



Equine Assisted Programs for First Responders

Saly Glassman
President and Director
Kindle Hill Foundation

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Our Mission

First Responders

We serve the first responder community, providing equine assisted programs to (1) advance training in de-escalation, negotiation and partnership; and (2) support officer wellness to relieve stress, and recover from anxiety, depression and PTSD.



History

Founded in 2019 and based in Blue Bell, PA, Kindle Hill Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to equine assisted learning, training and equine assisted therapy programs. The foundation serves a diverse population of clients, and its primary focus is training and treatment for the first responder community, namely, law enforcement.

Kindle Hill chose to emphasize law enforcement because it was clear that this professional community would be unlikely to ask for help, and yet, clearly needs the support. Furthermore, first responders have been challenged by public misunderstanding and misperceptions over recent years.

Kindle Hill Foundation's *Equine Assisted Training* is completely unique in that it offers a graduated curriculum, designed with input from first responders and backed by our team's research and education. To our knowledge, no other equine assisted program exists that integrates principles from ICAT and ABLE, as well as mental health protocols supported by Kevin Gilmartin, PhD.

All of our equine assisted programs are non-riding, and no prior horse experience is necessary. When participants engage with horses on the ground, they experience an open relationship, which facilitates a two-way partnership.

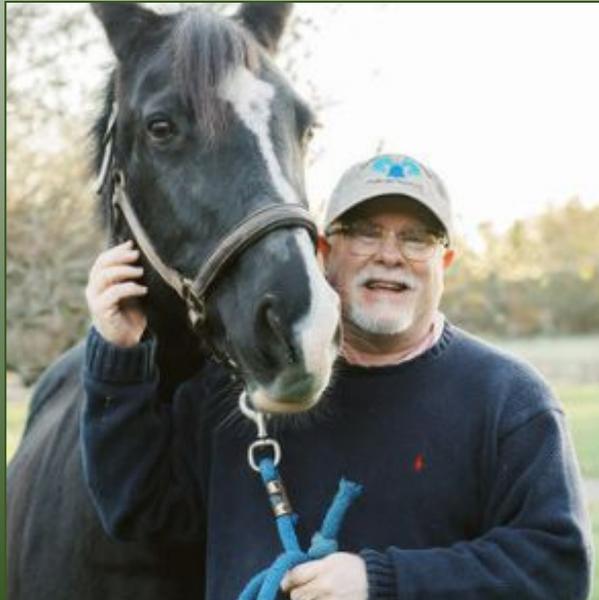


Team



Saly Glassman

**President and Director Kindle Hill
Foundation**



Sean Homsher

**Licensed Professional
Counselor**



Leslie Molinari

Equine Specialist

Saly Glassman

For 39 years, Saly was a prominent innovator, speaker, author, instructor and facilitator for Merrill Lynch, (now Bank of America,) the financial services industry, and the community at large.

When her long-standing partners acquired the wealth management practice in 2019, Saly was free to focus on advocating for mental health awareness and advanced training for law enforcement.

She and her husband Ira Berman established the Kindle Hill Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to Equine Assisted Learning and Therapy, and they provide a variety of services and programming, staffed with volunteers and of course, the horses!

Saly and her team members, all experienced equestrians, have participated in ABLE/ICAT law enforcement training, and this content has been integrated into programs for first responders.



Sean Homsher

After a rewarding career of over 20 years in sports and entertainment camera operation, which included Emmy awards, Olympic Games, and various sports championships, Sean turned his professional focus to his goals of helping others and making a positive change in the world.

Sean earned a Master's Degree in School Counseling and Mental Health Therapy from the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School. He is a certified Licensed Professional Counselor in Pennsylvania as well as nationally board-certified.

Sean is also credentialed as an EAGALA Mental Health Professional (*Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association*).



Leslie Molinari

In her 50+ year career with horses, Leslie has been an accomplished rider, leading thoroughbred racehorse trainer, and successful show barn owner.

Her skills have included rehabilitation and re-homing for retired racehorses and developing new careers for horses who can contribute to client educational and therapeutic experiences. She is also EAGALA credentialed.

