

BREATH BE BELONG



From the editor

Most people at year-end talk of new year resolutions, things they want to accomplish and achieve. Personally, I stay in a very reflective space, reminiscing the year that has passed, mourn what was lost, gaining peace with what is, smile and celebrate the good memories and really focus on

what was learned. Towards the end of the year, specific words come to mind, and I realise it was themes for the year. For the past two years, concepts like faith, letting go, breathe, trust the process and sunflowers stood out, but in 2024 it was EVALUATE & EVOLVE.

2024 review

Gratitude

From the editor
One in a million Pony
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Gallery

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2025 Expectations

Hope

Our road map for 2025



So many things started to push me in a direction personally and all that is EQuivalence. I realised that I am enmeshed in what EQuivalence is, which at times is not the best, but in the end, I cannot see it apart. I am EQuivalence and EQuivalence is me. But with that, I realised that it is time to evolve. The horses are demanding it, the people need it, and we need to listen. But, what does that really mean for us?

There is a person whose artwork I absolutely adore, Nica Quinn ([Nica Draws Nature](#)). She not only describes through images what I think, but also how I FEEL. One such image's wording is, "*The next revolution will not be lead on horseback, but instead standing by their sides*". Words highlighted in the image are empathy, love, kindness, presence, congruency, connection, empowerment, freedom. That which the horses are demanding for us to bring to the forefront.

Would I like to ride more generally, for sure, BUT, I don't really notice it because I have so much time next to their sides. It is there where things become clearer and I can truly hear them.

Evaluate Experience Evolve

Through my evolution this year, I had to let go of people that were important in my life, but grateful that I could come to terms with that to some extent. I am grateful for the mind space I am in now compared to last year this time... So much better!! I am grateful for the people that did show up this year and helped through very difficult processes.

I have met an amazing life-coach that has really helped me getting out from burnout to a place of hope. I am truly grateful for her.

As for EQuivalence, EQuivalence is EVOLVING. We have a wonderful team of people, newly joined and there from the start, that support our vision of being a place for people from different communities. We have wonderful people on board that will digitally help us with the process. At the centre of it all will be our horses. They are the driving force, the centre which everything revolves around and the means that gives our life's purpose.

With a hopeful heart we look towards 2025 having no expectations, resolutions, nor targets. Only the invitation... come meet our horses, experience a space where words are rarely needed, where you can breathe, be, belong.

Anneke



Celebrating our ONE IN A MILLION PONY!



Since about two years back we started to say that we will need to have a 21st party for Koejawel. So when beginning of March 2024 he showed signs of having difficulty to walk, till where he just said he can't do it, we were worried. After blood tests, x-rays and hoof examinations it was clear... Laminitis. The lamina is a part of the hoof's critical structures, so when one part is compromised, the rest of the hoof also has problems. One of this is that the pedal bone (main bone in

the hoof) starts to change angle towards the sole of the hoof and without immediate, drastic attention could mean that the bone penetrates the sole.

Immediate, drastic measures meant putting him 24/7 on stable rest, weigh every piece of teff grass and then soak it. He had to lose weight to lighten the load on his feet. There are a few conditions or circumstances that can trigger laminitis. Most common is horses that struggles to metabolise sugar in their body due to either insulin resistance or specific hormone imbalances.

Shavings were ordered to make a nice bedding for him with a little sandy paddock that he can interact with his friends. Cooper regularly came with squeals of encouragement. Koejawel was a champ and relieved to be off his feet and a chance to get better. The wet and tasteless food was a bit of a challenge and also not to get treats from everyone he loved. But cuddles and check-ins were appreciated.

Koejawel was introduced to Glue-on shoes by Theo his hoof specialist and Dr Arnold, our vet carefully monitored him through bloodwork and x-rays. The best combo a pony can have is an owner, vet and hoof specialist that is fully on board and working together. Then the support team that follows all instructions... only then one can hope for success. In many, many instances, laminitis can be a death sentence.

After four months Koejawel started to venture for short periods at a time between the herd during the day till he could fully rejoin the herd after about 6 months.



Then we knew, we can start planning for our 21st Birthday Party. We were all so excited and so many ideas came to mind, but in the end, it was decided that a family picnic between the trees, having the herd in the background, pony rides and a photo booth with our star pony was the best.

