

Hi Jennifer,

Here is our official statement from the Board of Directors and Staff at Pegasus:

Pegasus Therapeutic Riding Center is aware of the “concerns” being raised by some disgruntled volunteers regarding our upcoming move to a new location. As always, Pegasus will continue to operate with the utmost integrity and transparency. Our mission is driven by deep care for our riders, horses, volunteers, and employees.

We are happy to address any legitimate concerns raised by involved parties. However, the recent slanderous remarks regarding safety concerns, mistreatment of animals, and financial mismanagement are completely unfounded and baseless. These accusations stem from a small group of volunteers who are unhappy with the change of venue—a move that will ultimately benefit the entire program and enhance our ability to serve the community.

Despite these unfortunate attempts to tarnish our reputation, our mission remains steadfast. We are dedicated to making a positive impact in the lives of our riders and the broader community.

We invite any concerned individuals to engage in open dialogue with us and come visit our new facility.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we embark on this exciting new chapter.

Additionally...

Here are the responses to your questions. I also want to address the discrepancy in your online article regarding the Director of Programming position at Pegasus. If the individual mentioned is not Chase Burke, then someone is falsely claiming to have been employed at Pegasus with that title, as Chase Burke is the only person who has held that position. If you want to quote my response please use the whole answer.

**Safety:** All volunteers are required to complete an application form, which includes a liability release and emergency contact information. They must watch our training videos and undergo shadowing with an experienced volunteer before working independently. We ensure volunteers are comfortable before they operate solo. Orientation

includes demonstrations and instructions on emergency procedures, such as dismounting riders in case of emergencies. These protocols are reinforced throughout the season.

We provide a comprehensive verbal overview to new volunteers, covering the entire process from the arrival of riders to the post-class activities like helmet removal and handing riders back to their teacher, parent, or caretaker. This includes helmet fitting, safety protocols, handling riders, mounting, conducting safety checks, class participation, handling a spooked horse, emergency dismounts, and interacting with instructors. Additionally, we explain various volunteer roles such as assisting with helmet fittings, gate duty, side walking, and leading.

On their first side walking session, new volunteers are supervised by an experienced side walker.

Financials: Our most recent 990 form is available on GuideStar for your review. [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

Relocation: We are moving Pegasus due to damage caused by Tropical Storm Hilary and subsequent storms, which led to a loss of water to the facility and drinking water for the horses for over three weeks. During that time period we relocated our horses for their safety. Flood insurance costs are prohibitive, prompting our move to a new, more cost-effective facility. Phoenix Rising owns the land we operate on and their facility was devastated. They had to undergo ongoing construction for months, causing us to have to cancel programming on many different days due to heavy machinery coming through the Ranch. Also, with the increasing heat, we will now be at a facility that offers a covered arena. This will provide comfort for our riders, horses and volunteers.

Current Land Purchase: In 2022 we purchased a 4.11-acre lot in Thousand Palms on 30th Ave. We have engaged a reputable project manager, confirmed zoning requirements, drafted a site diagram, and submitted it to the Riverside County Planning Department for Land Use Guidance. We are awaiting their guidance on our next steps. Land development is years away and that is why we signed on with Willowbrook to continue operating.

Curriculum: Our programs are specifically designed for individuals who have received medical clearance from a qualified physician and who have submitted an application with our organization. This careful process ensures the safety and wellbeing of our participants. At

Pegasus we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where the bond between humans and horses can be harnessed to enhance physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Both employees and volunteers have followed the same curriculum for the past 40 years, initiated by our founder and passed down. Pegasus is not currently accredited and does not claim to be. However, we are in the process of getting PATH certified (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship). While student confidentiality prohibits full disclosure, we can tell you that each student's individual education plan is used by each student's teacher to facilitate rider curriculum and goals.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.