



2015 PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

In 2015 we adopted the Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework for our program evaluations. This is based on the work of Mark Friedman at the Fiscal Policy Studies Institute. The RBA framework encourages the measurement of how much was accomplished, how well it was performed, and what difference was made in the lives of those served.

How much did we do? This is a question of quantity and is most easily answered (assuming proper records are kept). For example, a school might say that they taught 700 students in a given year.

How well was it performed? This question moves the focus from quantity to quality. Is there a distinct quality difference between classes with 35 students each compared to classes with 20 students each; classes with adequate resources and classes with exceptional resources?

What difference was made in the lives of those served? This is the most difficult of questions to answer because of the long term implications that must be measured. How can you determine if children in small classes with exceptional resources are better off than children in larger classes with adequate resources? Would you measure by graduation rates? College acceptance? Standardized test scores?

We decided that the Saddle Up program would be our initial focus for the RBA framework and it would be rolled out to other programs in the coming years. Indications for improvement in each program's evaluation methods are noted.

In addition to the RBA framework, we will also use independent case studies as a program evaluation tool.

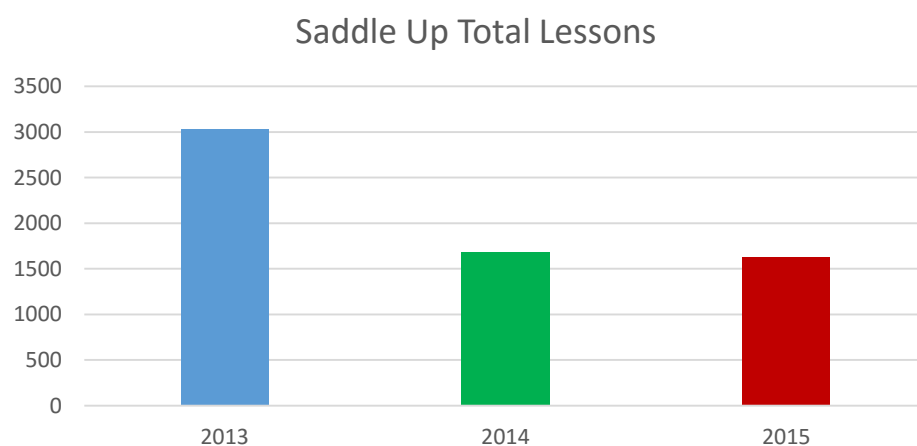
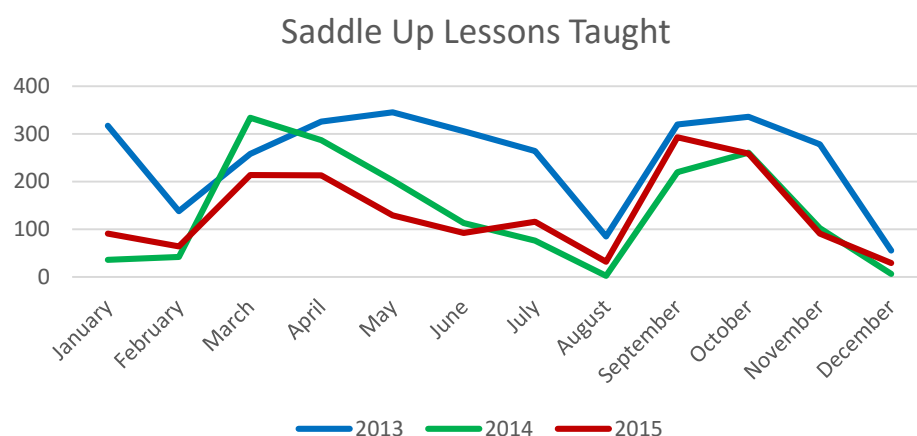
The use of documented results to guide our program development is an essential concept of the barn's Specific, Methodical, and Consistent (SMAc) model that outlines our strategies for success.

SADDLE UP

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

How many lessons did we teach in 2015?