Everyone had a great time! Lara organised a quiz and really got everyone's brains thinking. Koejawel received a specially made, sugar free carrot "chocolate" cake, made by Bronwynne's brother, which he devoured. The photobooth was a hit! Especially with Jo's extra props and details to make it special. Koejawel was enjoying every moment of attention and brought his prickiest ears and most dashing smile!



To say that Koejawel is a one in a million pony is not an overstatement. We wish we knew how many kids has learned on his back to ride, how many he comforted in ways that no one will know. He has the boldest personality and the gentlest moments. He has humour, sense of adventure, wit and a teacher of being truly awake and in the moment.

It is truely an honor to be able to work alongside this LEGEND OF A PONY!

Poly- WHAT?

In the beginning of the year we connected with Sasja van der Merwe, a clinical psychologist that is one of the first South Africans to have attended training with the Polyvagal Equine Institute (PVEI) and wants to share some of the principles through help of the horses. It is a wonderful collaboration that introduced Polyvagal Theory to mental health professionals as well as equine professionals interested in the field.

Great! But **what is Polyvagal Theory?** In short and simplified... Our body's nervous system naturally accesses stimuli or things we experience and then through an amazing system determines whether we are safe, physical OR emotional, and then activates a series of body functions in order to respond accordingly.

Polyvagal Theory classifies 3 different states, Sympathetic (Fight or Flight), Ventral Vagal (Safe & connected), Dorsal Vagal (Shutdown). What is important is to understand that neither of these states are bad, it is necessary, BUT it is when we GET STUCK in Sympathetic or Dorsal Vagal, problems with connection to life becomes interrupted.

This is but a glimpse into how our autonomic nervous system can give us information in relation to our wellbeing.



Calm Connection WORKSHOPS

Working from the basis of Polyvagal Theory and ultimately having a balanced life and lifestyle, Anneke & Sarah are hosting workshops explaining basic principles of how our autonomic nervous system gives our body information and how to use that information to get UNSTUCK and start connecting with ourselves, others and the world.

Our first set of workshops launched end of 2024 with the title "*Tame your inner chaos*". It was about experiencing and bringing into awareness where we find ourselves in general. The horses were like usual, amazing. They demonstrated fluidity between states as they naturally are masters at regulation. They helped attendees to really become aware of small nuances and how that impacts others around us.

So many realised how little we give ourselves time to connect with ourselves... to take the time to check in and do what is necessary to reset.

Our workshops shares some theory, valuable tools to implement immediately, time to reflect, and of course everything happens BETWEEN and NEXT TO THE HORSES.

Keep watch on our facebook page or contact us directly to join our next workshop in February 2025.

Human team behind all that is EQuivalence



I do need to give credit to the team behind all that is EQuivalence and currently we have a bunch that is extremely special. Each member bringing their colourful personalities to facilitate experiences between the horses for all individuals (children and adults).

Bronwynne, right hand, left hand, steady feet and all that is fun and crazy. Slowly, but surely, working herself towards our inhouse equine bodyworker. All this, while still being a full-time financial administrator at a different company.

Lara, quiet nature, keen for anything. Her passion for the horses and kids are tangible. Also responsible for our witty instagram posts!

Between Bronwynne and Lara kids can always look forward to wonderful experiences at camp and with the horses that build memories for life.

Ricardo, his love for animals is evident through how they respond to them. Responsible for helping to keep the yard welcoming to everyone and our horses in healthy condition. It is precious to see kids ecstatic when they see him as he assists in some of our sessions.

Towards the end of the year **Sarah** joined our team as in-house Mental Health Specialist. She has her Masters in Clinical Social work and also completed her certification in advanced coaching. She has worked and known our horses for a very long time as co-founder of Equinox Trust that has offered different programs to individuals alongside our horses.

She is passionate about the Equine Assisted Services world, focusing on Psychotherapy and Therapy since 2008. We are looking forward to the road ahead together.



To have all these highly skilled individuals are an asset to EQuivalence, as well as to each and every one we serve. As a team we are uniquely skilled to offer world class Equine Assisted Services.

LIVE, LOVE, RIDE!

