



## 2018 Program Evaluation

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. 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 in education between a class size of 35 students compared to a class size of 20 students; a class with adequate resources compared to a class with exceptional resources?

**What difference was made in the lives of those served? Is anyone better off?** 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?

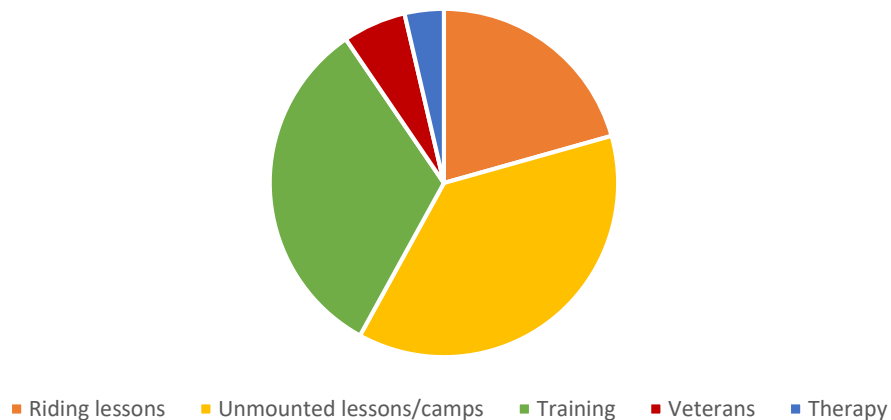
In 2015 we focused on the riding program for the RBA framework and in following years we applied it to unmounted lessons, veteran programs, and trainings. For the 2018 program evaluation, we are in the process of adding independent case studies. UAB Occupational Therapy students are conducting interviews with some of the 2018 students and identifying the impact of our programs on those participants. Because program evaluation is a constantly improving process, more areas for improvement may be noted in each section.

While a program evaluation process takes time, 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.

## THE RED BARN OVERVIEW

The Red Barn offers a variety of services. Our initial plan was to develop a team of professionals who could serve as mentors and support for others in the industry, especially those starting new programs. In order to develop our expertise, we offer programs on a daily basis including riding lessons, unmounted lessons/camps, training events, veteran programs, and equine-assisted therapy. The chart below is an overview of where we are currently spending our time.

Program Hours 2018



The year 2018 has brought quality improvement and professional growth opportunities to The Red Barn. Quality improvement efforts for The Red Barn include training for staff and refining our processes for determining goals, planning lessons and documenting results. The RIDES curriculum remains the standard for The Red Barn, but instructors and students now have designated time to work together and develop individualized goals based on the student's needs and interests. This goal-setting process increases engagement of the rider in their own learning process and allows The Red Barn to recognize and track smaller units of progress. The new lesson planning process ensures continuity of service if an instructor is absent. Our improved documentation model for lessons insures we collect meaningful data that supports the rider's learning and can be analyzed to determine best practice teaching strategies.

Areas of expansion for 2018 include offering hippotherapy and partnering with the JAYC foundation and the University of Alabama. A brief description of hippotherapy is "occupational therapy/physical therapy/speech therapy that incorporates the dynamic movement of the horse into the therapy session to improve life skills." Offering this unique program required mentoring time for the new therapists, training horse handlers for new skill levels, conditioning of the horses for new roles, and development of new administrative intake procedures.

This year The Red Barn partnered with The American Legion and the JAYC Foundation to develop a training program for first responders when interacting with individuals who are non-verbal, which is set to roll out in 2019. This included identifying community needs, collaborating with experts who work with populations that have communication difficulties, and creating training materials for parents, and teachers that coordinates with the training material for the first responders. Included in this process was education about how the horse can be used by each group to increase awareness of body language and to teach strategies for de-escalating a tense situation.

We began an on-going research project with the University of Alabama Department of Social Work to evaluate the impact of equine assisted activities on child behavior and families. This study will include information from families that are currently participating, as well as families from our wait list.

These efforts have improved our programs, as well as our donors' experiences, as evidenced by a few quotes from our recent donor survey:

*If you visit and observe how many people invest in each child, each horse, and each lesson, you come away so impressed and grateful! Everything is planned for on such an organized and professional level.*

*The barn is clean and the horses are healthy and well cared for. The staff is professional and kind. I am so impressed.*

*From the top to the bottom, the staff love what they do, and they work diligently to carry out their scriptural statement.*

*The needs that are met at the barn are too numerous to name, but the number of people who reap the benefits more than justify any donation.*

# RIDING PROGRAM

## HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

### How many lessons did we teach in 2018?

We taught 1,011 lessons, totaling 1,289 program hours in 2018. The majority of lessons were individual and 11% were group lessons. Group lessons typically consisted of summer lessons with two to three students, sibling groups, or close friends.

The number of lessons and program hours in the riding program were reduced in 2018 to allow time for the partnerships listed above. This reduction came through natural attrition, decreasing the number of group lessons and shortening the riding terms from 10 weeks to 8 weeks.