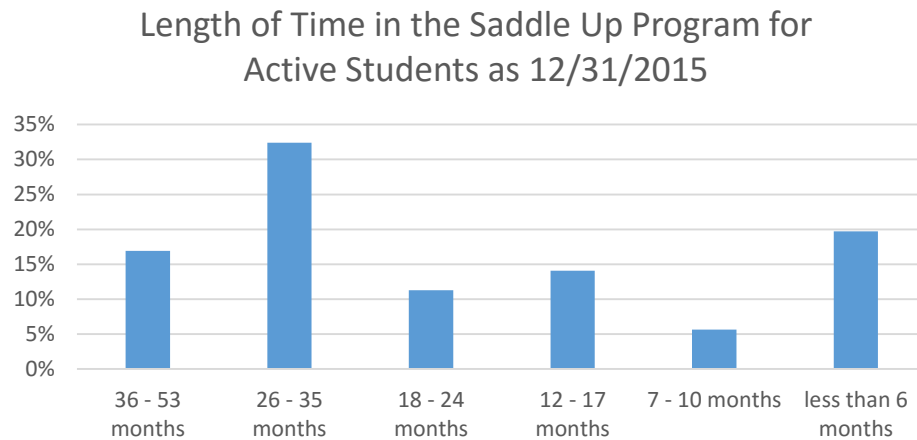
We taught 1,623 lessons in 2015, compared to 1,680 in 2014. Almost all lessons were individual, with a few of them being a group of two (usually siblings). Fewer lessons were taught in 2014 and 2015 than 2013 for two reasons: 1) In 2013, lessons to staff in preparation for instructor certification were included in this total. In subsequent years these lessons were included in the training program statistics. 2) Staff responsibilities have expanded from only teaching lessons and now include also assisting in the daily operations of the barn. This was a necessary shift to ensure the long term sustainability of the organization.



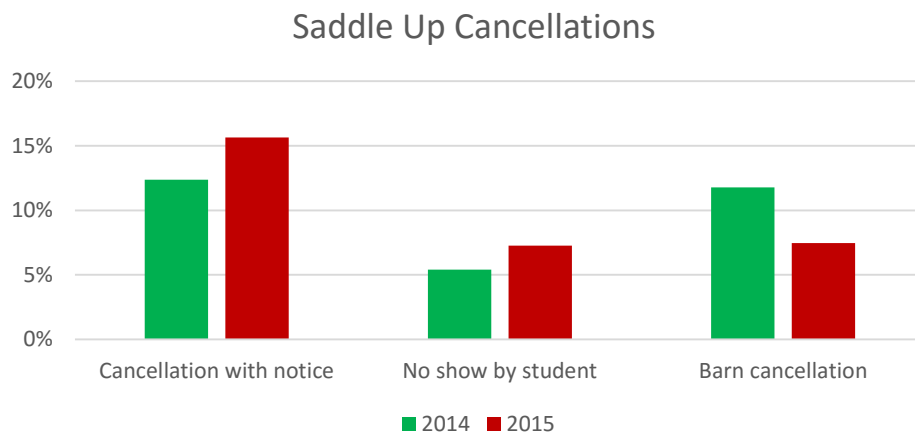
HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

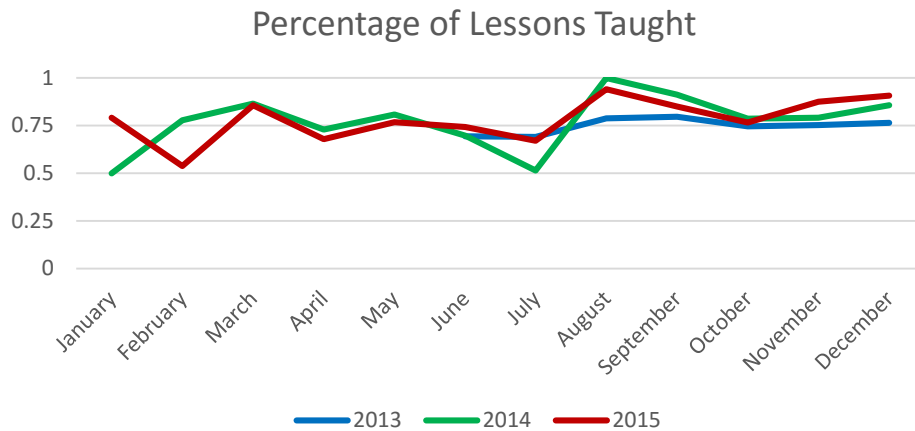
What is our student retention?

- Fall 2014 – 68 students.
- Spring 2015 – 76% returned (52/68) from Fall 2014, added 17 from waiting list for total of 69 students this term.
- Fall 2015 – 83% returned (57/69) from Spring 2015, added 18 from waiting list for total of 75 students this term.



What percentage of scheduled lessons was taught?





What is the demand for the program?

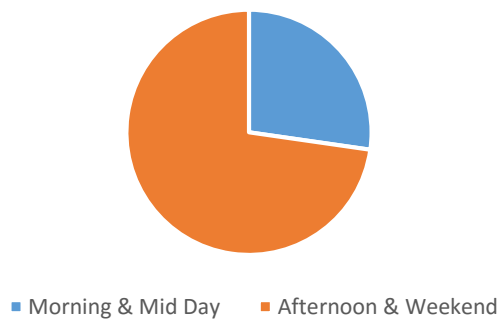
78 individual children with completed paperwork on the waiting list.

