



# CEO Message

If 2020 was known as the year the world shut down, then 2022 was the year the organization took a collective cleansing breath and reset.

During the COVID-19 pandemic we had to pivot from the comfort of our well-established operations, built over the last 30 plus years. Horses still needed intervention and critical care support, however, not being able to welcome volunteers and members of the public for nearly a year required a flexible mindset. We had to learn to work with less help while still maintaining the excellent standards of care we are known for.

As the world reopened and DEFHR began welcoming people back to the farm it was apparent that DEFHR had morphed into a different place; there were new programs, new staff, new processes, and new volunteers. We took time to softly fold in the newly absorbed Maryland Equine Transition Service program into our mission so we could help more horses by facilitating owner-to-owner transitions. We worked to enrich our staff training by infusing contextual, historical storytelling, connecting to the roots of the organization. We also spent time reviewing our protocols, redefining our values and reestablishing our inclusive culture that had been impacted by the barriers of temporary public health and safety restrictions. What has remained constant are the excellent standards of care we give to our horses and our desire to educate and welcome all members of the public.

Many organizations were unable to survive the pandemic, but we were lucky. We were lucky we had you. We had our community of supporters helping to ensure that the vital services we provide were able to continue and grow. In spite of it all, because of you, we were able to make incredible strides this year towards helping more horses and expanding our reach to more people.

On behalf of the horses and all of us here at DEFHR, THANK YOU. Thank you for your continued loyalty and confidence in the important work that we are doing. Together, we are making an impact on the future of equine welfare.

**ERIN CLEMM-OCHOA, CEO**