



Dreamcatcher™ Nature Assisted Therapy

Volunteer Impact Report 2024

STAFF MESSAGES

Eileen Bona, CEO & Founder



Dear Dreamcatcher™ Volunteers,

I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation and deepest gratitude for the unwavering dedication and hard work you all show in caring for our therapy animals. Your commitment, day in and day out, throughout the year—through harsh conditions, extreme weather, and even the holidays—has not gone unnoticed. You are the true heart of our organization, and we are beyond fortunate to have each of you as part of the Dreamcatcher™ family.

The love, care, and attention you give our animals is evident in how they thrive, remain healthy, and continue to bring joy to those they serve. Their happiness is a direct reflection of your wonderful efforts, and we could not do this without you. It is no small task to care for these animals, especially during times when the weather or other challenges make it difficult, yet you all rise to the occasion with grace and resilience. The sacrifices you make and the time you dedicate to this work are deeply valued. You ensure that our animals are not only well cared for but also loved and supported every single day, and for that, we are truly thankful.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to those of you who contribute in other vital areas, such as tourism, event and group volunteers. Your efforts in helping us organize, promote, and manage events, groups and activities play an essential role in bringing Dreamcatcher's mission to the wider community. The time, energy, and creativity you put into ensuring these events run smoothly are invaluable.

Additionally, we are incredibly grateful for our volunteers with special skills, including those who assist with marketing and program development. Your expertise helps us grow and reach new audiences, ensuring that our programs continue to thrive and evolve. Your support in these critical areas has a profound impact on the success of Dreamcatcher™, and we could not achieve all that we do without you.

Please know that your contributions are essential to the success of Dreamcatcher™. You are the reason our animals are so healthy and joyful; our communities are robust, and our efforts are utilized by the masses, and we cannot thank you enough for all you do. We are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

With sincere appreciation,

Eileen and the Dreamcatcher™ Critters

Founder of Dreamcatcher™

Volunteer Coordinator, Megan Riley

On behalf of Dreamcatcher™ Nature Assisted Therapy, I would like to thank our devoted volunteers for all your hard work over the past year! Whether you are a volunteer veteran or a brand-new volunteer on our team, we value each and everyone of you.

Your dedication to our animal's wellbeing, our tourism events, groups, marketing initiatives, program development, and everything else in between makes a huge impact for Dreamcatcher™ staff, animals, and the people we serve.

Your deep love for animals shows up in so many ways and we admire your commitment to helping the critters regardless of whether it is a holiday, how hot or cold it is, how mucky it can get, or how difficult it can be with the many changes or extra duties we add to your list.

In this role, I have had the pleasure of meeting such a caring and awesome group of individuals. I am incredibly thankful to have gotten to know many of you over the past few years, and for those who I am still getting to know, I am excited to learn more about you too as we continue to work alongside together!

Each of you bring such a radiant energy to our team and create an impact that reaches far beyond just our organizational needs. Your positive spirits, friendly conversations, and altruistic nature flows throughout Dreamcatcher™, creating a ripple effect to everyone you encounter, and generating a pleasant atmosphere.

Thank you so much for everything you do, you are the foundation of our work, and we truly could not do it all without your help!

Sincerely,

Megan & the Dreamcatcher™ Staff

Volunteer Coordinator



Our Mission

Our mission is to help people find healing, balance, joy, hope and confidence through the immediate feedback that animals and nature provide.

We are here to guide, teach, counsel and inspire.

Volunteer Impact & Statistics

Our volunteers are crucial to our operations success, they make up the foundation for almost all our services.






Volunteer Hours



Impact: Your volunteering hours equate to having 1 part-time employee! Your time spent has helped to save our staff about 3 hours per day, which is equivalent to 3 therapy sessions or 1 group session!

How You Make a Difference:

Enrichment		<p>In most of the volunteer roles, you help to provide our animals with love, compassion, & enrichment through developing deep, meaningful relationships with them.</p> <p>Doing this helps to revitalize their mental health and wellbeing by providing them with a support circle outside of their work!</p>
Training	 	<p>Many of you have also assisted in training new volunteers, helping them to become successful in their roles!</p>

Animal Care



You provided care for our critters for 365 days per year!

Whether it be a holiday, rain, snow, sun, -40 or +40, you were here to help!

Your Impact

Your care helps to keep the animals healthy & happy by significantly reducing health-related illnesses for our critters!

This also helps save our staff time to focus on operating our services. With your support, our therapists can have a full caseload & serve more clients!