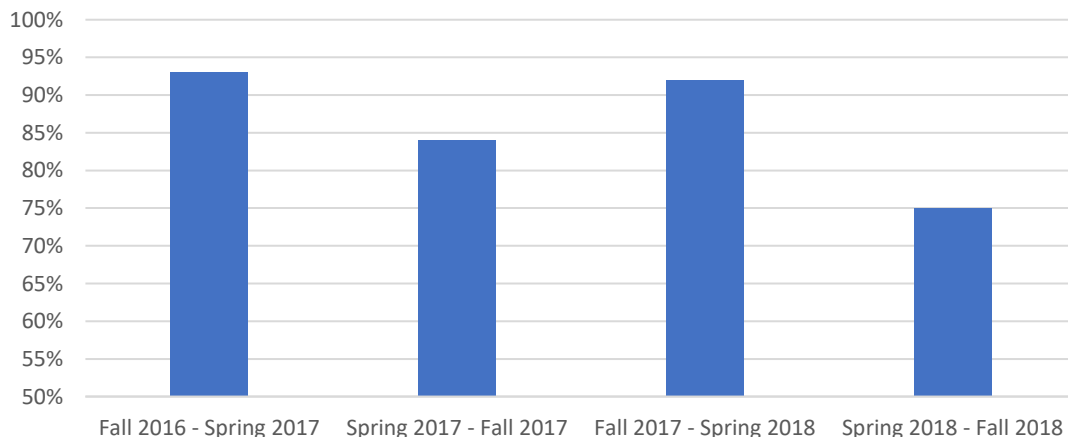
The number of group lessons dropped from 30% in 2017 to 11% in 2018. Several of the sibling groups transitioned to individual lessons. While this means that we were not able to serve as many individuals in the same amount of time, it allowed siblings to progress at their own rate and expand their unique interests.

## HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

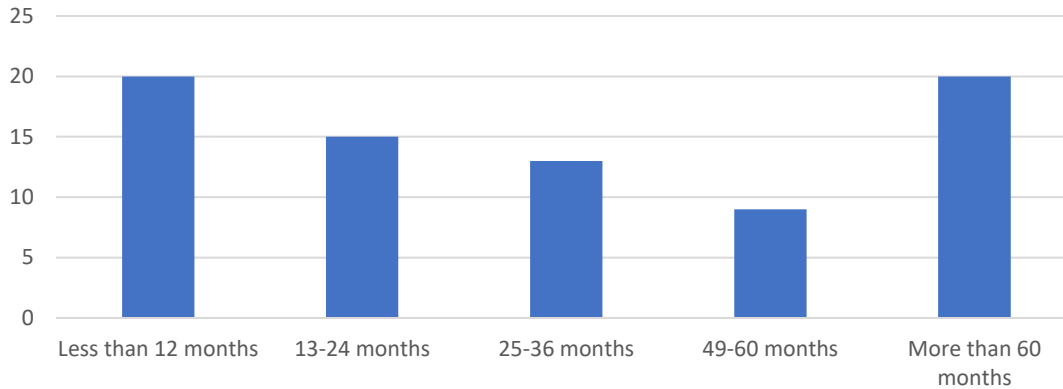
### What is our student retention?

One way to assess quality of services is to look at whether or not participants want to return. Student retention rates and the length of time students have been riding with us are given below. The reasons provided by those that left the program are shown below. The reasons for stopping lessons are predominantly out of our control, indicating that there is not much we can do to increase student retention. Our student retention rate typically drops from Spring to Fall as students' school and extracurricular schedule changes, resulting in schedule conflicts. With an overall high retention rate, the only way to increase the size of the riding program would be to increase our number of horses, instructors, and volunteers.

