

EQUIVALENCE

breathe > be > belong

From the editor
Meet Lily
Fresh brand
Ellie's story
Growing Together

2025

Glimmers
Workshops
Community Giveback
News from Nata
Healing Hooves
Thank you

FROM THE EDITOR

Last year, my words were Evaluate and Evolve. They guided reflection and growth, asking us to look closely at what was working, what wasn't, and who we were becoming.

This year, the word chose itself:
Endure.

2025 has been an extremely difficult year, marked by loss. Endings. Things that no longer are.

Since January, Bravo struggled with repeated episodes of colic. With each occurrence, the risks grew heavier — the possibility of complications, of displacement, of the dreaded twisted gut.

And then, 17 May, the worst happened: standing in front of the vet and needing to make the decision to end a life. Even when it is the right decision—when it is made to end pain, discomfort, and suffering —



looking the vet in the eye and uttering the word “Ok” carries a weight that is almost unbearable. Such a small word, yet so final. Such an immense responsibility.

And then... six months and one week later, we had to do it again.

For Cooper.

In some aspects it is easier when there is warning, time to prepare your heart. With Coops, there was none. One moment he was offering one of our kids a last ride, full of his usual generosity and spirit. Three hours later, I needed to say “Ok...” again.

Our horses are not just horses.
They are our life.
They are our dreams made tangible — dreams
we don't just imagine, but live.

They give us quiet, solitary moments where no
words are needed, just the comfort of a
presence and a shared breath. They also give us
the exhilaration of galloping up a hill, heart
pounding, fully alive. They stand with us in joy,
and they hold space for tears, fear, and
vulnerability. When they leave us physically, the
void is vast and layered.

Grief shows up in routines suddenly broken.
In open spaces that were once filled.
In food buckets bearing names — names that,
once covered, bring a sense of finality.
In the small, subconscious ways we try to let
glimpses of their presence linger just a little
longer.

And yet, somewhere in between the tears and
the heaviness of coming to terms with all that
this year has held, we welcomed a new presence
into our herd and our space: **Lily**.



The lily flower is rich in symbolism —
Divine provision, resurrection, new life.

Perhaps she is a reminder that endurance is not
just about surviving what is hard, but about
staying open enough to receive what comes
next. She feels like a quiet promise, a gentle
whisper that life continues to unfold, even after
profound loss.

As we move forward, we hold on to the hope
that Lily is a glimpse of what 2026 may bring:
renewal, healing, and the courage to keep
showing up. Because to endure is not to be
untouched by pain—it is to carry it, honor it, and
still make room for new life to grow.

Anneke

There comes a moment when
you realize it's time for a fresh
start, embracing the potential of
new beginnings.

Meister Eckhart

INTRODUCING LILY

Lily has eyes that see a lot — soft and gentle, yet
carrying a quiet caution that speaks of awareness
and wisdom. She stands tall and moves a little
slower, offering a calm presence that naturally
gives confidence and gentleness to those in her
care.

She enjoys being around humans, often choosing
connection, while still finding her way within the
herd. As she learns the rhythms and relationships of
her new environment, our herd is giving her the
space she needs to truly find her hooves.

Lily is settling in at her own pace, and in that
unhurried presence, she is already leaving her mark.

OUR BRAND, REIMAGINED

Branding is an essential part of any business, yet when you are starting out, it can feel elusive — something you know matters deeply, but can't quite define or visualize. It has been incredibly special to look back and see where our logo began and how it has evolved alongside us.

What we do at EQuivalence is not easily captured in words, let alone in imagery. The role of the horses, the depth of the work, and the quiet transformation that happens here require a level of understanding that goes beyond surface design. Your brand — your logo — is often the first interaction someone has with you, long before they ever arrive. That single visual must carry a feeling, an invitation, a promise of what can be expected.

For some time, we had been following an artist, [Nica Draws Nature](#), in the UK whose work resonated deeply with us. When we reached out, hoping she might be willing to create something for EQuivalence, it felt like a leap of faith — and one that was met with true alignment. Our website creators, [Niche Digital](#), also made our brand come alive with a website revamp.

Our intention was **simplicity layered with symbolism** — the same kind of richness we witness every day among the horses. At the centre of our branding are the horses themselves. Woven into the mane are symbols of gratitude, spirituality, and breath — a reflection of the emotional intelligence (EQ) horses naturally bring, and the space they create for people to **breathe**, to **be**, and to **belong**.

Our brand is not held by a single logo alone. It is supported and expressed through a collection of images that together tell the story of EQuivalence.

Within the graphics, you will find depictions of the seven horses as they were at the time—and always will be in spirit. You'll also notice Nata, represented through the image of a pit bull, as well as crows



flying and resting in the trees. These often-misunderstood beings — frequently judged or cast aside — symbolize those who, too, find belonging among the horses.

The trees in our imagery offer shelter and comfort to all. The rising or setting sun on the horizon brings a sense of gratitude, marking both endings and beginnings.

Together, these elements reflect what EQuivalence truly is: a sense of togetherness, connection to nature, and deep respect for animals. Each aspect is intentional — feeding and nourishing the soul of every person who walks through the gates of EQuivalence.

Our brand is not just something you see...

It is something you feel.



HORSES ARE ONLY A GATEWAY

Ellie's story

Ellie came to us as a little girl of seven. Ellie has developmental delays, combined with other conditions that make typical development challenging. For those who don't spend much time with her, her speech can be difficult to follow — but Ellie misses nothing.