Our day to day continued with our **Equine Assisted Learning** sessions and **recreational riding** lessons. We are so proud of all our students learning about all the practical stuff such as aroma oils and how horses naturally select the ones their body needs. Then learn some massaging and relaxation techniques and when to use them. Learning the horses' body language is ultimately the key into being safe around horses. When you can understand when they are unsure of what is needed, asked from them, or just the general environment, one can adjust oneself on the ground or when riding.



Our Equine Assisted Learning sessions keenly focus on developmental goals, social and emotional goals while developing horsemanship skills and riding skills. We have so many wonderful moments with the children and interesting conversations. Our recreational riding focus on correct terminology, technique and riding skills. Ultimately in all our sessions we aim to have a fun and safe environment where learning can take place.

During Koejawel's rehab, everyone adapted to experiencing interaction with different horses, building new friendships and understood the need for special care for him.

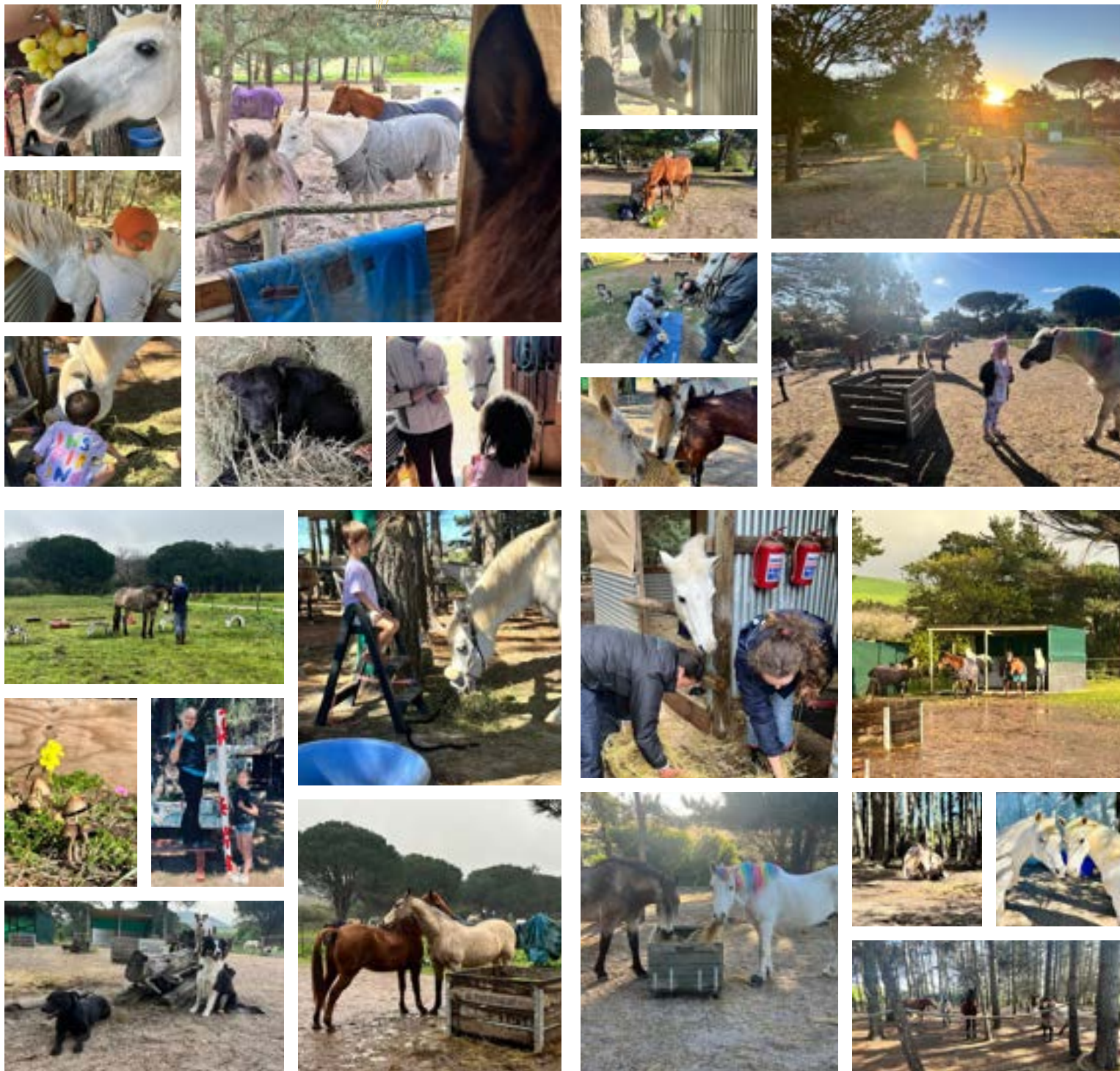


One of our facilitator precious moments this year was when one of our 3-year olds, fell asleep while we were on a walkout on his beloved pony. The day was just too long and the gentle walk just too much to try and keep eyes open.

