

The Shea Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

Rocket began riding horses before he could walk.

In 2017, his parents Ashley and Zach Fischer watched as he won the local 2017 equestrian gymkhana games for his age group. A competitor in peewee barrel racing since he was four, this success was particularly momentous considering what had transpired during the previous two years.

In 2015, at the age of seven, Rocket's horseback riding came to an abrupt halt. At first, his doctor thought his swollen glands were something that would pass, but "mother's intuition" prevailed and he was diagnosed with stage four Peripheral T-cell Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, an extremely rare form of cancer; his was one of only 20 pediatric cases in the world.

Rocket and "Auggie"



Ashley and Zach took Rocket to Boston Children's Hospital where the diagnosis was confirmed. Ashley says, "My first thought was 'Oh my God, my son is going to die.' Rocket then began six rounds of chemotherapy. It was all shock and awe."

Those were heart-wrenching times for the family. From September to March, Ashley and Zach alternated between Boston and their Orange County home where they shared the care of their other three children, ages 18 months to 15 years with their parents.

At the completion of his sixth round of chemo, Rocket was in remission and had seven days of recovery before a stem cell transplant. His already weak body

had a difficult time with the intensive chemo for the transplant, resulting in fevers, nausea, and exhaustion. When released, after a month in the hospital, young Rocket had lost almost half of his body weight.

After checking out of the hospital, Rocket still had 100 days of isolation. During that time, he was lonely and unable to be around other children. He

grew weaker and lost more weight and muscle tone. His parents were looking for a way to raise Rocket's spirits and thought of The Shea Center.

As Ashley tells the story, the doctor's approval for Rocket to ride at The Shea Center brought tears to her eyes. At the time, Rocket only weighed 43 pounds and could barely sit up, but when he got on the horse, he SMILED! The riding exercises, designed to build Rocket's strength, exhausted him. But, he was happy!

Rocket rode twice each week for four months and joined a group lesson. Because of his past riding skills, he became an inspiration to the

other riders. Cancer extracts a great price both physically and emotionally. The horse interaction and ability to encourage others helped heal some of Rocket's

emotional scars, and his personality and happy disposition began to return.

Now, age 10 and in the fourth grade, Rocket has been riding at The Shea Center for three years. He still has a few hurdles to overcome. His fine motor skills and executive functioning (the ability to organize, plan, and execute goals) are being addressed. His therapist, Janelle Robinson PT, helps him tackle these tasks by asking him to spell words to the rhythm of the horse's trot and perform other fun, but challenging exercises.

Ashley remarks, "Rocket loves to ride. Trail, bareback, and vaulting, he loves it all. Riding at The Shea Center has rebuilt Rocket's confidence. Once again, he feels good about himself and knows he's just as capable as others his age." Rocket feels so good about himself that he has

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"The Shea Center has become an anchor for us and we are so grateful."

Ashley, Rocket's mom



What's Next? Year 41 and Beyond

Message from Executive Director Dana Butler-Moburg and Board Chair Susan Chaney Purel

Milestones are important. In the lives of those we serve, those milestones might look like a first step. It might sound like a first word after a stroke (adult or child, we have stroke survivors of all ages participating at Shea!) It could also be the milestone of a first connection to a loved one – the ability to stand and say the pledge of allegiance – milestones are different for everyone.

The Shea Center just passed a major milestone – we turned 40 in 2018. On hand to celebrate throughout the year were our closest, best, and most loyal friends and partners. We had record-setting client services in terms of numbers and hours. We raised extraordinary and generous amounts of support for our services.

And you might think, “Well – that’s a good milestone year” and you would be right.

But now, what about year 41?

The responsibility to be forward-looking as well as past-honoring is a big job and we have just the right team to do it. Coming this year from our board and staff leaders, you’ll hear great news about:

- Program sustainability through building an endowment legacy
- The impact of our programs as studied by a major university partner then presented to national and international organizations
- The growth of our military programs along with our military family programs

And more.

The privilege of getting older is that we continue to focus on the needs of our community, and we plan how to best serve.

Our mission is to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. We know our programs change lives forever and for the better.

Thank you for years one through forty. Now, it’s on to year 41 and beyond.

Dana
Dana Butler-Moburg,
Executive Director

Susan
Susan Chaney Purel
Board Chair

Don't Stop Believin' THE SHEA CENTER GALA'19

The 80s are back (at least for one night) – so get out the shoulder pads and bright colors and join us for the annual gala event at Montage Laguna Beach’s Pacific Lawn on June 1, 2019. *The Don’t Stop Believin’* theme of the 28th annual gala honors the positive outlook and courage of our clients and their families who never stop believing in their abilities and potential successes.

