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NEWS RELEASE

Lack of funds means long wait list for those seeking horse-assisted therapy

December 19, 2022, Kelowna, BC – An innovative, local non-profit agency that uses horses to help people deal with physical and mental health challenges has more people waiting for service than it can afford to help.

SPARK (Society for Providing Horse Assisted Therapy in Kelowna) offers equine therapy to individuals and groups in the community for a fee, but also provides subsidized services so even those who might not be able to afford it can benefit.

“It’s really important to us that the power of horse-assisted therapy is readily available for all those who need it, and not just those who have the financial means to pay for it,” says life coach and SPARK executive director Annika Voeltz. “Caring for our six, wonderful horses, and running our programs and services is costly, and without financial support, we just can’t subsidize sessions. Unfortunately, that leaves some of the people who need us most out in the cold.”

Voeltz is hoping the spirit of giving will move local organizations and members of the public to step up with donations this holiday season to ensure SPARK can deal with its growing wait list.

“Horses have been used for therapeutic purposes since the time of the ancient Greeks, and help people with emotional regulation, self-confidence, responsibility, and impulse control, among other things,” says Voeltz.

While working with SPARK, people engage in activities such as observing, interacting, grooming and leading a horse or doing liberty work while being supervised by a mental health professional. Clients of all abilities and backgrounds are welcome at the barn, and sessions are tailored to the individual and their needs.

To learn more and to donate, visit <https://www.spark-kelowna.ca>

For more information:

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