Four agencies each want to bring groups of children to the barn for riding lessons.

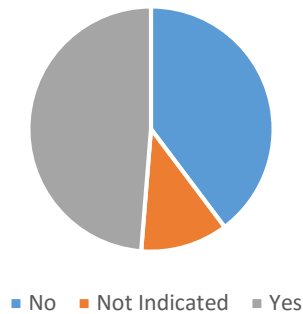
Average age of individual children on the waiting list is 8.5 years old.

Most common disabilities of individual children on the waiting list are developmental delay (speech and cognitive), emotional disability (anxiety, depression, etc.), and autism.

Wait List Lesson Availability
as of January 27, 2016





Wait List Students Needing Scholarship as of January 27, 2016



What did the students think?

A survey was sent to our 2015 students to complete (see attached example). We received a 30% response rate. The results are:

		
I like coming to the barn.		100%
I like my instructor.		100%
I like my volunteers.		100%
Coming to the barn is one my favorite things to do.	3%	97%
I want to come back to the barn.	3%	97%

Students were also asked how they felt when coming to the barn. Their answers included:

really
Happy

I feel happy, Great, excited,
Good and proud.

I feel happy+excited. I feel like i
Can do anything i put my heart
into

HAPPY 

hot

NOTE: The mom called to tell us that we should keep in mind the literal thinking of children with autism when creating the survey!

- I feel happy, very welcomed, and special
I also feel like I can be my self

like it's my home. I feel happy

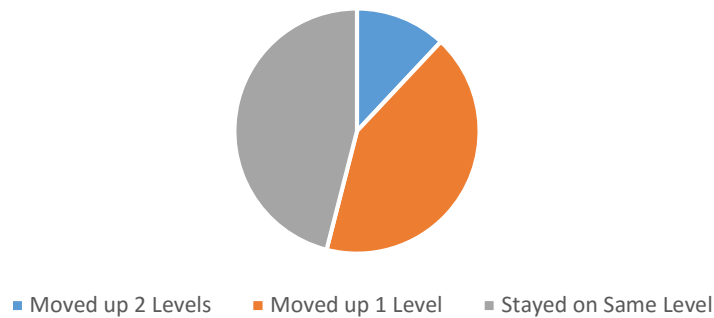
What riding skills were mastered?

In 2014 we began using the Rider Instructor and Evaluation System (RIDES) to measure the number of riding skills mastered for each student. As one of the first agencies in the United States to implement RIDES we knew there would need to be some adjustments as we implemented the system. Over the course of 2015 we decided that the definition of "mastered" was being interpreted differently by instructors. At the end of 2015 we decided to totally revise the RIDES levels in order to quantify what number of times a skill had to be performed correctly in order to consider it mastered. The revised system is much more stringent. Additionally, we decided that an independent evaluator would assess whether or not a skill had been mastered according to the new standard.

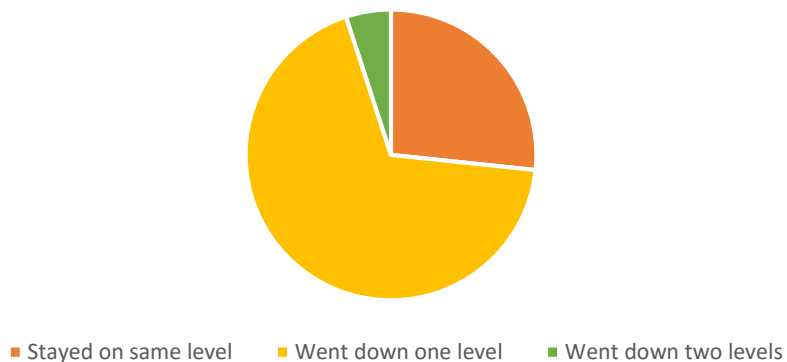
Example of original RIDES skill: Demonstrate a balanced seat at the walk.

Example of revised RIDES skill: Demonstrate a balanced seat at the walk along the long straightaway.

2015 Student Progress Using "Old" RIDES Levels



Revised RIDES Levels for 2016



Were there any incident reports?

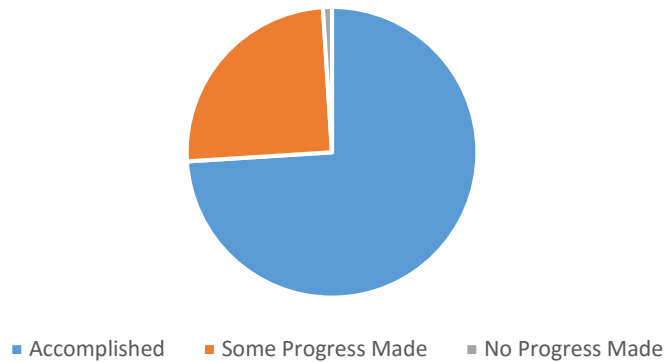
There were two falls this year out of 1,623 lessons. No one was injured in either fall and both individuals continued to participate in our programs.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

What did the parents think?

