



THERAPEUTIC RIDING
ASSOCIATION OF
OTTAWA-CARLETON



● CELEBRATING 50 YEARS • 1975-2025

Annual Report 2025

A milestone year of growth, stewardship and impact — half a century of enhancing lives through therapeutic riding and equine-assisted programs.

(613) 821-1844

www.ottawatherapeuticriding.ca

Greely, Ontario

A Milestone Year, by the Numbers

In our 50th year, TROtt reached more riders, families and community members than ever before — powered by our horses, our staff and an extraordinary corps of volunteers.

500+

Participants Served

Across riding and ground-based programs.

106

Riders in the Saddle

Up nearly 13% over the prior year.

283

EAL Participants

Equine Assisted Learning, across 680 units.

233

Seniors Engaged

More than doubling our goal of 112.

255

Volunteers

The cornerstone of everything we do.

11,820

Volunteer Hours

Generously donated throughout 2025.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

**A \$27,777 operating surplus,
reinvested in our riders, horses
and programs.**

\$757,597

raised in 2025 against \$729,820 in expenses

Fifty Years in the Making

In 2025, TROtt reached a milestone — celebrating 50 years of providing therapeutic riding and horse-assisted programs for children and adults with physical, developmental and learning disabilities.

Formerly GRAD (the Greenbelt Riding Association for the Disabled), TROtt was established in 1975 by Lelia Sponsel and a team of ten other riders. Inspired by an article about one of Canada's first therapeutic riding organizations, Lelia's team raised enough through community donations to rent a horse for an hour every Saturday morning.

They had no indoor arena in those early days — only a vision, and the determination to make it happen. With hard work and commitment, GRAD began providing therapeutic riding for a small number of persons with disabilities, and grew into the Therapeutic Riding Association of Ottawa–Carleton.

In 1982, TROtt moved into its current home at Equidae Stables in Greely, Ontario. Supported by donors, sponsors, a small dedicated staff and hundreds of volunteers, it has expanded to offer horse experiences to hundreds of participants each year.

After 50 years, TROtt continues to enhance the lives of persons with disability — a testament to the commitment of its founders, supporters and community.



"I have enjoyed the challenge, the risk-taking, the learning, and, above all, the opportunity to share my sport – riding horses – with so many others."

— LELIA SPONSEL, FOUNDER

1975

Founded as GRAD by Lelia Sponsel and ten riders.

1982

Moved to its home at Equidae Stables in Greely.

2010

Awarded CanTRA accreditation — still the region's only one.

2025

Celebrated 50 years of therapeutic riding.

Our Mission

To provide accredited therapeutic horseback riding and other equine-assisted programs that enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities.

Our Vision

To grow as a centre of excellence for therapeutic horseback riding and equine-assisted programs, recognized in our community and beyond.



A Standard of Excellence You Can Trust

We are proud of our program and of the support we provide for families in our community. What makes TROtt so significant is our commitment to the Canadian standardization of therapeutic riding instruction — with instructors certified by both the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA) and Equestrian Canada.

CanTRA is a member of Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI) and is recognized as the only governing body for therapeutic riding in Canada. In February 2010, TROtt was awarded Accreditation Status by CanTRA, and we remain the only accredited therapeutic riding centre in the Ottawa area.

Beyond accreditation, we support quality standards in equine-assisted activities by hosting trainings, certifications, clinics and workshops at our facility.

Certified & Accredited By

- **CanTRA** — Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association
- **Equestrian Canada** certified instructors
- **HETI** — Horses in Education and Therapy International

2010

The only CanTRA-accredited therapeutic riding centre in the Ottawa area.

Our Values

01 Volunteerism

The cornerstone of our service model — volunteers are valued, well-trained and thanked regularly.

02 Inclusivity

We create a place where all people feel safe, respected and valued, with access to the joys of equine therapies.

03 Excellence

As the only CanTRA-accredited stable in the region, we aim for excellence in all activities.

04 Safety

We sustain a culture of safety, with formal protocols learned and followed at all times.

05 Compassion

We exercise compassion and patience with our clientele, our horses, and one another.

— VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Volunteerism is the cornerstone of TROtt. Our volunteers serve as sidewalkers, horse handlers, barn help, event and fundraising support, and administrative help. Some have been with us for decades; others have just signed up. Together, they make TROtt an extraordinary experience for every participant.

255

VOLUNTEERS IN
2025

11,820

HOURS CONTRIBUTED



Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to reflect on a milestone year for TROtt. In 2025 we celebrated 50 years of enhancing the lives of individuals with disabilities through therapeutic riding and equine-assisted programs. From humble beginnings with a single rented horse to serving hundreds annually, our growth reflects the vision of our founders and the strength of our community.

We also recognize the contributions of TROtt's first Executive Director, Dianne Urquhart, whose leadership shaped the organization into a truly client-driven centre of excellence. Her vision, passion and commitment continue to guide us today.