The spectacular event begins on the lawn overlooking the ocean with signature cocktails and delectable appetizers. Guests will enjoy a sensational silent auction before strolling into the dazzling décor of the grand ballroom where they will be greeted with dancers giving a choreographed nod to the 80s. A delicious Montage dining experience and other evening fun follows!

Shea Center board member Jeff Cunningham will be honored as the 2019 recipient of the Michael Lewis Friends of the Disabled Award, and Rocket Fischer will be the evening’s featured rider story.

After dinner, the party will continue with the Fosheim Rider Support Fund, a spirited live auction, and dancing to the live band, Kicks.

For more information, please call 949-240-8441 x128.



Serving Those Who Serve and Their Families

Marines and Their Families at The Shea Center



The Shea Center works with several organizations that serve military veterans, active duty families, and children of veterans. Each year, we host participants in Camp Pendleton’s Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

More than 1,000 families at Camp Pendleton are enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program. Many of these families include children, some with disabilities, who are part of this program to support families with exceptional needs. On April 6, 175 family members (41 families) spent an exciting morning along with more than 150 volunteers and Shea Center staff.

Interacting with the horses was the day’s highlight with the children who rode, fed, and groomed horses, many for the first time. A day intended for kids and their families, activities included games, face painting, and family fun. Another highlight was the Tucker Petting Zoo which included a mini cow, mini donkey, a potbelly pig, goats, sheep, and bunnies.

The morning ended with a lunch from Soiree Event Planning & Catering (soireecatering.com), and snow cones provided by the Boy Scouts Order of the Arrow service Chapter.

Thanks go to the National Charity League Laguna Chapter and The Shea Center lesson volunteers who all helped make the day a huge success.

Getting Ahead by Giving Back

Leaders for Philanthropy

On May 1, members of the business school and Orange County chapters of Chapman, Colorado State, Harvard, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, and UCLA, and their friends enjoyed a networking evening at The Shea Center. Guests toured The Shea Center’s equestrian facility, networked with other MBA professionals and attendees. While enjoying appetizers and beverages, guests viewed a therapeutic riding demonstration in the Cvengros arena.

The evening highlight was Dennis Kuhl, Chairman of Angels Baseball. A champion of community involvement, Kuhl is a member of boards of directors and executive committees of numerous Southern California charities. He spoke to the impact that philanthropy has made on his life personally, and how the Angels organization views their philanthropy and giving back to the community.

Many thanks go to our Presenting sponsors, Angels Baseball and Bank of America and to the other 51 sponsors of the event.

Leaders for Philanthropy came out of the desire of two Harvard Business School alumni, who are friends of Shea, wanting to connect other business leaders to the work of The Shea Center and to the power of philanthropy as a way to transform communities. By connecting business leaders to each other in the forum of successful philanthropists and business leaders sharing their story, Leaders for Philanthropy has developed a successful 11-year following.

Girls Just Want to Have Fun!

2019 Ladies Night Out at The Shea Center

The always sold out Ladies Night Out event brought 150 enthusiastic women to The Shea Center's patio on March 14 for a lively evening in support of the 2019 *Don't Stop Believin'* annual gala. Guests viewed a riding demonstration by Lilliana and gala committee co-chairs Allyson Constantino and Pam Moellenhoff while sipping "Pretty in Pink" and "Dirty Dancing" cocktails.

Guests then moved upstairs to shop a 100-item silent auction while visiting and catching up with friends. After a salad buffet, provided by Soiree Event Planning & Catering, Executive Director, Dana Butler-Moburg welcomed the guests, and Allyson and Pam thanked them for their attendance and support of the Center's programs. During dessert, the guests listened to a moving story shared by Lilliana's mother, Nikki Sunyich. The fun-filled evening concluded with a high-spirited and entertaining live auction.

"Ladies Night Out is not just about the fun," says Shea Center Board Chair Susan Chaney Pural, "It's also about bringing new friends together with longtime friends and all in support of this remarkable place."

Celebrating Another Drive to Ride Success!

