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Dear Friends,

Imagine hearing your child call you “mom” for the first time in 6 years. Erin started riding at Main Stay when she was just 6 years old. Due to weak muscle tone in her trunk, she needed help just to sit up on her horse and was unable to use her voice. After three months of riding, Erin’s upper body strength had improved so much that she was able to push enough air through her chest and lungs to speak her first word, **“Mom”**.

Today, Erin is a young woman, and she still rides at Main Stay. She loves to listen to and sing Disney songs during her lesson. Riding continues to help Erin maintain her core strength so that she is able to sit up tall and sing!





Imagine a place where your voice is heard for the first time. Meet Nick, a teen who came to the farm a few years back with Allendale LINC, a therapeutic day school. When they came for their first session it was clear to him that this was not one of their usual school outings. As he exited the van and breathed in the fresh air of the farm Nick said, “*Oh, this is a farm, I’ve been to one before.*” While this statement may not seem all that remarkable to the average person, it stopped Allendale’s staff in their tracks! **It was the first time they had heard Nick speak even though they had been with him for an entire school year.** In one of his last sessions at the farm, Nick expressed his appreciation for the non-verbal team building activities that his group participated in at the farm, “*Because everyone was quiet for a change they could all finally really listen to each other.*”

Imagine the comfort a family member feels to be able to entrust the care of their loved one to someone else and know they will be safe. For many of our riders’ family members, their weekly visits to Main Stay are a time when they don’t feel solely responsible for their loved one’s health and safety. Main Stay’s kind, caring and well trained volunteers help to lighten their load. Jean is one of those remarkable volunteers. She comes through the door with a smile on her face, always excited to see everyone. You can see the genuine and loving connection Jean has with “her” riders, the trustworthy therapy horse, and the rest of the instructional team. It is truly a delight to see how her riders light up when she helps them accomplish a goal. They know, without a doubt, that she will both encourage them and keep them safe. Jean and so many other volunteers brighten the halls, arena, and hearts of the farm. The time volunteers give is invaluable and, like Jean, they do it with love, joy, and commitment.

These are just a microcosm of the thousands of lives your support has touched at Main Stay over the years. Last year alone, Main Stay provided services to over **500** people through **4,100** client sessions and with the assistance of close to **5,000** volunteer hours—all made possible through **your generosity.**

We are so grateful to you for helping to empower clients like Erin and Nick through Main Stay’s programs which have an immediate and lasting impact on them and help them to function in their daily lives. Your support has also created a place where people, like Jean, can find a rewarding and fulfilling experience to give back to the community.



Imagine, thirty-five years of changing lives by enriching mind, body and spirit through powerful connections with horses, animals and nature. Even though we’ve updated the words we use to describe Main Stay over the years, the core mission and values have remained unchanged. Because of you, so many lives have been positively impacted through Main Stay’s equine and animal-assisted and gardening programs. Main Stay’s culture of creating a place where everyone feels valued, respected and celebrated for who they are has been and always will be one of our cornerstone values.

*We simply can’t **imagine** how we would do it without you.*

Your support has helped Main Stay grow and expand programming services, and yet, there are still so many more ways our dedicated staff and volunteers, kind and gentle animals, and tranquil farm can benefit the community. With more than 30% of 4th grade students reading below the basic level, Main Stay saw a need that the farm and animals could fulfill and piloted a new program this year. Working in conjunction with local schools and libraries, **Books in the Barnyard**, a new literacy program, encourages young, emerging readers to work on their skills by reading with the animals. **Imagine, reading a book with a goat—how fun is that?**



Thank you for all you have helped Main Stay accomplish, but there’s still so much more we can do. Please consider supporting Main Stay today.

*We can’t **imagine** any greater gift you could give.*

Wishing you peace, love and light throughout this holiday season and in the year ahead.

With gratitude,

Loriann Dowell
Executive Director





Main Stay does not receive any state or federal funding. The fees we charge cover less than 20% of our program costs and financial assistance is available to those who qualify. Community support is our most valuable funding resource allowing us to keep program fees affordable for our clients.



~ Inspiring Unbridled Joy ~