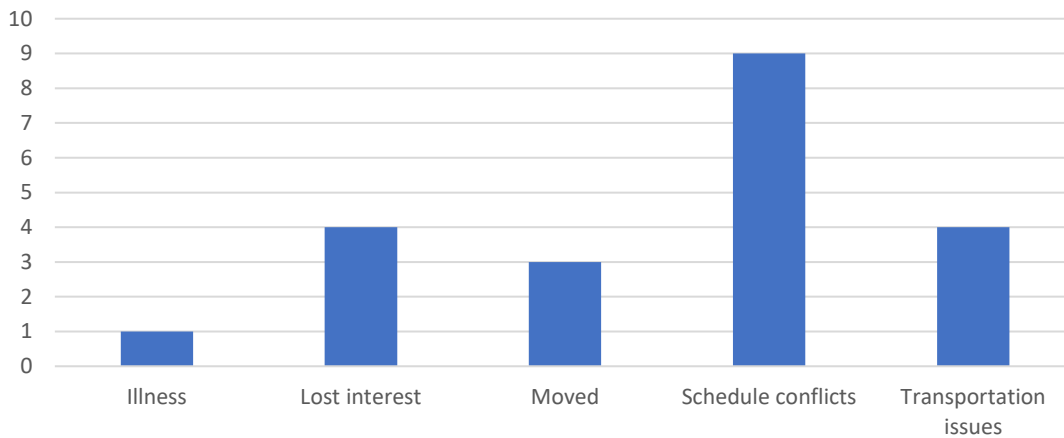
Student Retention from Term to Term



### Current Students as of 2018 Length of Time Riding at The Red Barn



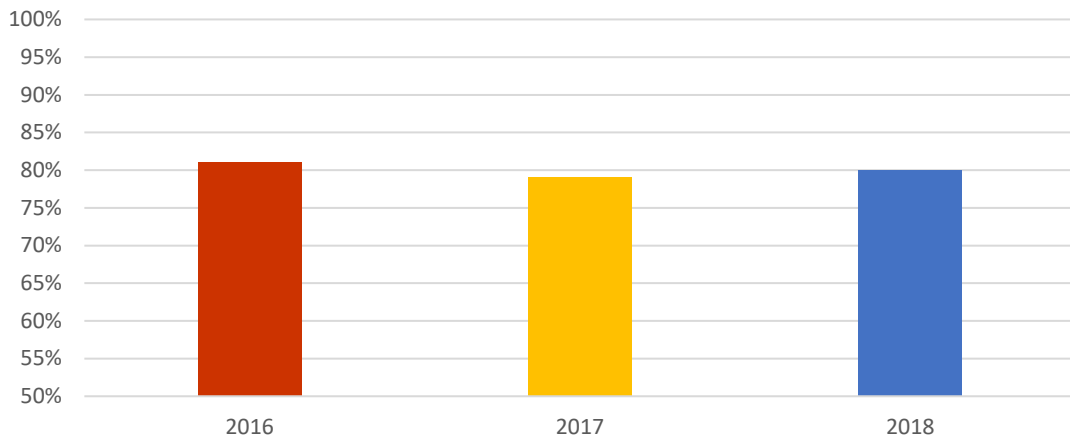
### Reasons for Stopping Lessons in 2018



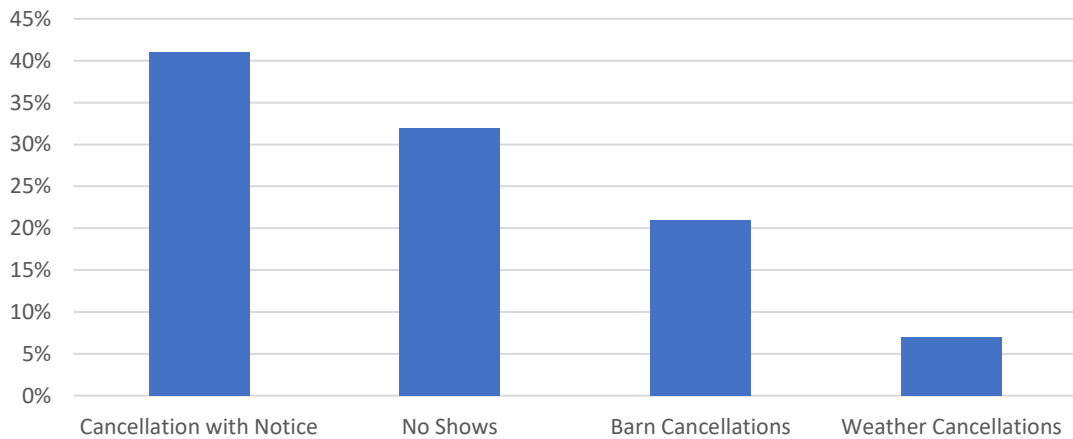
### What percent of scheduled lessons was taught?

In 2014 we began tracking the reasons why lessons were cancelled to improve our efficiency. Over the years we have made several changes to improve our efficiency. These include: 1) hiring more instructors so that lessons don't have to be cancelled if an instructor is absent; 2) educating parents about the costs of no-show cancellations (defined as less than 24 hours' notice); 3) stopping "make up lessons" if a student cancelled their regularly scheduled lesson; and 4) providing alternative strategies for teaching riding skills when the weather is not favorable. In 2018, we dedicated the smaller barn as an education and therapy area. We set up teaching areas using an mechanical horse and a vaulting barrel. Instructors are able to use this barn to continue working on riding skills and reduce the number of cancellations due to weather. As a result, for the past 3 years, we have been able to maintain an 80% rate for percentage of lessons taught.

