

Friends

snake

Archery

Happy trails means alot
to me it like another world
to escape the real world
the constellations are
drawings of what I got
to do in camp and out
camp we all had one
thing in common so
I didnt feel alone

lake/
swimming



2022

ANNUAL REPORT

CAMPING, CONNECTIONS
AND CONFIDENCE FOR
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In an ordinary childhood, summer means joy. Vacations, beach days, camp, and exciting adventures with families and friends await. However, for far too many children experiencing foster care, life is anything but ordinary. The trauma of being separated from family, friends and community is compounded by feeling isolated and different. Summer can be a terribly lonely time. The normalcy and routine of school is absent, extracurricular options are limited, and the sense of solitude can be overwhelming.

Happy Trails for Kids is here to change this reality. As camper James recently said about attending Happy Trails, “At camp, I get to feel ordinary.” His words struck the heart of our mission. Happy Trails is focused on creating community, a sense of belonging, introducing new experiences and celebrating the essence of the ordinary joys of childhood.

In 2022, we brought camping, connections and confidence into the lives of nearly 500 children. In just a few weeks, hundreds more happy, giggling campers will be boarding the bus and heading to our overnight summer camp for the experience of a lifetime. With so many names still on our waiting list, we are planning for the future. We remain committed to making our program accessible to the thousands of children in foster care in and around Los Angeles County.

We are grateful to our partners, supporters, friends, staff, caregivers and campers who make our work possible, and who share our belief that experiencing “ordinary” is **extraordinary**.



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.



SERENDIPITY

A lot of us are on paths
different from what we planned.
Many of us have felt alone
but not in Happy Trails for Kids Land.
There is a feeling of unity
in our foster kid community.
Activities stretch our being
with things we've never seen
through trial and error at times
like on a surfboard that one climbs.
It challenges us to face our fears,
adapt to change, but among cheers.
We tell ourselves to try and try.
When we get up the win is a high.
Happy Trails to me
Is serendipity.

By Junior Counselor,
C. Penaloza

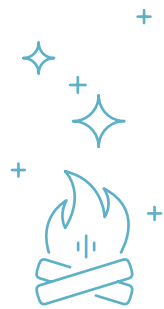
OUR PROGRAMMING

Camp

Thanks to our incredible staff, partners, supporters, and most importantly, CAMPERs, Happy Trails brought the magic of summer camp to over 300 children growing up in foster care. Our camp theme this year was “You have a Friend in Me” – which really goes to the heart of our program...friendship, laughter, community, adventure and fun for children in foster care.

I often think of the camper who told me that before she discovered Happy Trails, she dreaded returning to school in the fall. Teachers and other kids would ask her what she did over the summer...and she had nothing to share. Now, she can't wait to share about Happy Trails and all of the new experiences she has at camp. She sings her favorite camp songs and talks about what it was like to ride a horse for the first time, or take a night swim in a lake, or ride a zip line down a mountain in Big Bear.

Camp is an experienced-based intervention. Campers draw on their experiences at camp to help navigate their everyday lives; to find comfort in the connections made with friends and counselors when loneliness or uncertainty emerges; to demonstrate confidence when facing a new challenge or opportunity and to remind themselves that they matter and are loved.



CAMP IMPACT

95% of Campers report feeling more optimistic after returning from camp

81% Caregiver and youth relationships are improved following camp

95% of Junior Counselors report their training and participation in youth leadership prepared them for academic and career opportunities.

98% of Campers indicate a desire to return to camp in the future

80% of Campers participate in year-round programming engagements

Countless Smiles and Laughs...

OUR PROGRAMMING

Campers never have to pack their bags at Happy Trails for Kids. Our model of year-round engagement is intentional and impactful. With our reunion events, youth have opportunities to strengthen their relationships while exploring new paths, learning new skills, or simply having a fun weekend together. In 2022, Happy Trails for Kids hosted 36 educational or recreational reunion events.



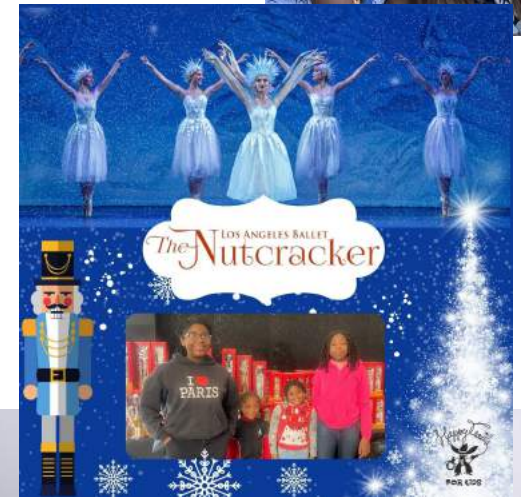
Specialized Programs

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.

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

Thank you to our Happy Trails friends for making our 5th Annual Taste of Camp an unforgettable night of celebration. This year's event, hosted by **Bixel and Company** and held on the charming cobblestone streets of Two Via Rodeo in Beverly Hills, raised over \$300,000 to support children in foster care!

We heard from Happy Trails' incredible counselors, who spoke about their personal experiences in foster care and the lasting impact Happy Trails has had in their personal, professional and academic endeavors. It was an evening where we all came together - for a cause, and for kids, we can rally and unite around.

Winter Toy Drive & Camp

Camp isn't only for the summer! With over 130 children in attendance, we shivered our way through one of the coldest winter camps in memory! Our hearts remained warm with the holiday cheer and generosity shown to our cause....and kids!