At the start of the Fall 2015 term, parents were asked to identify a few personal goals for their children. Examples include increasing core strength, following directions, improving social skills, and to relax and play. Phone surveys to parents were conducted, with an 82% response rate. Parents were asked to indicate whether their personal goal was either accomplished, had some progress made, or had no progress made.

Saddle Up Personal Goals Set by Parent



Parents included the following comments indicating that skills at the barn are also transferring to their everyday life.

I love seeing him make good choices to follow instructions. Before we do our lesson, we always do a chore. I love this because at home it is usually such a battle and here he looks forward to it.

She was so pleased with herself at the fun show. She took away the word "congratulations" and now tries to say it to her speech therapist.

I have never heard her say she is as proud of herself as she was to ride in the fun show.

I love watching his face light up as they listen to music when he rides.

She grew a lot through Pepper's death. The meaning of life and death clicked for her.

When he is not at the barn, he's missing a piece of himself.

Working through emotions has carried over exceptionally to school. A scary situation happened, but he didn't lose his cool, stayed calm and clear headed. Following directions has improved at home as well.

He's using way more syllables on his own and occasionally 3 word phrases on his own without being prompted. His letter recognition is getting better.

This is what he lives to do.

He rode around the round pen to see how long he could hold two point and did it longer than he thought he could. He's learning endurance.

He's loving going and has a fun time. It is nice to know he likes it and I don't have to worry about him getting upset.

He has come so far in his riding position and speaking up. He now has confidence to ask and communicate.

He had me put his picture from the awards banquet on my computer screensaver. When anyone comes over, he has me show them. It was inspiring.

What did the students think?

Students were asked "What have you learned at the barn?" as the final question on the survey sent to them. Many of their answers were riding skill related, such as how to trot, walk, halt, brush, groom, etc. However, some showed remarkable insight:

Keep your feet
down. Sit up straight,
trot, and never give up.

I have learned to never give up

~~With~~ Lord, and be ~~kind~~ kind.

I have learned to
ask before giving
hugs.

Working with other kids

CONCLUSION

The Saddle Up program continues to be our most requested. The revised RIDES levels have somewhat skewed our results for riding skill mastery, but the responses from both parents and students indicate that students are learning much more than simply how to ride a horse.

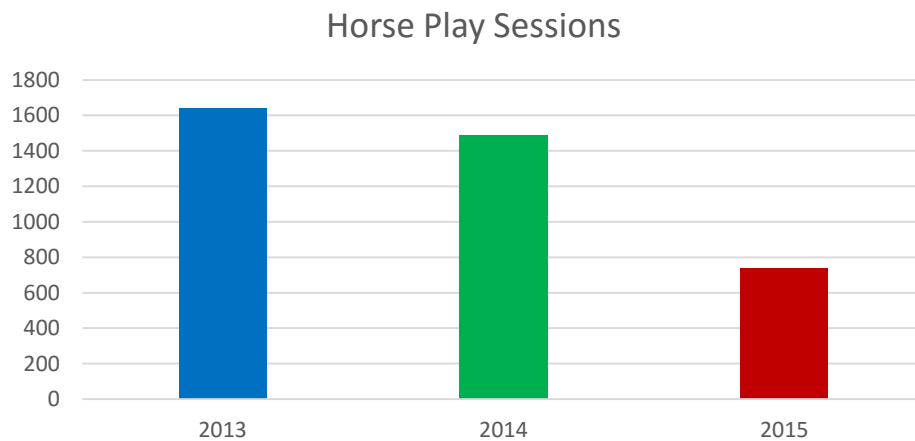
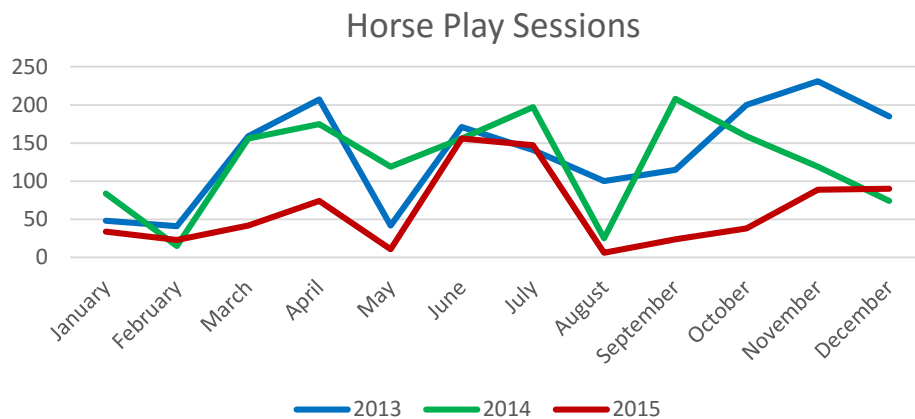


HORSE PLAY

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

How many sessions were held?