Leslie has expanded her credentials to include partnering with her husband Sean, in a successful equine assisted learning and equine assisted therapy practice. Her beaming smile and warm disposition are instantly recognizable, and she is loved by all the horses, dogs, cats and people who have been fortunate to connect with her.



Volunteers - Assistant Instructors*

Robin Baskin

Robin graduated from Union College with a B.S degree, double majoring in Psychology and Studio Art. Robin is thrilled to be able to blend her lifelong love of horses with her professional background of client management; using empathic communication and attentive listening skills within Kindie Hill Foundation's equine assisted programs.

Keira Fischetti

Keira graduated from Temple University with a bachelor's degree in Psychology and is currently studying at Chestnut Hill College for her Master's in Clinical and Counseling Psychology. Keira was introduced to riding at the age of 3, and has been in love with horses ever since. Now, she is eager to incorporate her training in psychology with the healing power of horses through equine assisted psychotherapy.

Alyssa Friedenber

Alyssa graduated Delaware Valley College, where she achieved her degree in equine business management. Alyssa received her certificate in Animal Assisted Therapy through Harcum College; and also completed the training for The Fundamentals of EAGALA Model Practice. Alyssa is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Counseling from Arcadia University.

All volunteers have participated in ABLE/ ICAT law enforcement training.



Why Horses?

Horses and first responders are similar in how they view the world. They both understand in order to survive they must:

- Exist in a perpetual hypervigilant state
- Maintain a heightened level of awareness

The benefit of working with horses for therapy, learning or training is:

- Horses do not hold judgment or bias against other beings
- Horses have no agenda; they cannot premeditate their actions
- Horses give first responders the opportunity to practice new techniques without fear of judgement or negative consequences
- Horses provide immediate feedback to first responders
- Horses offer first responders a truly unique experience, and the opportunity to actively train outside of the office environment.



Programs - *Equine Assisted Therapy*

Kindle Hill Foundation's Equine Assisted Therapy program is designed to be complementary to talk therapy and medication, as well as alternative methods, such as EMDR.

The program is a series of 10-12 private sessions with an EGALA (Equine Growth and Learning Association) certified and licensed therapist.

The therapist works with a first responder who experienced a traumatic event or is challenged with PTSD. The session includes one or more horses.

- 10-12 sessions are paid by the foundation's endowment, grants, and donations from the public
- One-hour sessions by appointment only
- Sessions are self scheduled between the first responder and therapist
- HIPAA compliant
- Family members may participate in sessions



Programs - *Equine Assisted Learning*

Kindle Hill Foundation's proprietary Equine Assisted Learning program is a personal growth and development series of 10-12 sessions.

Sessions are held between a first responder and a Master's in Counseling candidate or principal. The session may include one or more horses.

This HIPAA compliant program is focused on individuals who may benefit from support to sharpen or advance self and interpersonal skills such as:

- Nonverbal communication
- Empathy
- Self care
- Improving personal and professional relationships
- Self confidence
- Dealing with difficult people
- Negotiation and partnering
- Scripting (overcoming objections in public perceptions)



Programs - *Equine Assisted Training*

Kindle Hill Foundation's proprietary Equine Assisted Training program was originally developed by Saly Glassman and Kenneth Lawson, Chief of Whitpain, PA PD, and enhanced with the help of first responders all over the region. The curriculum is based on the principles of natural horsemanship and is aligned with ICAT and ABLE in support of regional and state mandates.

The program has evolved since its creation in the summer of 2019. Community law enforcement has been integral to the development of curriculums, advising on relevancy and creating scenarios that are as close to "real world" as possible.

The curriculum focuses on two main critical goals:

- The development of advanced skills in de-escalation, negotiation, and partnering
- Techniques for managing stress, anxiety, PTSD, and other rigorous demands of the first responder culture.

There is a standard series composed of four 90-minute sessions, and an accelerated version which can be shortened to one to two sessions.

Sessions are held with a maximum of six first responders. Participants receive a certification of completion after attending all sessions and completing an evaluation of their experience.



