. Early 2024 events are ready for your RSVP!

FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS VISIT
WWW.REINSOFLIFE.ORG/EVENTS



www.reinsoflife.org



STAFF@REINSOFLIFE.ORG

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(574) 232-0853	(219) 874-7519
Fax: (574) 232-1104	Fax: (574) 232-1104

REINS RIDER FALL FUN SHOW

NOVEMBER 4TH

Snap Shots with Cowboy Santa!

DECEMBER 9TH

The 26th Annual Kelsey Meekhof Memorial Dinner & Auction

FEB 3RD, 2024

Disability Employment Awareness Month

OCTOBER 2023

OCT 30TH- NOV 9TH

NEW VOLUNTEER & SPECIAL PROGRAMS TRAINING