

Dear Friends of Horse and Buddy,

When my wife Lucilla was first diagnosed with cognitive impairment at 59, we had no way of knowing what the next seven years would bring. Dementia is not a straight path — it winds, it shifts, and it slowly takes pieces of a person's independence away. As her partner of many decades, I've tried to meet every turn in the journey with patience, love, and creativity, always searching for ways to help her hold onto joy, purpose, movement, and connection.



In April of 2024, we found something extraordinary. Lucilla began riding in the Silver Saddles program at Horse and Buddy — and from the very first visit, something in her lit up. At 66, she is rediscovering a childhood and teenage love of horses, and that spark matters more than words can fully express.

Therapeutic riding has become one of the most meaningful parts of Lucilla's week. The horses offer a kind of calm and connection that dementia rarely allows. The staff and volunteers meet her with patience, dignity, and genuine warmth. And the gentle rhythm of riding gives her something she has lost in other parts of her life: a sense of agency. She can guide her own movement again. She can interact with a living creature who understands her without needing words. For someone navigating cognitive decline, that is powerful.



Our neurologist recently told us that Lucilla is a bit of an outlier — that her cognitive baseline has held steadier than expected for someone seven years into the journey. We do many things to support her well-being, but riding is one of the activities that clearly makes a difference. It gives her joy, it supports her physical engagement, and it nourishes her emotionally in ways nothing else quite does.

Horse and Buddy has also given us something we didn't expect: community. Lucilla rides at the same time as her friend Sarah, another Silver Saddles participant. While the two of them are with the horses, Sarah's son Daniel and I sit together in the gazebo and talk. Over time, this shared routine has become a genuine friendship — a bright, welcome thread woven into the fabric of our week. That, too, is part of the healing this place offers.



What happens at Horse and Buddy isn't just therapy. For families like ours, it is hope. It is connection. It is a way of preserving quality of life while facing a disease that can so easily isolate and diminish.

I am deeply grateful for what Silver Saddles has given Lucilla — joy, strength, confidence, and moments of true presence. I am grateful for what it has given me as her caregiver — a reminder that there are still new things to discover, still ways to help her flourish, still moments of wonder ahead.

I hope you will join me in supporting Horse and Buddy's year-end campaign. Your generosity makes it possible for seniors like Lucilla — and for riders of every age and ability — to experience the healing power of horses, compassionate volunteers, and a community that sees the person before the diagnosis. Your gift ensures that programs like Silver Saddles continue to grow, thrive, and change lives.

Thank you for helping make this remarkable place possible.

With deepest gratitude,

Mark Hoshor