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To:  CCCF fund advisors, donors, grant panelists:

Lasata is an equine assisted activities center located in Coatesville, PA. Our programs serve adults, veterans and children in Chester County areas including Coatesville, Parkesburg, Oxford, West Chester, Downingtown, Kennett Square, West Grove, Honey Brook, Unionville and Cochranville. The population we serve experience various mental and physical challenges including PTSD, Parkinson’s, Down Syndrome, traumatic brain injuries, ADD, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, depression and anxiety, to name a few. Studies have shown that equine assisted therapies and activities can help individuals struggling with these challenges in the following ways:

- help foster self-esteem
- build confidence
- encourage social interaction and improve verbal communication
- assist in developing core strength, balance, and mobility
- promote a sense of accomplishment, inclusion, and renewed spirit
- develop relationship building
- relieve stress and develop coping mechanisms

Due to the unfortunate circumstances brought on by COVID 19, this population is deprived of much needed therapies and outlets needed to enable them to cope with forced isolation, limited exercise, and day to day uncertainties. Children are being home-schooled and missing social interactions with their peers, those on the autism spectrum are struggling due to changes in their normal routines, and depression/anxiety is at an all time high for many people. We believe there will be an even greater need for our services when we are able to reopen. With all the new stress that social distancing has caused, more people will be seeking outlets to relieve that stress. Added to our current population will be front-line workers, the unemployed, parents who have been homeschooling, and families struggling with financial hardship. Our equine assisted programs, especially equine assisted psychotherapy, will be instrumental in helping those at risk better cope with life’s “new normal”.

During the mandatory shutdown, our organization has tried to keep in touch with our students to offer hope and reassurance that we are still there for them. We organized a drive-by caravan to the homes of our students in the Chester County area. With decorated cars, we delivered t-shirts, pictures, cards, and notes from their equine partners. Our staff and instructors have held phone chats and video sessions with their students to check in and let them “visit” with their favorite farm friends. We have stayed connected through social media with videos of the farm and virtual riding and horsemanship lessons.

Our current budget, which was balanced pre-COVID 19, is now operating with a $59,000 deficit due to lost fundraising opportunities, reduced lesson and camp income, and a decrease in donations. We have cut expenses where possible; however we are still committed to funding our existing scholarship program, especially during this time of great need. We are asking for a grant of $5,000 to enhance this fund and will be allocating a huge percentage of any future fundraising dollars to build up our scholarship account. Utilizing this fund, we are planning to offer our returning students (approx. 40) free of charge, one lesson a week for 6 weeks, maybe more depending on other donations received. We feel that now, more than ever, we need to reach out to our students and their families to help ease their burdens during this difficult time. We are grateful for the opportunity to apply for this COVID 19 mini grant and appreciate your time in considering Lasata as a recipient.

Kindest Regards,

Deborah Anderson
Board President
Lasata