You do this by...



Keeping their environments clean through daily & seasonal cleaning



Providing them with food & fresh water



Giving them supplements & medications



Preventing & treating parasites through delousing, deworming, & dipping



Trimming goat hooves & chicken talons



Reporting & monitoring signs of illness or injury



Bringing them warm buckets of water to prevent urinary issues



Assisting with the vet or farrier



Tourism



You assisted with 4 public events and 1 private event. One of which was our largest event of the year, Open Farm Days that had over 300 attendees!

Providing over 5 guided tours, 4 goat yoga sessions, scavenger hunts, craft booths, market booths, parking, animal handling & more!

Your Impact

Our tourism events would not be possible without your help!

As a volunteer at our events, you help to create memorable experiences for your community by creating DIY projects for the magical forest, providing interactive animal tours, & animal handling for animal yoga or special events! All while maintaining the safety of our guests & critters!

Community Impact



Time spent with family while creating treasured memories with the ones they love



A chance to connect with nature & animals safely through guided animal tours



Promote health & creativity through wellness activities such as animal yoga or nature walks in the magical forest



dreamcatcher™
nature assisted therapy

Builds brand awareness, reaching those who may need counselling in a different environment or form



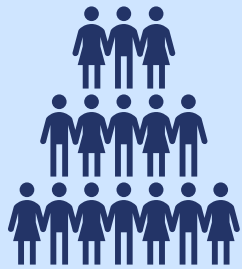
Opportunities to become educated about animals & agriculture which aids in sustainability for our future generations



A chance for people to get outside of the hustle & bustle of the city, disconnecting from technology while reconnecting with each other



Therapy Groups



In 2024, you helped with over 14 groups between January to April and October to December!

Your Impact

Your help allowed us to:

- Book more therapy groups
- Run more animal stations
- Have more clients be able to attend group
- Ensure that the clients were safely interacting with the animals
- Maintain ethical standards of care for the critters by giving them necessary breaks



Special Skills



**Mental Health
Awareness Week**
October 1-7

You created over 20 marketing posts in 2024, provided photography at Open Farm Days & did a nature/animal fall photoshoot, & you created 1 orientation slideshow for our volunteer program!

Your Impact

Your help has significantly reduced staff resources & time spent creating training or marketing materials.

Making orientation slides helps to create consistency while training new volunteers. While your assistance in marketing has helped to build brand awareness & teach others about mental health!

You also helped to capture amazing moments at our events & provide new photos for marketing.

Charity Board



You provided funding assistance for **16** families through the cost-share counselling program!

You were also nominated by the 100+ Women Who Care in Sherwood Park and did a presentation for their event!

Some of you also helped at our Open Farm Days event!

Your Impact

Your fundraising initiatives have helped our clients access our services & get the mental health help that they needed.

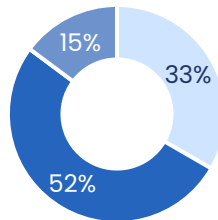
Your assistance at our events helped to fill positions that were necessary for the events' success.

Our charity also allows for us to apply for the VSC screening program for our volunteers to get free screening through this program.

Retention & Recruitment

Volunteer Recruitment

■ Long-term Volunteers ■ New Volunteers ■ Short-term & Returning Volunteers



Long-Term Volunteers

We had 9 volunteers who have been with us for over 1 year continue volunteering with us throughout 2024



New Volunteers

During the past year, we had 14 new volunteers join our team!

