



NEWS

FALL 2025



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

Celebrating Our Success, Strengthening Our Future

We extend our heartfelt thanks to each one of you who supported the Annual BBQ and Family Faire on September 27. Thanks to your generosity, the event was a resounding success—raising over **\$1.4 million** to support our mission of improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horse-related programs.

The BBQ is a unique opportunity to experience The Shea Center's mission firsthand. Guests walk through our barn, cheer on our clients during the Client Parade of Stars and join more than 1,500 members of The Shea Center "family" in a celebration of hope, healing, and community.

As we enter the final quarter of the year, our focus turns to ensuring that financial aid resources are in place for 2026. More than **86% of our clients** receive financial assistance, and we are committed to keeping our programs accessible to all who need them. Our goal is to raise **\$250,000** before **December 31** to support client financial aid and critical program priorities. We welcome your generous support in helping us reach this important goal.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue our strategic planning to bring our three-year vision into greater focus. The need for our services—especially in the areas of mental health for children, youth, and veterans—is growing rapidly. We are also exploring ways to expand our capacity to meet the increasing demand for our services. Your insights and ideas are always welcome as we shape the future of our work.

As we move into fall, we wish you peace, safety, and a holiday season filled with joy and meaningful moments. Thank you for being valued members of our Shea Center family.



Dana Butler-Moburg
CEO



Greg Talbott
Board Chair

Relive the magic!

Scan here to
watch highlights
from The Shea
Center's 2025
Annual Gala.



See the fun in action!

Scan here to
watch The Shea
Center's 2025
Annual BBQ and
Family Faire
highlight video.





Get Involved and Support The Shea Center

- **Advocate** for us
- **Fund** financial aid
- **Sponsor** a therapy horse
- **Contribute** to the endowment
- **Attend** our events
- **Volunteer** with us
- **Purchase** an item on our Amazon Wishlist bit.ly/SheaAmazonWishlist



Year-end Reminders

- As you make your giving plans this holiday season, please keep The Shea Center in mind.
- The Shea Center can accept required minimum distributions (RMD) from an IRA as well as stock transfer donations.

For more information about how to get involved or make a year-end contribution,

contact Holly Hadden at: hhadden@sheacenter.org or (949) 240-8441 x126.



Funding to Preserve and Grow

by Holly Hadden, Chief Philanthropy Officer

At The Shea Center, we are both proud and humbled by the impact of our work. Every day, we witness how our efforts improve — and often transform — the lives of individuals who are profoundly deserving of support.

In 2025, thanks to philanthropic leadership, we've been able to maintain our facilities, enhance equine care, and expand access to our therapeutic programs. Yet, we are eager — and need — to do even more.

We recognize that sustaining and growing the Center's impact requires a continued focus on strengthening our financial foundation. The demand for our life-changing services now far outpaces our capacity, resulting in significant waitlists. Each year, 86% of our clients rely on financial aid to access our services. We are determined not only to reinforce our existing programs for these clients but also to expand into critical areas of need, including enhanced mental health support.

To achieve this, we are focusing on two key areas – along with improved technology – over the next 18 months to fuel strategic fundraising growth:

- **Strengthen Our Major Gifts Program:** To complement our successful event-based and annual campaigns, we are expanding our major gifts program — with an emphasis on multi-year pledges and planned giving. These commitments will help ensure steady, sustained funding for years to come.
- **Build Our Endowment:** With 85% of our annual revenue derived from charitable contributions, it is essential to grow our endowment to ensure long-term financial stability. A stronger endowment will help reduce our reliance on annual fundraising events and provide a more secure future for our programs.

The Shea Center thrives because of your unwavering commitment and with your help, we can continue to provide exceptional care to those who need it most, while securing the future of our mission for generations to come.

Together, we can preserve our legacy and grow our impact. Thank you for standing with us.



Scan here to donate to The Shea Center!



Early Intervention Through Specialized Therapy Services at The Shea Center

by Randi Shannahan, PT, DPT, HPCS, Therapy Services Manager

Therapy services—physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT), and speech-language pathology (SLP)—are delivered by clinicians with advanced degrees, including AHCB-certified Hippotherapy Clinical Specialists. Offered in traditional clinic and sensory-rich outdoor environments, sessions incorporate hippotherapy, a scientifically supported approach using equine movement to enhance outcomes with the highest standards of care.

The first five years are a crucial developmental window when the brain shapes motor, cognitive and behavioral skills for life. Because of neuroplasticity, the brain’s ability to form connections, young children are especially responsive to therapy. In fact, a child’s brain creates approximately 80% of neural synapses before age three. By targeting functional movement patterns early, therapy strengthens neural connections for motor learning, improving developmental trajectories.

Early intervention builds essential skills for school, social growth, and independence. Caregivers also gain strategies to integrate at home, reinforcing progress in daily life. PT helps children move with strength, balance, and coordination. OT refines fine motor skills, sensory integration, and emotional regulation. SLP nurtures language, social connection, and oral motor control.

Hippotherapy further amplifies these benefits by harnessing the horse’s rhythmic, transmissive, and three-dimensional



View the inspiring story of Sloane’s progress here.

walk. It’s evidence-based treatment using dynamic and adjustable movement to promote progress. Each step provides variable sensorimotor input, equaling over 3,000 steps in a 30-minute session—highly intensive and efficient for motor learning. This enables clients to essentially “borrow” from the horse’s naturally organized neurological system, supporting goals across all therapy disciplines.

Sloane, a spirited toddler with Down syndrome, started PT using equine movement at just two years old. Today, she is walking independently with growing confidence; proof of the difference early intervention and hippotherapy can make.

At The Shea Center, every child’s progress matters. From first steps to newfound independence, our therapy services grow with families at every stage. With support from our community—parents, partners, donors—we can continue creating stories like Sloane’s and help even more children thrive.



We won these awards in 2025!

People’s Choice



The Capistrano Dispatch

Three Best of San Juan Capistrano People’s Choice Horseshoe Awards

Best Special Needs Therapy on Horseback

Best Special Needs Camp



ParentingOC
Reader’s Choice Award

2024 At-a-Glance

230+
clients per week

780+
volunteers

1,249
unique participants

77
disabilities

22,663
volunteer hours

30
therapy horses

“The Shea Center exceeded our expectations. We came for therapy, and we got healing.”

-Ann Marie Jennison



Scan to watch Annual BBQ featured clients Charlie and Jane Jennison’s Shea Center journey and other heartwarming stories.



We always need volunteers!



Scan here to find out about volunteer opportunities!

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SheaCenter.org

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Save
these
2026
dates! ↘



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SheaCenter.org

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