Percentage of Lessons Taught



Reasons for Lesson Cancellations 2018



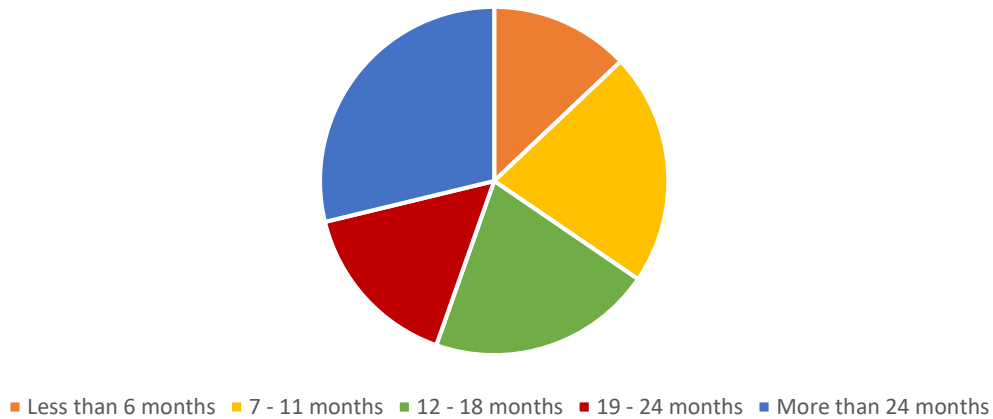
**What is the demand for the program?**

There are currently 169 students on the waitlist compared to 189 in 2017. The average age of a waiting list student is 11 years old.

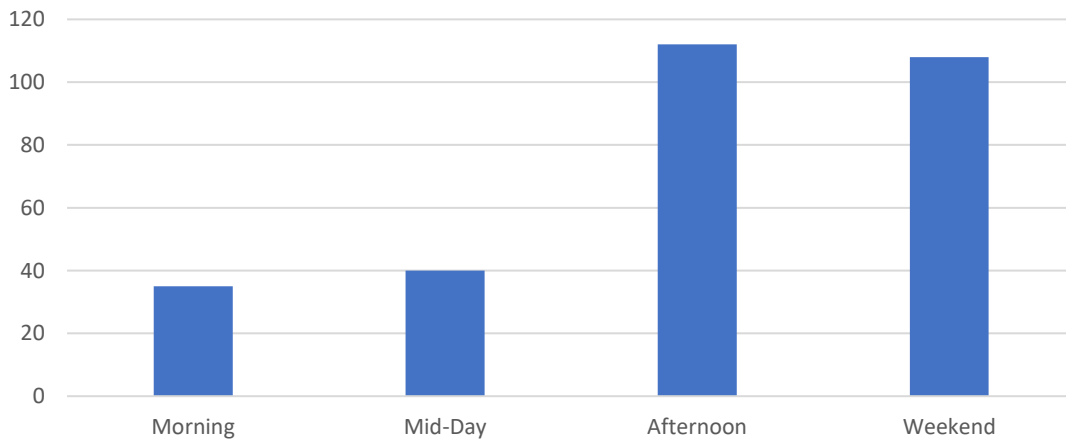
We continue to work on getting more students off the waitlist and in to programs. In 2017, we started conducting waitlist evaluations on Saturday with help from AED student's from UAB. These evaluations allow us to interview the parents and observe the students around horses and with their peers, giving us a better understanding of where they would fit at the Barn.

In 2018 we revamped our initial evaluation to improve consistency among evaluators. Once this was complete, we began scheduling potential students for an evaluation as soon as possible after we receive their initial paperwork. This allows us to best match them with a program as quickly as possible. However, the majority of wait list students indicate afternoon or weekend availability. To accommodate for this, we would have to hire more instructors and expand our horse herd.

Waiting Time of Current Wait List Students



Wait List Availability



### What did the students think?

A survey was sent to all 66 students who participated in the riding program in the Fall of 2018. We have received 24 surveys back, for a 36% response rate. One student indicated that they did not like being at the barn, grooming, or want to come back. Their mother noted on the survey that they were having a bad day when filling it out, but the child does look forward to coming each week. One student indicated that he does not like grooming because he wants to hurry up and ride. The results were as follows:

	Happy Face	Frowning Face
I like coming to the barn.	96 %	4 %
I like to groom.	92%	8%
I like to ride.	100%	0%
Coming to the barn is one of my favorite things to do.	96%	4%
I want to come back to the barn.	96%	4%

Students were also asked how they feel when they are at the barn. Some examples of their answers are below:

I like coming to The Red Barn.

love



I like to groom.

love



How do you feel when you're at the barn?

I feel happy

How do you feel when you're at the barn?





### What riding skills were mastered?

In 2014 we began using the Rider Instruction and Evaluation System (RIDES) to track the mastery of riding skills divided into five levels. Each level contains both mounted and unmounted skills and mastery is checked at the end of each term. The levels are:

Level 1 - This level of rider is primarily walk only on lead. Trotting is minimal, if at all.

Level 2 - This level of rider is learning basic riding skills at the walk and trot on lead.

Level 3 - This level of rider is learning to ride off lead at the walk and on lead at the trot.

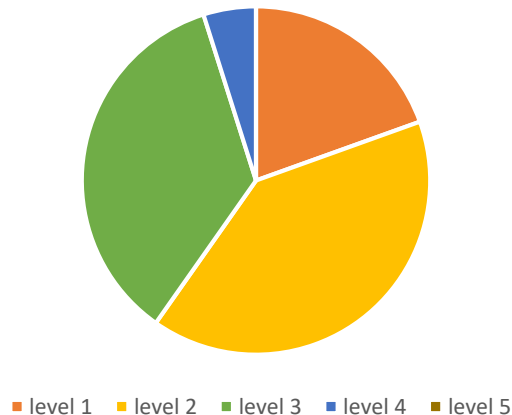
Level 4 - This level of rider is proficient at riding off lead at the walk and is learning to ride off lead at the trot.