Program Metrics

The following markers are being used as metrics to measure program efficacy:

1. Improved self-care for managing stress and PTSD in the first responder community.
2. Reduction in mental health breakdowns, violence, and suicides of first responders.
3. Use of more advanced techniques in de-escalation, negotiation, and partnering, as alternatives to leading with use of force.
4. Increase in community support for first responders and an appreciation for their well-being.
5. Fostering sympathetic and understanding relationships between first responders and the community members they serve.



Testimonials

“When we did the ‘contact-cover’ exercise with a horse, everything clicked. Slowing things down showed me that the horse and I could stay calm, and I was still in control.”

—*Police Captain*

“I had been feeling very stressed in my job, and at home. It seems that everyone wants a piece of me. Being with the horses gave me a sense of peace and cleared my head.”

— *Patrolman*

“The horses taught me to see through a different set of eyes and point of view. When I'm with the horses, all of my stress seems to fade away.”

— *Police Sergeant*

“I never thought about how much stress I was accumulating. I just kept powering on and pushing it all down. The horses saw right through that, and I realized I wasn't hiding it as well as I thought. It was a huge relief to realize that asking for help was actually an act of courage, and by getting help, I could get stronger and healthier, and be there for others.”

—*Detective and Military officer*



Testimonials

NBC Story



Accelerated Curriculum

Session length: 1 day, 2 hours 45 minutes

Opening remarks

1. Grain exercise - Understanding how quickly things can change in an unpredictable situation where an officer needs to present a calm demeanor in the face of unrest.
2. Choose your equine partner
3. Learning to lead - This exercise is about clarity
4. Leading with disturbances - This exercise is meant to demonstrate the guardian role, one of the four roles of the herd.
5. Dominance - This exercise is meant to demonstrate the dominant role, one of the four roles of the herd.
6. Sighted Obstacle course - This exercise is about mindfulness, being aware of yourself as well as another, being thoughtful, remembering to breathe, and the most important point, slowing down (ICAT).
7. Blindfolded Obstacle course - This exercise illustrates the same points as the sighted version but introduces the importance of: giving and asking for CLEAR communication, as well as learning to see the situation through the perspective of another, i.e., empathy.

Accelerated Curriculum

Session length: 1 day, 2 hours 45 minutes

8. Rope - This exercise is about the importance of trust as well as appropriate levels of communication.
9. Scary Objects - This exercise is about perceptions of who is in control, and how that affects stress and energy levels.
10. Box - This exercise is about Contact and cover.

BREAK - 5 minutes

11. Circular Breathing - This exercise reflects the importance of practicing habits when you are in a calm state, to prepare you for situations that are stressful.
12. Obstacle course with triggers and Cardio prior - (Officers TO WEAR VESTS and DUTY BELTS) - This exercise incorporates elements of the prior obstacle course but adds additional elements of cardio to raise the heart rate and the stresses of having to retain information and handle an agitating situation.

Wrap up, questions, comments

Conclusion

Foundation Support

Costs for the foundation's law enforcement programs are covered by its endowment, grants, and tax-deductible donations from the public. While we are pleased to provide these specific programs at no cost to agencies, it is not feasible to scale them without long term financial support.

Kindle Hill's critical goal for first responders is to elevate the need for mental health support and provide training that aligns with official government mandates. Additionally, there is the focus on positively influencing community relationships with first responders.

- The cost for one individual Equine Assisted Therapy session and one Equine Assisted Learned Session is \$100 per person.
- The cost for one Equine Assisted Training group session is \$600, or \$100 per person.

To be able to continue to support and expand its programs, the foundation would ideally:

- Have its therapy programs accepted by insurance and workman's compensation
- Receive state support for the program via sponsorship of \$100 per person.



Thank you

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Appendix

Research

The benefits shown using equine assisted therapies:

- [Multi-Site Psychophysiological Analysis of Equine Assisted Healing in Combat Veterans and First Responders](#)
- [Horse Therapy Helps First Responders with PTSD](#)
- [Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy: An Emerging Trauma-Informed Intervention | Advances in Social Work](#)
- [First responders find horse therapy helps ease symptoms of PTSD | FOX31 Denver](#)
- [Equine-Assisted Therapy for Veterans with PTSD: Manual Development and Preliminary Findings | Military Medicine | Oxford Academic](#)
- <https://nceft.org/services/first-responders-program/>