

2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

CAMPING, CONNECTIONS  
AND CONFIDENCE FOR  
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

# Every Summer Has Its Own Story...

Jorja L. Happy trails Camper

## Message from the Executive Director

Stories are an important part of Happy Trails for Kids. Stories about our history, our program, and our campers help to foster community and provide a window into the organization. For this past summer, our program's most important story was being able to safely offer camp for hundreds of children experiencing foster care. It showed our commitment and resilience to the children we serve, while creating opportunities for children to create their own stories.

Our resolve to deliver on our mission was based on the belief that during the pandemic, too many children had been without joy, nature, friends, and family. We navigated the challenges of the pandemic and were able to safely bring together these missing pieces, creating a celebration of childhood and a refuge to process all that was lost and overcome.

By delivering on camp, we helped our campers create new stories through their profound experiences. Long after the suitcases are packed and camp is over, these camp stories help advance positive changes in the lives of children we serve. All of that is reinforced through year-round engagements and ongoing supportive, educational, and recreational programs.

As an example, I am reminded of three brothers who attended camp. On the last day of camp, they were looking at pictures together in their scrapbooks— already reminiscing over the fun times. Their story this summer was not defined by foster care and the tragedy of being separated and living in different homes. They have a new story to share and build on – and it is one of joy and togetherness.

Each child growing up in foster care has their own story. And, while we cannot remove past chapters, we can help change the narrative. Happy Trails for Kids gives children reasons to celebrate, reminding them that they are resilient, they are important, and they belong. Just as our community of campers relied on Happy Trails this past year, we in turn relied on our community of friends and partners. During very challenging times, our supporters rallied for our cause and for our kids. Thank you so much for being a part of these important stories.



**Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW**  
Executive Director Happy Trails for Kids



# OUR MISSION

• • •

**HAPPY TRAILS FOR KIDS** transforms the lives of children and youth experiencing foster care by building a supportive community through the magic of camp and year-round programming.



« My painting is called lost love because I found the love that I've never had before. This painting is showing a girl surrounded by darkness and what most of her life was about. There's a figure giving her a hand to show her love and support and that they are here for her no matter what she's going through. They would follow her all the way and show her that she is loved and supported. That she has a family. The figure showing her this love and affection is Happy Trails. Even though most of us foster kids don't have a family or may not like being in the foster system, Happy Trails shows that love that we've always wanted. They care for us even though we are not their kids. They support us. They let us know that they are here for us through all the struggles we had. »

# OUR PROGRAMMING



## Camp

Overnight summer camp continues to be the heart of Happy Trails. Campers overwhelmingly report the positive impact overnight camp has on their lives. The comradery and comforts shared at camp are carried with them throughout the year. The realization that “I’m not the only one” can be transformative for a child experiencing the heartbreak of foster care.

With the memory of virtual camp behind us, we were thrilled to offer in person overnight summer camp in Big Bear, California. Boating, dancing, swimming, archery and cherished time with friends brought to life the magic of camp for over 200 children this summer... and created endless fun.

Every moment was magical.



## CAMP BY THE NUMBERS

35 Activities, crafts and workshops

25 Trips around the lake for campers

2500 Photos taken for scrapbooks

32 Siblings and family members reunited at camp



Countless Smiles and Laughs...



# OUR PROGRAMMING

Our programming extends well beyond camping. Maintaining a consistent and active presence in the lives of the campers is critical to our model. Happy Trails understands that the “extras” in life matter. We carefully select our programming to bring extracurricular experiences into the lives of children experiencing foster care. We hosted 42 educational or recreational reunion events this year.



## Specialized Programs

**Trails to Success:** Programming to help prepare older youth to live accomplished and happy lives, including leadership development, career readiness and individualized outreach and support.

**Happy Trails Hangouts:** In partnership with Happy Camper Live, campers participate in monthly virtual extracurricular experiences. With exciting guest facilitators and the opportunity to spend time with camp counselors and friends, Hangouts brings children together for fun, safe and accessible extracurricular activities.

**Happy Trails Tutors:** Weekly tutoring sessions and academic support for children. Our incredible tutors provided nearly 15,000 hours of tutoring in 2021.

**Mobile Photo Lab:** Too often children growing up in foster care report an absence of childhood photos. The Photo Lab project ensures campers not only leave camp with a scrapbook of camp memories, but a documentation of their life experiences and friendships.

**Hoof to Heart:** An equine education and exploration program designed to help children foster an appreciation to horses and benefit from the therapeutic experience connected to these majestic animals.



# OUR EVENTS



## Taste of Camp

Oct 21, 2021

The 4th Annual Taste of Camp was a perfect night of celebration! Held at the beautiful Fairmont Miramar Hotel under the Fig Tree, we hosted 200 guests and raised nearly \$300,000. The evening felt brisk and was brimming with passion and festivities.... Delicious food, cocktails and conversation flowed. Most importantly, the evening was an opportunity to come together – for a cause, and for kids, we can unite around. We are grateful to all involved in making this such a successful and wonderful event.