Level 5 - This level of rider is working on more advanced skills off lead at the walk and trot and is learning to canter. When our students complete this level, we consider them to have graduated from our programs.

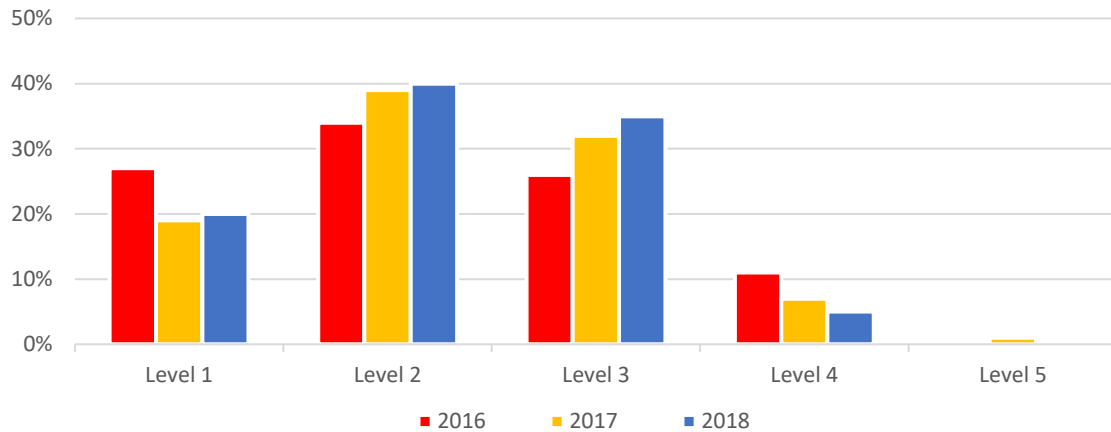
Students progress at their own pace, but in a methodical way. Some skills are mastered quickly, and other may take longer. The point of the RIDES system is not to compare students to each other, but only to identify that skill mastery is indeed taking place over time and to outline logical riding skill progression.

RIDES levels also help us identify horse and volunteer need. For example, the graph below indicates that the majority of students are on levels 2 and 3, which require the horse to have a volunteer leader. Level 2 students typically have an additional 1-2 volunteer helpers in the lesson.

RIDES Levels at end of Fall 2018



RIDES Levels over Time at End of Fall Term 2018

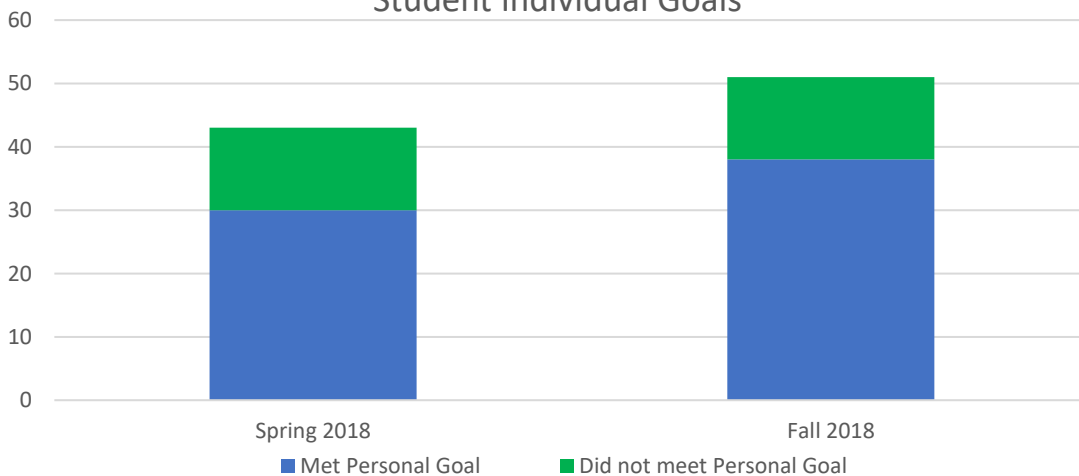


## IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

### What did the students think?

In 2018, students were asked to set their own goals. The instructors included these goals, along with parent concerns, and RIDES goals in their lesson plans. This was our first year to ask the riders for goals and it was a learning process for all involved. Some riders developmental age prevented them from participating in this activity. Some riders indicated that they had never been asked to set goals in their extra-curricular activities and required help with the process. Other riders jumped at the opportunity to define their dreams. Goals ranged from learning horses' names to jumping competitively. While we were not able to directly address some of the goals, such as jumping and galloping, the instructors worked with every student to understand how their lessons were laying the foundation for their goals.

Student Individual Goals



In addition to the data above, students were asked open-ended questions about what they learned at the barn.

What have you learned at the barn?