This year, TROtt expanded its reach, providing riding and ground-based experiences to over 500 participants — growing in both scope and impact. Volunteers remain at the heart of TROtt: in 2025, 255 volunteers contributed more than 11,800 hours, reflecting our values of inclusivity, compassion and excellence.

The Board remains focused on sustainability and growth — strengthening financial stability, maintaining accredited programming, and investing in our people and horses to meet increasing demand. As we look ahead, we are committed to expanding thoughtfully, enhancing experiences and reducing waitlists while preserving the quality and safety that define TROtt.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, donors, sponsors, partners, riders and families for your trust. Together, we celebrate 50 years of impact and look forward to the future.

John Ross

CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors



John Ross
CHAIR



Cilla Perry
TREASURER



Marie Charron
DIRECTOR



Fabian Schwarz,
MD, MPH
DIRECTOR



Pauline Herzberg
DIRECTOR



Alison Shaker
DIRECTOR



Priyanka
Nagasubramanian
DIRECTOR

Message from the Executive Director

As the new Executive Director, I am excited to build on the success of TROtt. For 50 years, TROtt has provided horseback riding programming that enhances the lives of persons with disabilities — benefiting our clients physically, psychologically, socially and educationally.

TROtt's success is due to the commitment and dedication of its donors, sponsors, volunteers, staff and Board of Directors. We are grateful for every contribution — from those who give a small amount of time, to those who have been involved for years, and, for some, for decades. Thank you.

Looking ahead, I see many opportunities to ensure TROtt continues to grow and thrive. We plan to invest in enhancing programs and client experiences, expanding our offerings, welcoming additional horses, and adopting modern systems to build the foundation for a sustainable future.

From client feedback, our growing waitlists, and our engagement with community partners, we know the need for TROtt programming is as important as ever — and that it positively impacts everyone involved. Together, we can set TROtt up for success for the next 50 years.



Andrea Stuhec-Leonard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Staff & Coordinators

Andrea Stuhec-Leonard
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stacey McCready
DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING

Alanna McLelland
PROGRAMS MANAGER

Rhonda Roberts
BARN & EQUINE MANAGER

Shawna Carlton
RIDING PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Evelyne Lecavalier-Hurtubise
GROUND-BASED PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

Ron Kok
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Joanne Stanley
BOOKKEEPER

Our Horses

In 2025, TROtt was home to 10 horses and 2 miniature horses. Each is chosen for temperament, size, breed, gait and other essential qualities. Extensive training enables us to deliver a safe, structured, goal-oriented program — these remarkable animals are the key to the physical, social, cognitive and educational activities we offer.



Bobbie

New Arrival

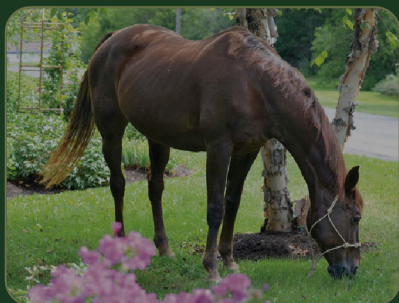
A 16-year-old, 15hh registered American Quarter Horse who joined us in September 2025. Friendly and curious, Bobbie provides a lovely smooth ride and is thriving across riding lessons and Equine Assisted Learning — a wonderful addition to our herd.



Charlie

Horse of Distinction

Named one of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association's 2025 Horses of Distinction. A favourite at the barn and an ideal therapeutic horse, Charlie embodies the calm, generous temperament our riders depend on. Congratulations, Charlie!



In Memory of Belle 1995 – 2026

The alpha mare of her paddock and best friend to Zip, Belle passed in 2026. She will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by the many riders, volunteers and staff whose lives she touched.

Financial Highlights

Through the generosity of our sponsors, donors and grantors, in 2025 TROtt delivered summer camp programming, affordable programming for seniors, and expanded ground-based programs — making riding and ground experiences possible for over 500 participants.

\$757,597

TOTAL REVENUE

\$729,820

TOTAL EXPENSES

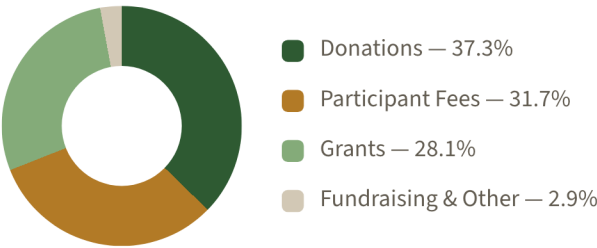
\$27,777

NET SURPLUS

500+

PARTICIPANTS SERVED

2025 Revenue



Corporate donations	\$190,912
Individual donations	\$91,665
Participant fees	\$240,178
Grants	\$213,020
Fundraising	\$4,396
Other	\$17,426
Total	\$757,597

2025 Expenses



Salaries and benefits	\$427,141
Facilities and stable	\$242,336
Administration	\$54,283
Special events	\$4,683
Equipment	\$1,377
Total	\$729,820

Chart percentages are rounded and group smaller line items: “Fundraising & Other” combines fundraising and other revenue; “Events & Equipment” combines special events and equipment. Figures tie to the line-item tables above.