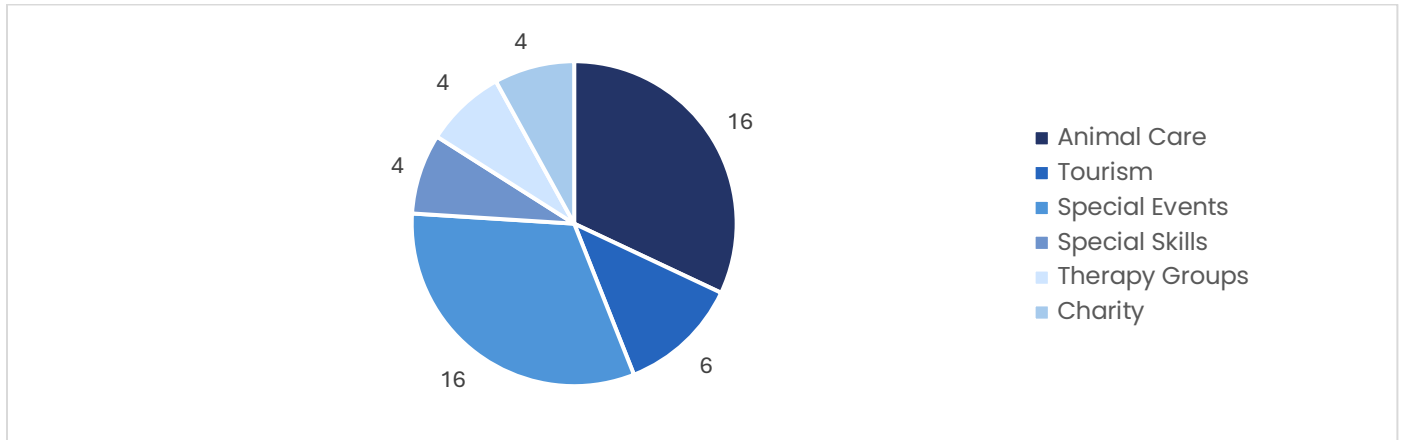


Short-Term & Returning Volunteers

In Spring/Summer, we had 1 temporary volunteer assist with animal care & maintenance. We also had 1 group of volunteers come out to decorate our magical forest before Tourism season began! And, at Open Farm Days, we had 1 returning volunteer & 1 single-event volunteer help us for the event!

Volunteer Roles

In 2024, we got 8 new animal care volunteers, 5 new tourism volunteers, 3 new group volunteers, 4 new special skills volunteers including 2 marketers and 2 program development support/photographer! The graph below shows all volunteers.



Program Improvements & Volunteer Opportunities

Dreamcatcher™ values and appreciates our volunteers! Your support is very important to us, so we want to ensure that you are enjoying your experience, feel like valued members of our team, and are supported throughout your roles.

As such, we are always striving to make improvements to our volunteer program, whether it's creating efficiency and consistency for you or by providing opportunities for skill development that can assist you in your personal or professional goals.

In 2024, we were able to create some changes and offer new opportunities based on previous volunteer feedback, your interests, and the need to fulfill any gaps in our program.

However, it is important for you to know that by taking the time that you do to volunteer with us, you free up time and resources for our staff that allows us to focus on creating these improvements and doing more for you in return!

What We Did



Volunteer Opportunities/Improvements

Hiring Halli has helped to reduce the workload for the other volunteers & provide an additional on-call staff to cover shifts.

In this role, Halli has filled in open shifts or covered volunteer shifts, animal handled for events, regularly ordered & restocked animal feeds & supplies, helped with maintenance

Internally hired 1 previous volunteer to assist in our Animal Care & Tourism Programs



Provided 1-1 meetings with volunteers

cleaning & seasonal duties, trimmed goat hooves & chicken talons, dewormed chickens & goats, deloused chickens, & trained new volunteers!

These meetings are voluntary. They give you an opportunity to provide feedback about the program which helps us to make improvements & allows us to provide support to you wherever needed.



Offered Horse Competency Training Videos & Practice Sessions

This provides you with a chance to learn new skills, enhance your knowledge about horses, & build stronger bonds with the equines!

Gaining these skills offers you more ways to become involved, a potential for a paid position, or prep for a future practicum with us!



Offered activities for practicing animal handling

This allows you to gain knowledge about the animal's health & behaviours by assisting with events, therapy groups, or extra animal care duties (i.e., delousing, deworming, trimming talons/hooves, helping the farrier, etc.).

Through these types of activities, you can build transferable skills that you can add to a resume, explore a variety of career pathways, build upon existing interests, form meaningful connections with the animals or with one another, or have the potential for a paid position with us!



Recruited volunteers to help with program development

This volunteer is helping to improve our volunteer program through developing materials, training/orientation slides, & give ideas for how to improve the program based on her experience!



Developed training documents & guides for volunteers

Including an Egg Candling Guide, Gutting Coops/Shelters Checklists, Trimming Chicken Talons Guide, & a Marketing Manual for new volunteers to use!

This is intended to help you to feel more comfortable & confident in helping with these tasks.



Updated onboarding manuals

Such as the Volunteer Application Form, Volunteer Orientation Manual, Simplified Occupational Health & Safety Manual.

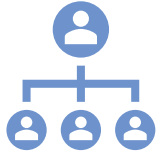
This helps to keep you updated on our policies & procedures, expectations & responsibilities, & ensures all manuals reflect our volunteer program.