I have learned how to communicate with my horse,  
and how to be a better rider

What have you learned at the barn?

turning  
my horse

What have you learned at the barn?

I have learned how to  
groom, ride, and have fun with  
the horses

What have you learned at the barn?

I have learned  
a lot thank you for  
helping me.



### What did the parents think?

Parents were given a survey asking if they saw growth in a variety of areas. The four most common areas were self-confidence, following directions, physical strength, and coordination. Next, they were asked if they saw these improvements carry over into other areas of life.

	Saw improvement at the barn	Saw carry-over at home
Self-confidence	88%	75%
Following directions	100%	87%
Physical strength	62%	50%
Coordination	62%	75%

When asked what The Red Barn means to them, parents replied:

*A place where my son learns life lessons. A place that accepts him as himself, while setting and reaching goals set for him specifically. The Red Barn provides him a sense of purpose.*

*You give him a chance in life and show him anything is possible.*

*It is a peaceful place where my child can be himself. It is a safe place for the whole family.*

### CONCLUSION

The demand for our programs remains strong, as evidenced by our growing waitlist and high student retention. Our cost estimates for 2018 are not available yet, but historically costs for lessons at The Red Barn are higher than other similar agencies because we focus on teaching private, rather than group lessons. These individual lessons do require more staff, horses and volunteers to operate, but we believe that individualized lessons allow us to customize each session for that student's unique needs, allowing them to progress faster accomplish more.

## UNMOUNTED CLASSES

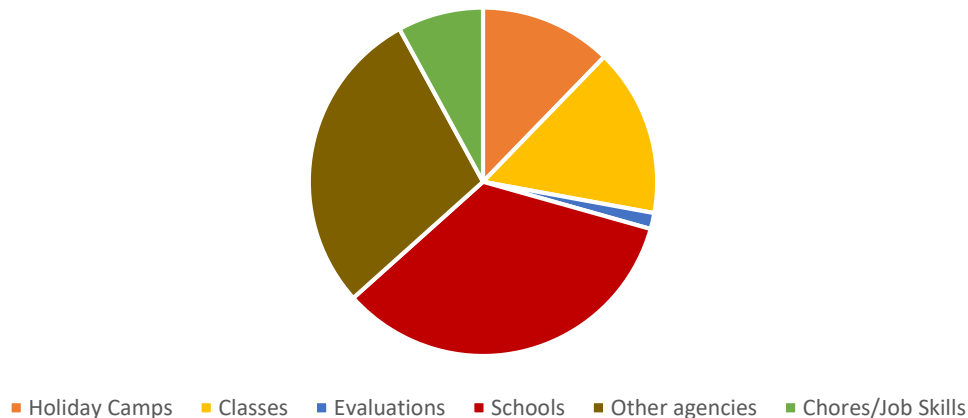
Our unmounted classes continue to be in high demand. These activities impact students in a different, but equally important, way than our riding program. Unmounted classes allow those on the waiting list to take part in barn activities. Many of our students do not have a lot of extracurricular activities because of their disabilities. Our classes give these students the opportunity to participate in fun activities while learning important life skills. Our activities are often inconclusiveness, giving typically developing students the chance to develop empathy while serving as peer models for our students with disabilities.

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

#### How many hours of programming were provided?

We provided 2,128.75 hours of unmounted classes in 2018. These hours include summer camps, job skills training, developmental play groups, horse art classes, social skills classes, work groups, science of the horse, 4H, and field trip experiences. The classes are offered to individuals on the waiting list as an opportunity to participate in the Barn experience; however, current riding students and individuals from the general public often choose to participate as well.

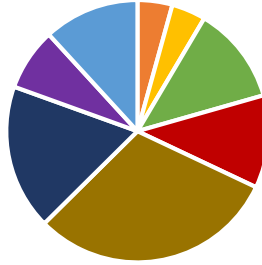
Unmounted Program Hours



#### Who participated?

Our unmounted classes serve individuals as well as other organizations from the community. Seventeen school groups and 9 non-profit agencies composed 62% of the unmounted program hours. Classes, such as holiday camps, job skills training, and on-going weekly classes serve individuals. These classes account for 38% of our unmounted activities. The breakout of classes for individuals is shown below.

## Unmounted Classes for Individuals



- 4H
- Horse Art
- Job Skills
- Social Skills
- Work group
- Education Village
- Behavioral One
- Science of the Horse

## HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

### What did the students think?

At the end of each group, we ask students to complete a short survey.