2025 PROGRAMS

Riding Program

The TROtt riding program is central to our success. Our riders arrive with a range of abilities and goals for their time in the saddle — and every one of them leaves with a smile and a sense of accomplishment.

In 2025, we increased the number of individual riders by nearly 13% — from 94 to 106 — and grew our units of service by 8%, from 2,495 to 2,698. We plan to continue building capacity slowly and strategically: adding a few lovely horses to our herd and ensuring we have the CanTRA, PATH Intl. and Equestrian Canada certified instructors we need.

Slowly but surely, we will chip away at our rider waitlist — without ever compromising the quality of our programming.

106 ▲ 13%
INDIVIDUAL RIDERS

2,698 ▲ 8%
UNITS OF SERVICE

Nancy's Sensory Trail

We continue to make great use of Nancy's Sensory Trail, and we'd love to see even more people enjoying it — not only for riding outdoors, but as a beautiful place for a short walk or for ground-based programs.

Ground-Based Programs

19

CAMPERS

Summer Camps

Our 2025 summer camp was immensely successful, supporting 19 participants with individualized, one-on-one attention based on each camper's unique needs, comfort and abilities. Through Equine Assisted Learning, sensory-friendly activities, crafts, outdoor play and adaptive programming, every camper experienced success in a way that worked for them.

233

SENIORS SERVED

Goal: 112

Horse Power for Seniors

Funded by the New Horizons for Seniors Program and the Seniors Community Grant, this program served 233 seniors — more than doubling our goal of 112. Participants included veterans, individuals living with dementia, seniors experiencing isolation, and those from multicultural backgrounds, many referred through partners such as the Council on Aging and ROSSS. Over 30 volunteers, many aged 55+, contributed to a strong sense of purpose and connection.

283

PARTICIPANTS

680 units

Equine Assisted Learning (EAL)

In 2025, our EAL program expanded to 283 participants across 680 units. These ground-based sessions focus on engaging with horses without riding — enhancing mental and social well-being, teamwork and communication through grooming, games and connection. Sessions are led by certified EAL coaches committed to high-quality, client-centred activities.

Our Goals for 2026

Celebrating TROtt's 50th anniversary was an extraordinary milestone — and an opportunity to assess where we are and where we want to go in the decades ahead. Four pillars frame our plan for the future.

01

Financial Sustainability

We are deeply grateful to those who sponsor, grant and donate to TROtt. Their generosity made 2025 possible. We aim to invest in enhancing programs and client experiences, expanding our offerings, welcoming additional horses, and adopting modern systems to build a sustainable future.

02

Standards of Excellence

Our vision is to grow as a centre of excellence recognized in our community and beyond. This requires lifelong learning for our Board, staff, volunteers and clients — and ongoing training for our horses.

03

Modern Systems & Succession

The world has changed in 50 years. It is important that we update our systems and make processes and information sharing accessible and easy for everyone — while developing a succession plan that supports a sustainable future.

04

Growing Our Programs

Above all, we will continue growing and expanding our programs to enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities — reducing waitlists and reaching new participants across our community.

Sponsors, Grants & Donors

Our 2025 highlights were made possible by an extraordinary community of supporters. With heartfelt thanks to:

Giant Tiger

Federal Enabling Accessibility Grant

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Adobe Grant

New Horizons for Seniors Program

Seniors Community Grant

Canada Summer Jobs

Harry E. Foster Grant

Fondation Miroir Foundation

Golf Tournament

In Memory of George Springate

Farm Credit Canada

Mattia Spadola's Art Show

Ottawa Civic Grant, City of Ottawa

Greely Lion's Club

RBC Investments

Skarland Enterprises

Shaker Realty

Victoria Milnes

Donna Watt

ADOPT-A-HORSE SPONSORS

Nathan — by the Properties Group

Riley — by Tony Graham Lexus

Chica — by the David Loeb Foundation

Abby — in memory of Rolfe Cooke

Joe — in memory of Jack Marshman

Buddy — by Onyx Design Build Inc.

... and many more sponsors, grants and donors who make the TROtt dream possible.

OUR SPONSORS & FUNDING PARTNERS



TONY GRAHAM LEXUS



Thank You

For making the TROtt dream possible — and for 50 years of impact.
Together, we look forward to the next 50.

(613) 821-1844

www.ottawatherapeuticriding.ca