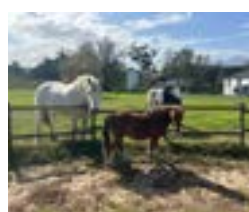
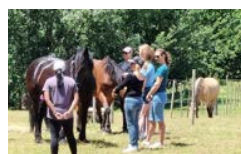
Our favourite moments for the kids are not only to introduce their ponies to grandparents and friends, but also to show off some new riding skill they learned.

It is important for everyone that comes to yard, whether riding or not, being able to succumb to our tranquil environment and find a moment to clutch out and enjoy our space.

2024 YARD life...



2024 other stuff



COMMUNITY GIVE BACK

HOPE - Horse Outreach Programme at EQuivalence



As we exit 2024 we have offered children from the farm on EQuivalence consistently Equine Assisted Learning services for 9 years. What an absolute privilege it is to see the children grow up. Some of them were only 6 months old when their sisters brought them with to the horses, needing to look after them. Those 6 month olds are going to grade 4 in 2025. Stressing about them not knowing basic colours to them coming to our yard to come and read some books. We admire them for their resilience and their extreme punctuality on the days that are “Perdry” days.

We continued this year going back to smaller groups, one Saturday a month, to provide groundwork with horses, horse riding and activities that included yard work like prepping food and keeping the horses’ camps clean.

Ages range from 3 year old to grade 7. The big group consists in total around 18 kids that live on Altydgedacht.

We thank our volunteers of this year, Jo, Anja, Nadine and Christelle that were committed to the Saturdays that was scheduled during the year and each one bringing their unique qualities to make these interactions special.

Our aim on these days is to provide a space where children can feel safe, while learning important life skills, as well as gaining confidence around horses. Ultimately, being involved with them for so long, creates the opportunity to create long lasting relationships, be people they can trust and feel safe with. And as they grow older, become mentors and assist in opportunities outside of the farm if possible.

Ultimately, creating
long lasting
relationships is what
matters....

Horse Powered EduDevelopment

The Valley Primary School

Our Equine Assisted Learning project continued for a second year receiving 25 children from The Valley Primary school from Grade 1 - 7. The program is designed to address academic and behavioral challenges faced by children in classroom settings. Using experiential learning with horses with a foundation in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), the program helps participants build critical life skills that improve self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and overall classroom success.

The program spans over 7 weeks where each week focus on different aspects of horsemanship. By interacting with the horses on the ground, important skills such as nervous system regulation tools are learned as being erratic, unpredictable and other disruptive behaviour cause the horse to disengage. Trust needs to build between facilitator, student and horse and as trust is built, horse care, reading body language, leading and horse handling skills are taught. Each aspect translatable skills outside of the arena.

It was incredible to see the change in interaction, confidence, being able to voice what they feel and why from the first session to the last. First sessions mostly go without going close to a horse and in the last session being able to comfortable play with the horse in hand over obstacles. Able to adapt and consider the horse in their ability and adapting their routes, plans and difficulty level to accommodate their partner, the horse.

Each child leaves the 7 week period with a certificate of participation, a little braver and have some skills to regulate themselves.

Up until now we offered it to 8 children, once a week for a term. Thus 4 groups of 8.

Challenges to continue with programs like these are finding people that commit free time not only for the time during the week, but offer specialised educational knowledge to program development. Due to lack of funding, in order to pay such individuals remains impossible and those who have skills to offer freely does not have the time to commit indefinitely.

We remain unsure what this program will look like during 2025.