2018	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Did you have fun?	96%	3%	1%
Do you want to come back?	92%	7%	1%

## IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

This continues to be difficult to answer for unmounted programs. While using a standardized assessment would be beneficial to measure improvement, we have not identified one that is appropriate for such a wide variety of participants and experiences. To determine impact following our summer classes and camps, we asked our student's parents to provide feedback. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, supporting the idea that our unmounted programs do make a lasting impact on the students we serve. Several quotes from the parents are listed below:

*This was the highlight of my daughter's week!*

*I see improvements in confidence and self-esteem, as well as awareness after my daughter spends time at The Red Barn. Her focus becomes less about her weaknesses and more about her strengths and special talents that God has bestowed upon her.*

*My son felt very important and loved his responsibility of taking care of the goats.*

*The pace and love at The Red Barn is unmatched! Every child grows in various ways to benefit their overall quality of life.*

*My daughter learned a lot about how to interact with others and not take everything to heart. She is better able to distinguish between “kidding talk” and being “mean.”*

*Thank you for acknowledging the special emotional needs of adopted kids and creating a safe place where they can be understood and loved through the ups and downs of growing up adopted. She is treated with such loving attention. She comes home feeling uplifted and refreshed.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The unmounted program provides invaluable opportunities for students who cannot participate in our riding lessons. These programs also provide a safe space for our students to practice appropriate social interactions with their peers. While it is still difficult to determine the degree of impact, we believe that the demand and positive feedback from both participants and parents indicate that these programs are beneficial. We will continue to look for more appropriate assessment tools as we further improve our program evaluation practices.

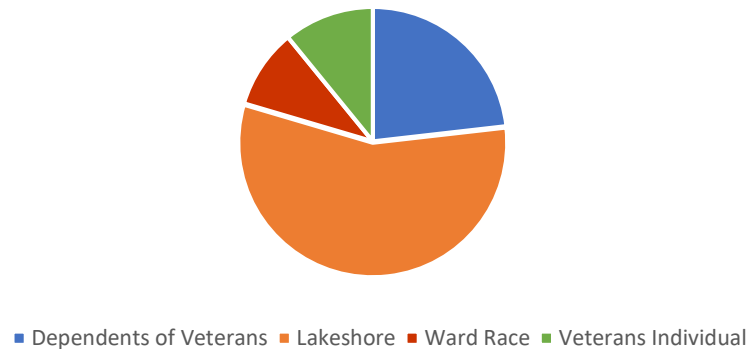
## VETERANS PROGRAM

Our Veterans Program is offered to active or inactive military personnel and their families. We offer ongoing sessions for individuals, riding lessons for the veteran or family members, as well as one-time sessions for agencies who work with veterans.

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2018 we provided 335.25 hours of services to individuals and groups.

Veteran Program Hours 2018



Our total hours for the Veterans program increased in 2018. This is due, in part, to tracking the number of veterans and dependents that participate in riding lessons and unmounted lessons. Groups of veterans from Lakeshore Foundation visited and spent the day grooming horses, art work, and playing with the small animals. The Red Barn setting provides an opportunity for them to relax and spend time with others who have similar life stories. Individual sessions are able to be tailored to the individual's needs, giving more depth to their time spent at the barn. A group of marines visiting with the Ward family visited the barn prior to the Take the Reins race. The majority of the dependents participated in riding and unmounted lessons with other individuals in their age group.

Recruitment for this demographic has always been difficult. We attempted to offer sessions through the PATH Veteran program, but the nature of this groups' needs historically leads to a higher absentee rate than our other participants.

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

The goal of the Veterans Program is to provide a relaxing environment for attendees, so we do not want to interrupt their experience by asking them to complete a survey. For dependents of veterans who participate in the riding lessons, their progress is tracked within the riding lessons.



## **CONCLUSION**

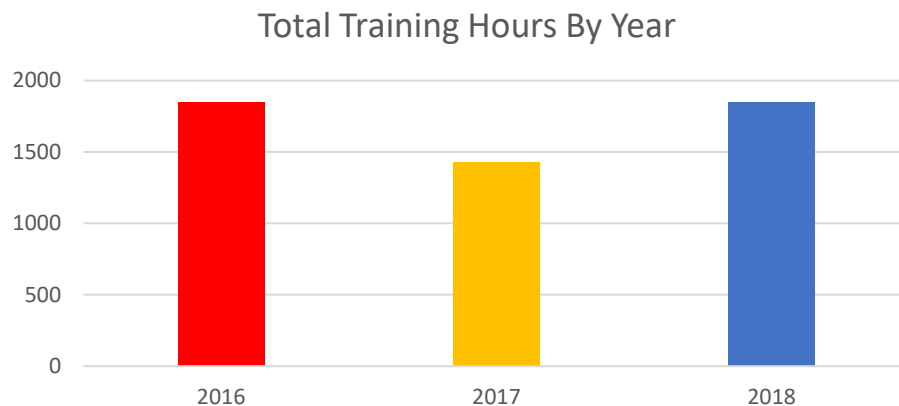
These services are free of charge, so we do not make any income from these programs. However, we are very passionate about providing affordable and meaningful programs to our veterans. We will continue to examine the best method of evaluating our veterans' program.

## TRAINING

The training program was created in 2015 due to a shortage of available training programs for our current staff, future instructors, and volunteers. More explanation about the reasons for creating this program can be found in the 2015 program evaluation.

### HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

We provided 1,850 hours of training in 2018, compared to 1,428 hours in 2017 and 1,845 in 2016.