Hosted a volunteer appreciation event in April

We usually host volunteer appreciation events at least twice a year! This provides you with an opportunity to meet each other, engage in some fun activities & conversation, share food & feel valued as a member of our team!

In April, we piloted a movie in the barn which was a great success & will possibly be offered as part of our tourism program in the future!



Provided internship supervision for an old volunteer with us & accepted a current volunteer to do their practicum with us in 2025!

We know that some of you are working toward a career in counselling. We do our best to offer opportunities for you to obtain your practicum hours or intern with us to fulfill your academic goals. However, there are times we are unable to take on our volunteers, in this case, we try to offer our support in other ways by writing reference letters or providing resources to help you succeed!



Offered opportunities for volunteers to apply to work with us

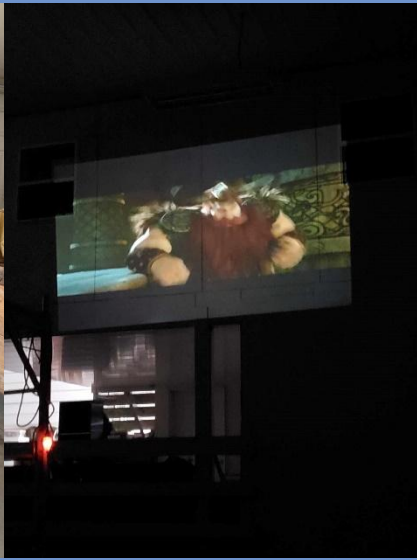
Whenever we are hiring, we check with our current volunteers to see if you are interested in the position first before hiring externally, such as with our animal care/tourism staff and evening administration positions.

This gives you a chance to step into a new role, develop new skills, or reach your career or academic development goals.

2024 Highlights

Volunteer Appreciation Party 2024





Open Farm Days Event



Horse Competency Practice



Dreamcatcher™ Goals for 2025

1	Hiring: Master's Level Provisional/Registered Psychologist/ Clinical Social Worker to help people access our services & reduce our waitlist Intake Coordinator, Academy Administrator, Marketer, Manager of Operations
2	Bring more awareness to our programs and services by creating a thorough marketing plan
3	Develop & expand our tourism program to be sustainable for years to come Including: creating unique memorable experiences for our community to enjoy, applying for grants to enhance our tourism program, creating more DIY projects for the magical forest trails, finding a person run the events
4	Train volunteers in horse competency for those interested & offer more opportunities for animal handling
5	Raise funds for our Cost-Share Counselling Program through our Charity for client's needing financial support

The Dream Team of 2024

Dreamcatcher™ Volunteers

Animal Care

Alysha
Avery
Makenna
Eric
Merranda
Kyra
Sam
Hailey
Robert

Jessica
Victoria
Helena
Mimi
John
Brad
Wanda
Greg

Tourism & Special Events

Angela
Alysha
Avery
Helyn
Tracy
Frances
Halli
Ting

Victoria
Mimi
Kim
Tracey
John
Wanda
Ashley
Greg

Therapy Groups

Avery
Mimi
Brad
Greg

Charity Board Members

Wes, President
Charmaine, Board Member
Jocelyn, Treasurer
Rachelle, Secretary

Special Skills – Marketers

Salaman
Sonya

Special Skills – Program Development

Debbie
Tracy

Dreamcatcher™ Staff

Psychologists, Social Workers, & Therapists

Eileen, M.Ed., Registered Psychologist, Founder & CEO
Melonie, M.A., Registered Psychologist, Clinical Manager
Reesa, MSW, Registered Clinical Social Worker
Janine, M.Ed., Registered Psychologist
Kaeley, M.A., Registered Psychologist

Kaytlyn, MSW, Registered Social Worker
Sarah, M.C., Mental Health Therapist
Samantha, M.C., Intern Therapist
Mandi, M.C., Intern Therapist
Liesel, Behavioural Interventionist
Josh, Behavioural Interventionist

Support Staff

Jessica, B.H.Sc., Administrative Manager
Raina, Evening Administrative Assistant
Megan, B.A., Volunteer Coordinator/Event Planner/Marketer
Taylor, B.A., Practicum Student
Halli, Animal Care/Tourism
Dale, Engineer/ Property Maintenance
Derek, Farrier, Group Staff, Workshops

Academy

Jessica, B.H.Sc., Administrative Manager
Janelle, Certified Dog Trainer
Danielle, B.A., Certified Dog Trainer