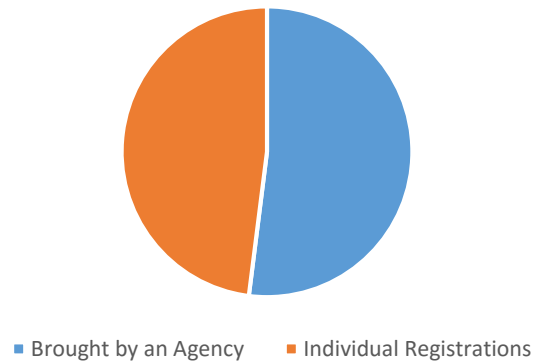
We held 734 sessions of Horse Play camp. A session is defined as one child attending one camp experience. Generally, Horse Play offers an opportunity for individuals not currently enrolled in the Saddle Up program to participate. However, Saddle Up students may choose to participate if they wish. Occasionally riding is included in a Horse Play session, but the majority of the time it is not. In 2013 and 2014 we offered non-horse related programs that were not offered in 2015 due to staffing constraints. Additionally, many programs that were previously considered Horse Play were changed to Horse Sense Training programs in 2015.



Who participated?

Participants were fairly evenly split between individuals who signed up and those brought by agencies. The agencies we worked with in 2015 include: Cahaba Academy, Girl Scout Troops, UAB, Grace House, UCP, Glenwood, Everest Academy, Impressions Homeschool, Shelby County Special Education classes, Moton Community Center, Mitchell's Place, Kirkwood by the River, JBS Find, Amelia Center, COTH Woodlawn Outreach, Urban Kids, Hillcrest, Lifeline, New Beginnings, Compass Homeschool, and Girls, Inc.

Horse Play Participants

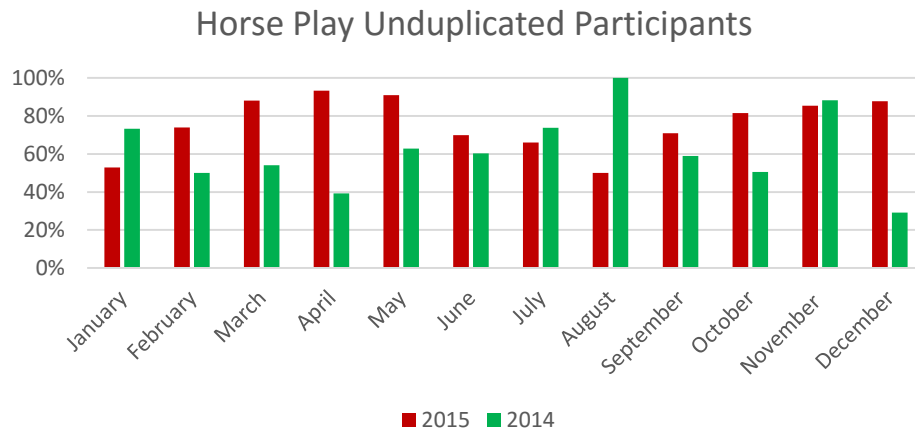


HOW WELL DID WE DO IT AND IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Our program evaluation efforts have been mainly directed to the Saddle Up program since it is our most labor intensive and costly to provide. We have some indicators of how well Horse Play was provided, but there is still much room for improvement in future years.

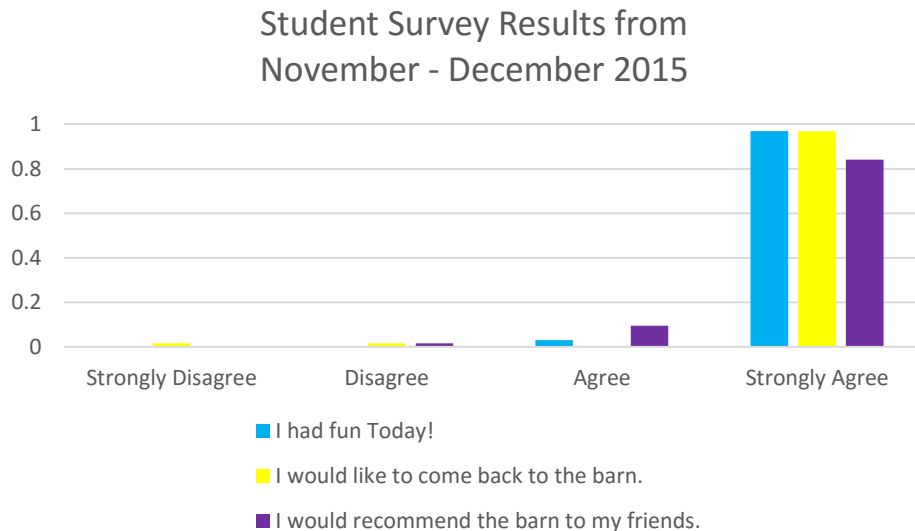
How many unduplicated participants were there?