During February, The Shea Center held its annual *Drive to Ride* to raise funds for priority programs, financial aid, and horse care. Thanks go to Donor Relations Manager, Sonya Violette and committee chair and volunteer, Brenda Cross, **who led the campaign to surpass the goal of \$160,000 by more than \$15,000.**

Riders, clients, families, and friends of The Shea Center posted their heartfelt Shea success stories online to share with family, friends, and peers. The top fundraising Shea Center story from a rider won an iPad, and the top volunteer story won a \$500 Amazon gift card! During the month, all participants were encouraged and inspired to reach their personal goals by other committee members including Susan Chaney Pural, Terry Johnsen, Linda Saville, Paula McCloskey, Laura Robinson, Deana Bergquist, Erin Estes, Erin Hoefer, Sue Graf, Shari Crane, and Jeanne McCreadie.

Rider Colette P. won the iPad by collecting \$15,000 with the help of family, friends, staff members, and board member Jim Washburn. Volunteer Greg Talbott raised over \$8,400 to win the Amazon gift card. All Shea stories that raised at least \$500 were awarded Shea Center *Drive to Ride* hoodies and those who raised \$750 or more also received a *Drive to Ride* cap.

Sonya comments, "It's important to note that riders, families, volunteers, board members, and staff all work together to contribute to the enormous goal of raising money for priority programs, financial aid for our riders, and maintaining the well-being of our therapy horses. A tremendous thank you to all the individuals who supported *Drive to Ride*!"

Since the inception of the *Drive to Ride* campaign nine years ago, the fundraiser has contributed over \$1 million to The Shea Center.



The 2018 Volunteer Celebration and Annual Meeting

Join us for the festivities on June 19, 2019 as we honor our dedicated volunteers and board members of The Shea Center for their time, treasure, and talent given in support of our mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs. Refreshments, riding demonstrations, board member and volunteer awards as well as the announcement of the horse of the year are all part of the fun event!

Please RSVP by June 8 to Madisen Clanton at mclanton@sheacenter.org

Rocket, continued from pg. 1

started playing water polo and joined the junior lifeguard program, both of which require significant body strength and endurance.

Rocket's family members have also become more involved with The Shea Center. His mom exercises horses, and Rocket's sister has been a lesson volunteer. Ashley comments, "Horses are so important for people [facing health challenges]. Horses are like a therapy dog, but you can ride it! The Shea Center has become a grounding community for our family; this place feels like 'our people'. We were meant to be here. I love sitting with the other moms and seeing them be able to regenerate and renew at Shea."

Faith has played an important part in this experience for Ashley and Rocket too. "Sometimes bad things are given to you," Ashley explains. "You have to get through it; there's no choice. You just need to look at the situation and find something positive."

Foundation Giving at The Shea Center

With great appreciation, we acknowledge additional gifts received between October 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 from foundation partners in support of our mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

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*Same website.
New look and stories!*

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SAVE THESE DATES!

Annual Gala: June 1, 2019, Montage Laguna Beach
Mark Powell Charitable Giving Workshop: May 16, 2019
Volunteer Celebration & Annual Meeting: June 19, 2019
Annual BBQ & Family Faire: September 21, 2019
Mark Powell Special Needs Trust Workshop: October 10, 2019



THE SHEA CENTER
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Mark Powell

Create Your Own Philanthropy and Estate Plan

Education Opportunities from Estate Planning Attorney Mark Powell

Charitable Giving Workshop – May 16, 2019 | Special Needs Trust Workshop – October 10, 2019

Take advantage of the expertise of premier estate planning attorney, Mark Powell, who will cover the basics of charitable giving and estate planning.

In the Charitable Giving workshop, Mark will walk you through the steps to take to get started on your own legacy giving. Charitable giving cannot only minimize taxes, but can help ensure your assets are distributed as you wish and the values are passed down through multiple generations.

The Special Needs Trust Workshop will highlight what you need to know in order to set up a trust to ensure your loved one with special needs will be taken care of beyond your own lifetime.

Both workshops are from 6-7:30pm and will be held in the second floor Bilek Family Meeting Room in the Klein Family Education & Therapy Building at The Shea Center.

Your planning is a gift you leave to ensure the future of those you love. These workshops are sponsored by The Shea Center's Reins of Life Legacy Club and open to anyone who would like to attend: Shea clients, volunteers, family or friends!

Mark Powell is a long-time volunteer for The Shea Center and a partner at Dorsey & Whitney, LLP. For over twenty-years, Mark has focused exclusively on trust and estate work with emphasis on charitable planning, estate planning, trust and probate administration, and estate and gift taxation.

To attend in May, RSVP by May 13, or to attend in October, RSVP by October 7 to Gloria Kilburn, (949) 240-8441 x111 or email gkilburn@sheacenter.org.