We are a registered NPO & PBO
We can issue Section 18a certificates for donations

SPONSORS & DONATEURS 2024

VAN DEIJL
SINCE 1964



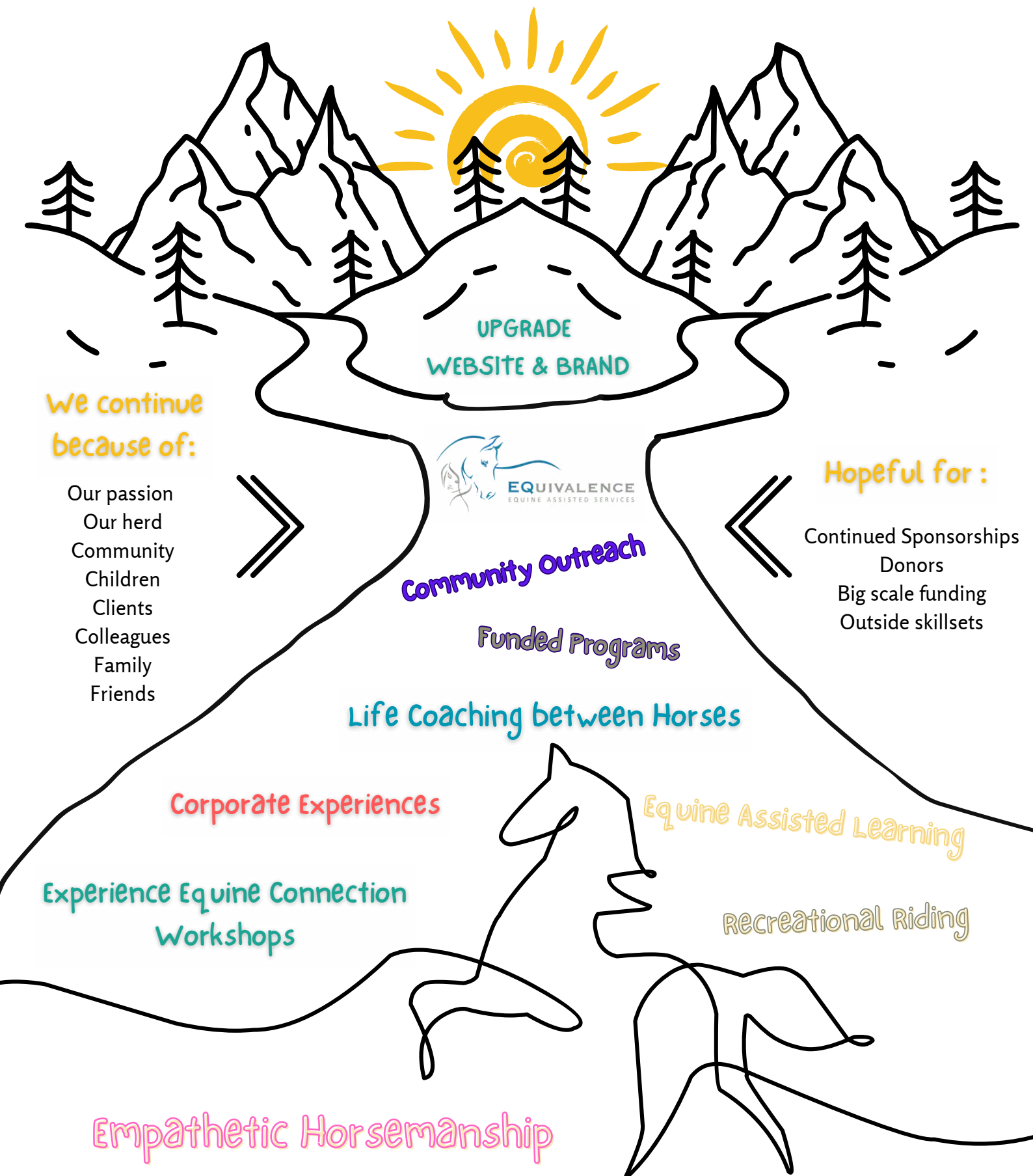
We would like to thank everyone that contributes in different ways towards EQuivalence's operations.

Van Deijl Jewellers that contributes on a monthly basis towards general operations.

Christian Living Network is an organisation that not only contributes towards session costs for individuals, but serves their broader community in different ways.

Invader Off-Road Campers made a substantial contribution to our extra much needed shelter for our horses, which they thoroughly appreciate.

2025 EXPECTATIONS



REACH US

Thank you for taking time to read about what we were up to and what our hopes are for 2025.

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