Since one of the main goals of Horse Play is to provide a barn experience to those on our waiting list or unable to participate in Saddle Up, it is expected that the unduplicated numbers will be higher. A high percentage of unduplicated participants does not indicate dissatisfaction with the program. The chart below shows the percentage of unduplicated participants in each month for 2014 and 2015. For example, in January 2015 we held 34 sessions with 18 unduplicated individuals attending for a 53% rate. Keep in mind that some of these unduplicated individuals may also be counted in subsequent months and may also have participated in Saddle Up programs. We are working to find the balance between tracking unduplicated participants without having an overly burdensome administrative process.



What did the students think?

In the past we have sent surveys to group leaders to be completed after their experience and these surveys were rarely completed. In Fall 2015 we began giving a paper survey to participants before they left the property and had a much better response rate. Although we tell group leaders and parents whether or not riding will be included in the camp, students often come expecting to ride even when leaders and parents have been told riding is not included in the camp. This can lead to disappointed campers.



Students were also asked to indicate their favorite activity. Grooming was by far the favorite, with nature activities and free play close seconds.

Students were also asked to list three things they learned while at the barn. Their most popular answers included safety information, how to groom, and facts about the horse's anatomy. Some of the more interesting answers included information about horses needing personal space like people, that horses have jobs, and that horses have character traits similar to those of people.

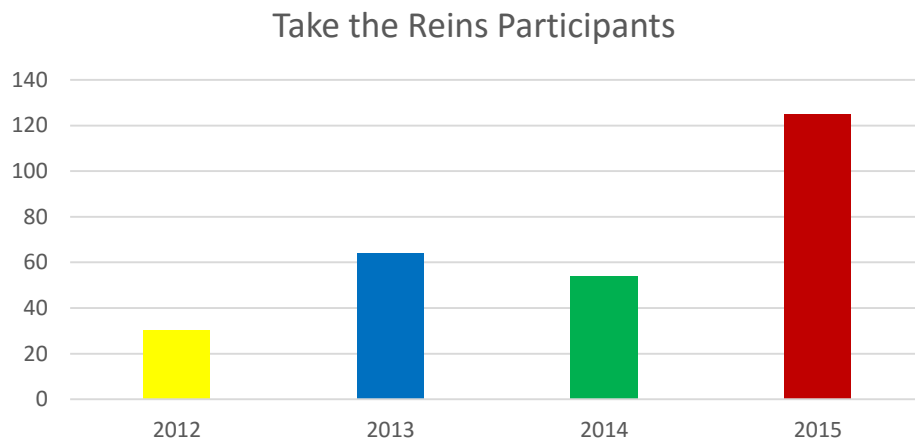
CONCLUSION

The majority of our formal program evaluation efforts have been directed towards Saddle Up, but we also see evidence that the Horse Play program continues to make an impact on the lives of participants by providing an enriching and educational experience for them. The program allows us the opportunity to work with children on our waiting list, as well as others in the community. Our future program evaluation plans include formal surveys with agency contacts and continuing to follow up with students with end of session surveys.

TAKE THE REINS

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2015 we held 125 Take the Reins sessions. A session is considered each time one individual comes to the barn to specifically participate in a Take the Reins program through a partnership with an agency specifically for veterans, such as Lakeshore, Wounded Warriors, or the VA. These numbers do not include our Saddle Up or Horse Play students who may have an active or inactive duty parent.



HOW WELL DID WE DO IT AND IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

As mentioned previously, our primary focus has been to first work on our Saddle Up program evaluation and later develop these measures for other programs. Also, since the goal of Take the Reins is to provide a relaxing environment for attendees, we do not want to interrupt their experience by asking them to complete a survey. However, in-person interviews and conversations with the group organizers indicate that participants appear more relaxed at the barn and that the barn's atmosphere promotes conversation and relaxation.

As an example, one spouse told the session leader that during the session her veteran husband was more talkative than she had seen him previously and that he seemed to remember more details about the horse than he usually did in conversation. Another spouse reported that she had not heard her veteran husband speak of his experiences until he had the opportunity to be around other veterans while grooming.