## Cantor Fitzgerald Charity Day

Sept 11, 2021

Happy Trails for Kids was proud to be featured in the Cantor Fitzgerald Virtual Charity Day on Friday, September 10, 2021, in honor of the 20th Anniversary of 9/11 and all those who lost their lives. Pro Football Hall of Famer and Actor, Tony Gonzalez served as the Happy Trails Ambassador. We truly appreciated Tony's efforts to raise awareness for the meaningful work Happy Trails for Kids does for children in foster care.



## Winter Toy Drive and Holiday Celebration

Dec 11, 2021

Thank you to all of our friends, volunteers, sponsors and partners who created pure holiday magic for the children of Happy Trails. With over 1,000 presents donated and a day of fun and friendship, thanks to YOU our boys and girls felt the love and support of our community.



## The Max and Janet Salter Scholarship Fund

The Janet and Sonny Salter Scholarship Foundation was established to provide financial support to campers and counselors enrolled in college. Janet and Max “Sonny” Salter, along with their daughter Pepper, were instrumental in founding Happy Trails for Kids.

We are thrilled to announce Carolina Lleranas and Kiyomi Alagee as our 2021 scholarship recipients. Carolina is a first-generation college student majoring in psychology at the University of California at Irvine. Carolina describes that Happy Trails has made her “part of a big family, even though we aren’t related.” She values the sense of belonging because it was a missing piece of her childhood. “If I were to fall, I know Happy Trails is there to catch me.” Kiyomi is a Resilient Scholar at Cal State Northridge. As a camp counselor, she found her calling in working with youth.

The majority of our counselors have lived experience in foster care. At Happy Trails, our vision is for youth to see themselves in our counselors, become inspired by their accomplishments, and in turn, believe in their own personal potential. Kiyomi and Carolina represent that vision to the fullest. Janet and Max “Sonny” Salter would be proud to know that their legacy and light lives on through Happy Trails.





# »»» OUR IMPACT



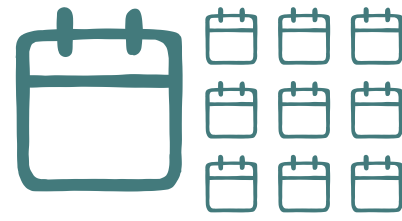
## 434

NUMBER OF KIDS SERVED  
51% F 49% M



## 77%

OF COUNSELORS  
IDENTIFY AS A FORMER  
FOSTER YOUTH



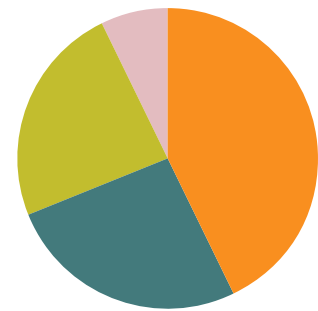
## 42

REUNIONS EVENTS,  
WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS



## diversity

- HISPANIC OR LATIN 45%
- BLACK 39%
- CAUCASIAN 6%
- ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER 4%
- BI/MULTI-RACIAL/OTHER 6%



## types of programs

- HAPPY CAMPER HANGOUTS 18
- REUNION EVENTS 11
- TRAILS TO SUCCESS/OLDER YOUTH 10
- FULL FAMILY 3





# OUR TEAM



## Our Board of Directors

### CHAIRMAN

**Jon Abrams, JD**  
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Abrams Brown LLP

### PRESIDENT

**Susan Abrams, JD**  
Policy Director,  
Children's Law Center

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**Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW**  
Happy Trails for Kids

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Real Estate Legal Affairs  
Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc

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Director of  
Engaged Learning at  
Loyola Marymount University

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Erika Frank Interiors

**Jason Gilliland, JD**  
Principal,  
Endeavor Capital

**Jeffrey Schwartz, BS**  
Founder and Managing Partner,  
Corbel Capital Partners

## Our Leadership Team



**September Sucher, Camp Director**  
**Vincent Stevens, Assistant Camp Director**  
**Denise Hernandez Trails to Success Project Coordinator**  
**Nadia Gonzalez, Leadership Team**  
**Eclasia Wesley, Leadership Team**  
**Ash Velasco, Leadership Team**  
**Jasmine Steele, Leadership Team**  
**Angela Alvarado, Leadership Team**

# \$\$\$ OUR FINANCIALS

## revenue

## expenses

54%

\$ 426,237

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS  
AND SPECIAL EVENTS

2%

\$ 12,500

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION AND  
GOVERNMENT GRANTS

72%

\$ 464,117\*

PROGRAMMING

\*2020 program expenses were significantly  
decreased due to COVID-related programming  
reductions