The following types of trainings were provided:

**Instructor Training:** We provided ongoing continuing education for our own instructors and program staff, as well as assisting individuals to begin the instructor training process. These hours included riding lessons, hands-on horsemanship, guest speakers, how-to seminars, and mentored hours for those wishing to become riding instructors. In 2018 we hosted a PATH On-Site Workshop and Certification clinic, where 16 individuals from across the country, including four Red Barn staff and three Red Barn volunteers participated in the workshop and one staff completed the certification process. We also held a training for the newly created equine therapy program at the University of Alabama in which ten professors were taught how to implement The JAYC Foundation's Pony Express and High Conflict Divorce Curriculums. In addition, we hosted a CEUpalooza where speakers from the state presented information on horse movement and balance, various disabilities, and program management. The CEUpalooza provides an opportunity for therapeutic riding instructors from the Southeast to obtain continuing education hours for their certification, along with networking opportunities with similar agencies.

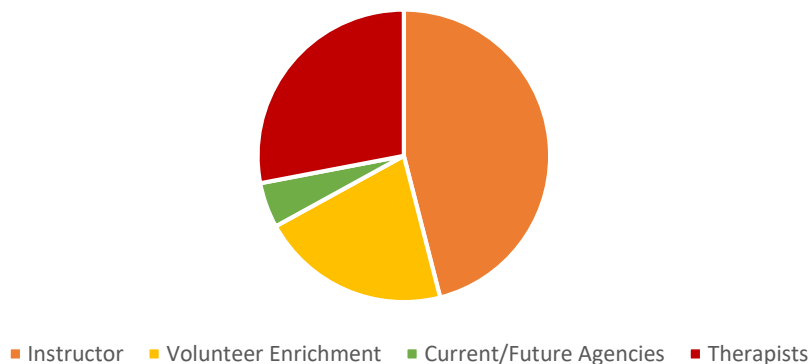
**Therapist Training:** We hosted a Level 1 course for the American Hippotherapy Association that taught the basic principles of hippotherapy and how to analyze horse movement when used in treatment of a client. Ten occupational therapists, physical

therapists, and speech therapists from around the country participated, including 5 occupational therapists from the Birmingham area.

**Volunteer Enrichment:** We provided our current volunteers with ongoing educational opportunities about disabilities and horsemanship. This does not include the basic training and orientation to become a volunteer.

**Current or Future Agencies:** We provided informational clinics and meetings for 19 individuals who were either working at an already established similar agency, or who were wanting to establish their own in the future.

Training Hours 2018



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

We are still struggling to determine the best way to answer these two questions without creating too much administrative burden. Below is information that attempts to answer these questions

### CURRENT AND FUTURE AGENCIES

Nineteen people attended training regarding administration for current and future agencies. These participants represented agencies that can be equally divided into two categories: established agencies and agencies that have not yet been formed.

We have remained in contact with all of the attendees. Those representing established agencies responded that it was incredibly beneficial to have an independent sounding board for their internal concerns and to learn from a larger agency. Of the three agencies that had not yet been formed, one incorporated as a non-profit, one decided to become a for-profit instead due to living on the property, and one is still trying to decide what to do.

### INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

These hours can be divided into two primary types: hours spent to help individuals either become certified instructors or to help current instructors improve their skills.

In 2018, one program assistant completed her PATH certification at a clinic hosted on-site.

One of our largest Instructor Training event this year was our CEU-palooza, which is designed to help riding instructors from both The Red Barn and similar agencies. The nature of this event makes it the easiest to evaluate since it has a definite beginning and ending, unlike the hours spent training someone to become an instructor.

Thirty-four individuals attended the event, and 100% of those returning the surveys indicated that they loved attending. We also asked whether they would be interested in short lunch-and-learn events on a variety of different topics, such as Equine First Aid, Working with Volunteers and Succession Planning. Every respondent expressed a desire to attend these lunch-and-learns more often. Half of the participants indicated that they would like to attend such events once a quarter, 25% indicated that they would like attend once a month, and 25% indicated that they would like to attend every six months.

### **THERAPIST TRAINING**

The Red Barn hosted the AHA Level 1 clinic, a 4-day training program that provides the foundational information for therapists wanting to incorporate hippotherapy into their practice. Two therapists that attended the clinic are working with clients at The Red Barn. In addition to the time at the clinic, these therapists receive on-going mentoring to develop treatment skills and horsemanship skills.

### **VOLUNTEER ENRICHMENT**

The volunteer evaluation is a separate document and gives more detail about the impact of the volunteer enrichment hours.

### **CONCLUSION**

We are working to continue to improve upon our record keeping in order to best track our progress in this program. However, training hours can be difficult to calculate, as it is hard to discern what activity exactly comprises a training hour. Some hours, such as clinics, are discreet events. However, because learning and mentoring are a continuous process at The Red Barn it is difficult to quantify the exact amount of time when it is concurrent with daily activities. Overall, the positive feedback, high hours and increase in staff education indicate that this is a meaningful and worthwhile program.