We have one on-going participant who recently wrote the following for our annual report:

"Working with the staff at The Red Barn is nice and rewarding because through mucking the stalls and giving the horses food and water it gives them a good environment to live within. I feel very privileged to have worked alongside Wyspr and Kyle. It has taught me how to look past

what shortcomings someone might have and do my best to try and accomplish the goal despite what shortcomings that may be. I might be a little bit bias [sic] because I am talking about myself but I think I have made vast improvements since I began there."

CONCLUSION

Take the Reins is our smallest program and it is difficult to measure its impact since the vast majority of attendees are one-time experiences. For future evaluations, we will continue to use examples of comments relayed to staff in sessions and other testimonials. We will also begin a more formal survey of group organizers.

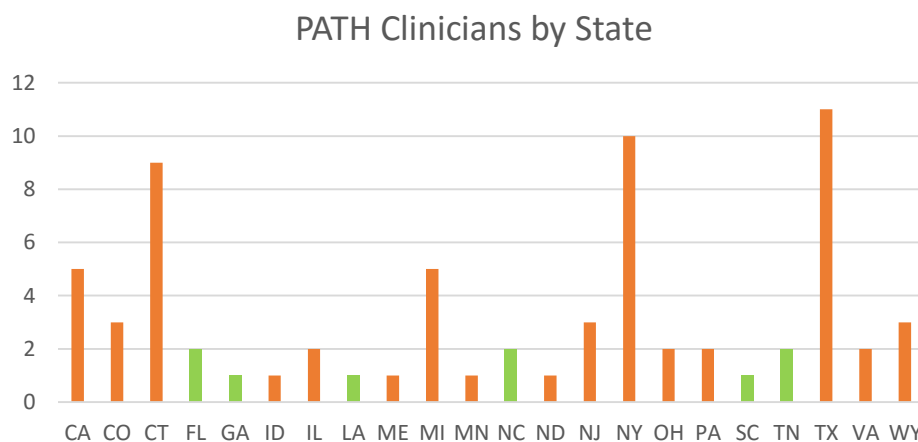
HORSE SENSE TRAINING

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROGRAM CREATION AND HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In the past, training classes were combined as either Saddle Up lessons, Horse Play sessions, or not counted at all in program numbers. In 2015, we began to document our training activities as our newest program and decided upon the name Horse Sense since the program reaches a wide variety of participants: our staff, staff from other similar agencies, volunteers, the general public, individuals interested in beginning their own agencies, and individuals wanting to become certified therapeutic horseback riding instructors.

While all of these reasons for participation are important, the program originated from the need for more certified therapeutic horseback riding instructors. A recent study by Otterbein University that received surveys from over 1,000 Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) agencies across the United States. They were asked, "What is the biggest challenge you face when hiring new employees?" and 60% of them responded by saying they could not find a qualified instructor. We also have realized the impact of this statement in our own staffing needs as our programs have grown.

The problem of a lack of instructors is exacerbated by the fact that there are a limited number of clinicians who are qualified to certify new instructors and that a limited number of clinics are taught each year in the southeast.



As the above chart indicates, there is a serious shortage of instructors living in the Southeast, with none residing in the state of Alabama. Since PATH requires two clinicians to be present for either a workshop or certification clinic to be held, scheduling can be difficult to coordinate with expensive travel costs for clinicians.

With these facts in mind, we began this program and provided 1,855 hours of training in the following categories:

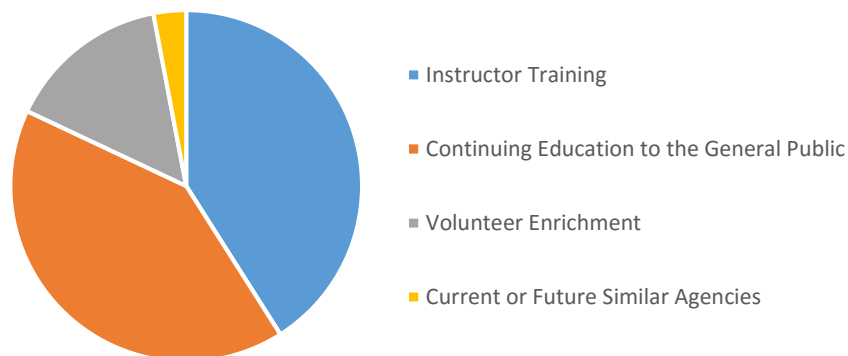
Instructor Training: Providing ongoing continuing education for our own instructors, as well as assisting other individuals to begin the instructor training process. These included certification clinics, how-to seminars, and hands-on practice for individuals wanting to become instructors.

Volunteer Enrichment: Providing our current volunteers with educational experiences specific to The Red Barn's needs. It is our hope that some of these volunteers will later consider a career as an instructor.