18%

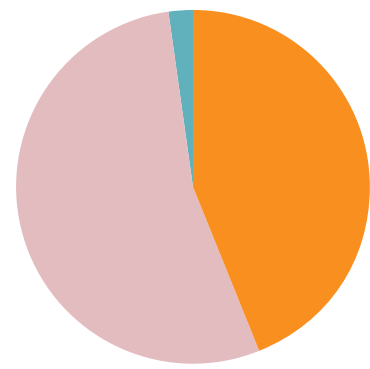
\$ 113,473

FUNDRAISING

44%

\$ 350,279

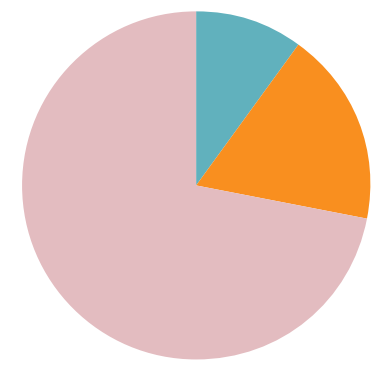
FOUNDATION  
GRANTS



10%

\$ 66,287

GENERAL OPERATIONS



\$ 789,106

\$ 643,877

# »»» OUR SUPPORTERS



**Abrams Brown** LLP  
LAW OFFICES



**CORBEL**  
CAPITAL PARTNERS

**HOLLY J. MITCHELL**  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR • 2ND DISTRICT

**CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION'S**  
FOSTER YOUTH INITIATIVE FUND  
administered by Whittier Trust

**TAILWINDS**  
FOUNDATION

**THE**  
**ROBERT NELSON**



**WOOD RANCH.**



**L** LAW OFFICES OF  
**LAUREN ABRAMS**

THE  
**GUMPERT**  
FOUNDATION

**FOR THE**  
**NEED**  
FOUNDATION™

Pom Pom at Home  
LIVE IN LINEN



**SALTER**  
*family foundation.*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR  
**JANICE HAHN**  
4th District

### \$50,000 +

Salter Family Charitable Foundation  
The William Gumpert Foundation  
The Tailwinds Foundation

### \$25,000 +

Harriet Zaretsky  
Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund  
Alan Bilanin and Susan Zolla  
California Community Foundation  
David Boyle

### \$10,000 +

Lauren Abrams & Scott Shagrin  
Barbara Abercrombie  
Corbel Capital Management, LLC  
Jeffrey & Rachel Schwartz  
Women Helping Youth  
John & Nikol Fischer  
Louis Lucido  
Brett Hobbs & Lindsay Elliott  
Gillian Abercrombie Frame  
Oarsmen Foundation  
Robert Nelson Foundation  
Thomas & Dorthey Leavy Foundation  
Jay & Erika Frank

### \$5,000 +

Junior League of Los Angeles  
Nathan & Albina Hunt  
Helene Causse  
Jeffrey Lee-Chan  
Cynthia Jennings  
Christopher Esse  
Max & Ciria Fischer  
Adam Segel  
For the Need Foundation  
Pom Pom at Home, LLC  
Hilde Leiaghat

### \$1,000 +

Wood Ranch  
Bill and Lucy Ready  
Michael and Britta Slinger  
Vistas for Children  
Ben Shokati  
Eunnie Kwack  
Stanley and Joan Abrams  
Barry & Stacy Meepos  
Kate Reva  
Jason and Haley Gilliland  
Armando Dollero  
Carolo Dollero  
Dennis Quintela  
John Battenfield  
Abrams Brown, LLP  
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Jon Jeffares  
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Kelvin Driscoll  
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Linda Campbell  
Eugene Lee  
Kelli JoTacket  
Erich Sorger  
Mark & Amanda Hikin  
Robert Orgel  
Janet Rotner  
Emily Hutters  
Tarang Desai

### \$1,000 + (cont)

Tarang Desai  
Allyson Pfeifer  
Deanna Cooke  
Jewels Washington  
Michael and Diane Ziering  
The Bloomfield Family Foundation  
Aaron Weinstein  
Sara Van Ness  
Lisa Lazar  
Annette Shapiro  
Brandon & Lindsey Rosenthal  
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Dan Sorger  
Esteban Velez  
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Kenneth Riemer  
Martin Bros.  
Michael & Bianca Leiaghat  
Milken Family Foundation  
Morgan Handel  
Nancy Kenyon  
Pedro Ramos  
Robert & Peggy Shapiro  
Randie Gold  
Sam Leiaghat  
Speiser Family Fund  
The Winnick Family Foundation



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR  
PARTNERS, SPONSORS  
AND SUPPORTERS.**

**Every dollar contributed makes a difference  
in our ability to improve the lives of  
children in foster care.**