We received hundreds of toy donations, and each camper was gifted customized holiday presents - bringing smiles and warming hearts. A huge thank you to the fantastic team at Pali Adventures Camp. We are so grateful to Andy and Jen Wexler and the entire Pali team for their generosity in helping make Winter Camp a reality.



Above, Susan Abrams, Happy Trails President and Lindsay Elliott, Happy Trails Executive Director



Cheyenne Roan-Santini,
Happy Trails Camp Counselor



The Janet and Sonny 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.

Congratulations to Zachary Carter, the recipient of the 2023 Janet & Sonny Salter Scholarship Award. Zach is currently completing his freshman year at Cal Poly Pomona. Zach has been part of Happy Trails for the past 5 years – first as a camper, then Junior Counselor, and now serves as a Camp Counselor. In describing his commitment to Happy Trails, Zach wrote, “I want to be a good role model and leader for other kids like me when I had just entered the system and to give kids in the foster system a space where they can be themselves.” Happy Trails is honored to have Zach as part of our camp family. Congratulations on your academic endeavors and keep up the good work!



»»» OUR IMPACT



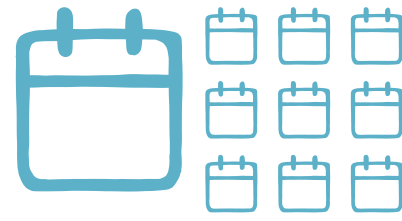
424

NUMBER OF KIDS SERVED



76%

OF COUNSELORS IDENTIFY AS A FORMER FOSTER YOUTH



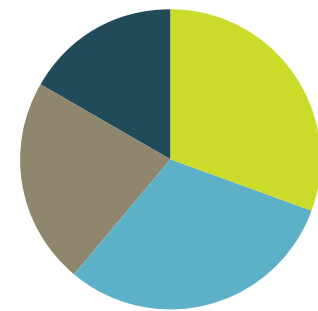
42

REUNIONS EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS



diversity

- LATINO/A/X 45%
- BLACK 36%
- CAUCASIAN 6%
- ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER 4%
- BI/MULTI-RACIAL/OTHER 9%



types of programs

- HAPPY CAMPER HANGOUTS 11
- TRAILS TO SUCCESS/OLDER YOUTH 11
- REUNION EVENTS 8
- FULL FAMILY 6

OUR TEAM



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Nadia Gonzalez, Leadership Team
Stephanie Mojica, Leadership Team
Ash Velasco, Leadership Team
Jasmine Steele, Leadership Team



When Happy Trails counselor Carolina sent a message to her camper, J.L. about how proud she was of her, J.L. responded with this message "Thank you, but it is really you who should be proud. Because of you, I was inspired to not give up and keep pushing for a better life. You are my inspiration".



\$\$\$ OUR FINANCIALS

revenue

expenses

27%

\$ 389,598

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

25%

\$ 348,933

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND OTHER REVENUES

73%

\$ 577,214

PROGRAMMING

11%

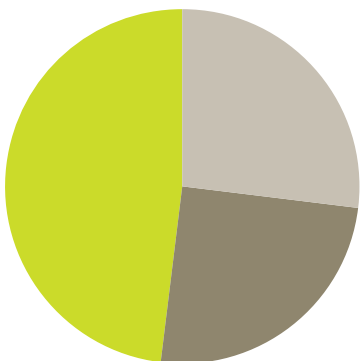
\$ 84,800

FUNDRAISING

48%

\$ 687,095

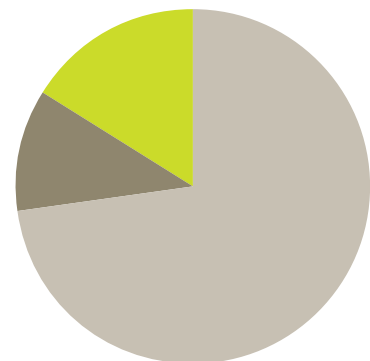
FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATIONS GRANTS



16%

\$ 128,585

GENERAL OPERATIONS



\$ 1,425,626

\$ 709,599

»»» OUR SUPPORTERS



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RALPH M. PARSONS
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CORBEL
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR • 2ND DISTRICT



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Daley
STRATEGIES



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THE
GUMPERT
FOUNDATION

JOHNNY
CARSON
FOUNDATION

Pom Pom at Home
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SALTER
Family Foundation

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR
JANICE HAHN
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\$50,000 +

Salter Family Charitable Foundation
The Tailwinds Foundation
William Gumpert Foundation
County of Los Angeles
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's
Foster Youth Initiative Fund,
administered by Whittier Trust

\$25,000 +

The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Robert Nelson Foundation

\$10,000 +

Corbel Capital Partners
Gillan Abercrombie Frame
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Seattle-Sonoran Foundation
The Ryan Family Fund

\$5,000 +

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Jeffrey Abrams
Fidelity Charitable

\$5,000 + (cont)

Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc
American Endowment Foundation
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Johnny Carson Foundation
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The Barry & Wendy Meyer Foundation
Wendy Sugarman
Jon & Shannon Abrams

\$1,000 +

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Behzad Shokati
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Vistas for Children
Jamie Phillips
Brian Yoon
Lisa & Scott Whitman
Dana Bronson
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Margaret & Tim Henry
Patricia Friedman
The Bloomfield Family Foundation
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Jason Levin
Katrina & James Hernandez
Carolyn Giangiacomo
Michelle Bellamy

\$1,000 + (cont)

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Allyson Pfeifer
Anita Cooke
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Kathryn Langer
Taylor Dudley
Nathan & Albina Hunt
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\$1,000 + (cont)

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**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.**