Continuing Education to the General Public: These classes were offered for individuals to improve their horsemanship skills, as well as learn more about therapeutic equine activities in general. Attendees included our current students and their families, volunteers, teachers from the community, social workers, and individuals from other similar agencies.

Current or Future Agencies: We provided informational clinics and meetings for other similar agencies or those wishing to begin them.

Horse Sense Classes in 2015



HOW WELL DID WE DO IT AND IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

This program had 382 unduplicated participants.

In March 2015, the first cohort of Instructor in Training classes began with five instructor candidates, two of whom were staff, one intern, and two volunteers. All five individuals passed their PATH online tests. The intern has since left us, but all four other individuals are still involved. One of the volunteers has totally completed her Phase One requirements, two staff members plan to complete Phase One by April, and the other volunteer by July.

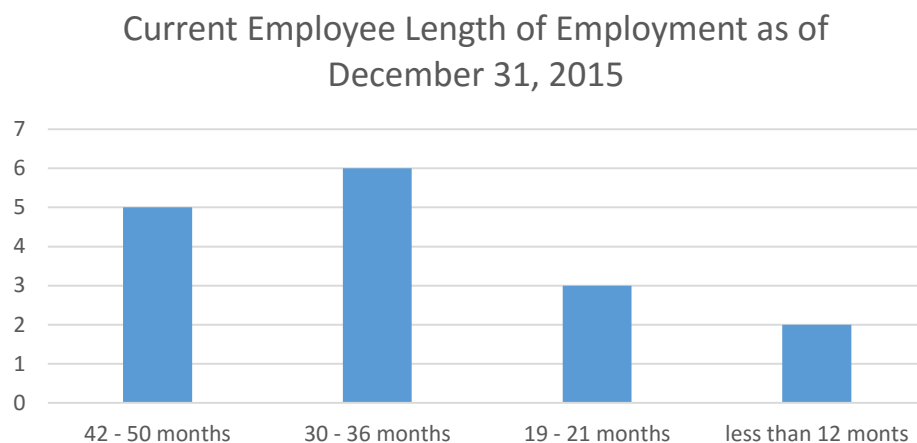
CONCLUSION

The volume alone of this inaugural year leads us to conclude that this is a successful program. We will continue to refine our evaluation methods to track instructor certification numbers, as well as participant satisfaction.

OVERALL AGENCY INDICATORS

EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Our current staff's length of employment is shown in the chart below.



Of the four employees leaving the barn in 2015 (not included in above chart):

- One moved out of state after 14 months of part-time employment.
- One decided to stay home with her child after 12 months of part-time employment.
- One decided to stay home with her children after 10 months of part-time employment.
- One needed to work closer to her home (she commuted an hour each way) in order to assist with family responsibilities after 27 months of part-time employment.

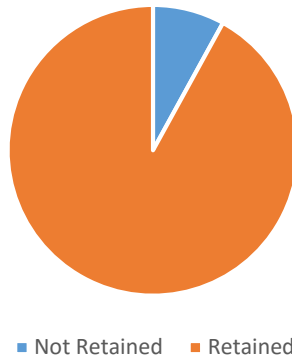
VOLUNTEER RETENTION

A volunteer is not considered retained if he or she:

- Does not fulfill their commitment to the barn.
- Indicates unhappiness or unwillingness to continue participating.
- Has not responded to our emails or messages after one year.

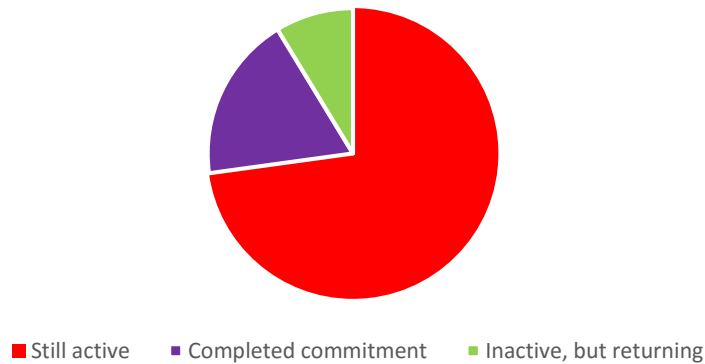
Of the 151 volunteers in 2015, 92% are considered retained.

Volunteer Retention 2015



The current status of the retained volunteers is shown below:

Retained Volunteer Status 2015



The purple segment represents primarily students who volunteered for one term in order to receive service hours for school or students who have moved away for college. The green segment represents individuals who are unable to volunteer at the current time due to other obligations, but do want to remain on the volunteer list in hopes of returning when their schedule allows.

CONCLUSION

The employee and volunteer retention rates indicate that both staff and volunteers are satisfied with their participation at the barn.