From a very young age, she could distinguish every member of the herd. Any change at the yard, no matter how small, she noticed immediately. To support the children, we assign colours to each horse—matching saddles pads, fly masks, halters. Ellie knows every single one by heart.

As the years went by, structure became essential for her. She needed to know who was riding before her, after her, and on the same day — and which horse they would ride. Any changes had to be communicated to Yolandie, her “second mom,” so Ellie could prepare herself mentally. Ellie also became the unofficial rule enforcer, ensuring everyone complied—from wearing helmets, long pants to closed shoes—even if you weren't anywhere near a horse.



Koejawel and Bravo were her noble steeds. They shared countless big and small moments together, with me on the ground beside them. Then Covid came. We saw a noticeable decline in Ellie's mental health and confidence — especially around people and public spaces. Apart from home, the yard became the only place she felt safe.

When Koejawel could no longer carry heavier riders, Bravo became her constant. Koejawel still held her heart, and she tried very clever ways to negotiate riding him again. Animals were always welcome in her space; humans were harder. If someone unfamiliar was around, she would often shut down — sometimes not even wanting to get out of the car. Yet, eventually, the pull of the horses was always stronger than her fear.

Last year, Ellie noticed some of the horses' fly masks were broken. I gently suggested, “Why don't you go to the horse shop and buy new ones?” The challenge was set. With careful instructions and encouragement, she and Yolandie went — and walked out with two fly masks in exactly the right colours.

This year, a volunteer named Kelsi joined us. With her quiet presence, she lingered in the background, chatting with Yolandie. Ellie noticed. She began asking questions. Soon, one of the highlights of Ellie's day became spotting “Die Groen Jeepy” — Kelsi's car. Slowly, familiarity grew. Kelsi began walking with us, and eventually, with permission, leading Bravo.



Then Ellie was encouraged to go back to the horse shop — this time to buy a red saddle pad for Bravo. And she did.

And then... Bravo passed.

One of my first worries was: who would Ellie feel safe with now? Who could step into that role?

Tornado rose to the occasion.

He stepped in for many of Bravo's children. His temperament was very different — Bravo was confident and grounded, while Tornado could be unsure in new environments. We told Ellie she was now part of Tornado's training team, helping him build confidence. A role she took serious. Saltare, led by Kelsi, joined as Tornado's co-regulator.

Ellie set a goal: to walk to the wall — a specific place on the farm. With every new distance away from the yard, we heard her gentle encouragement: "Good boy."

She became acutely aware of her own breathing when she felt nervous. We teach our kids to breathe to help calm themselves

and their horses — though Ellie's loud breathing sometimes confused Tornado, who had to learn alongside her.

A team formed around them: At times, Lara & Nadine joined in, but always Kelsi, Yolandie, myself, Tornado, Saltare, and whichever dogs were on duty that day. Step by step, they walked further. Until one day, they reached the wall.

What a victory that was.

This was a child who once couldn't tolerate one unfamiliar person in her space — now surrounded by a whole team. She greeted the farrier one day and confidently led Tornado over to where he was working. Something she would never have done before. This year, she even ventured into the new Woolworths at Tygervally — after six years of avoiding malls entirely — and walked through the whole store.

Then Lily appeared on our radar, and I saw another opportunity. Before the year closed, we encouraged Ellie to meet Lily at another farm. Not only did she go — she rode her. Three lessons. A new yard. A new horse.

Lily carried her with a soft, giant gentleness that felt strangely familiar, reminding us all of Bravo.

Walking alongside horses and witnessing the journeys of our children — literally watching them grow up — cannot be summed up in a few sentences. Our work goes far beyond the horses and the yard. It lives in consistency. In showing up. In creating safe platforms from which these children can slowly, bravely venture out into the world.

The horses are only the gateway.



GROWING TOGETHER

Facilitator training and development



One of the greatest joys this year has been watching the relationships form between our facilitators and the children they work with. Each session carries its own rhythm and connection, and it is truly special to witness the bonds that develop — built on trust, consistency, and shared presence.

Besides client/student sessions, our four facilitators intentionally invested in expanding their knowledge and skills. As opportunities arose, each of us stepped into learning spaces that would not only enrich us individually, but in turn deepen the environment we create between our clients and the horses. While we share a common purpose, our focus areas are wonderfully diverse.



Lara completed her first year of **Equine Behaviour** through the Ethology Academy — a journey she will continue into 2026. Her growing understanding of equine behaviour and communication plays a vital role in supporting both horse and human relationships within our work.

Bronwynne's focus has been on **equine bodywork**. She completed two in-depth courses with Lize Kimble, concentrating on trauma and fascia release, and also explored the foundations of the Emmett Technique with Heidi Johnson through an introductory workshop. This work adds another layer of care and attunement to the horses who support our sessions.



After completing courses in Life Coaching and registering as members of COMENSA, **Anneke** and **Sarah** attended the Trauma Trilogy Conference at CCTIC, hosted by Professional Minds. They also participated in a Childhood Anxiety workshop offered by FAMSA Western Cape, further strengthening our **trauma-informed** and **child-centered approach**.

At Equivalence, continuous professional development is not optional — it is part of our responsibility. We strive to keep learning, reflecting, and evolving so that we can show up with integrity, knowledge, and care for both our clients and our horses.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be **hosting** a three-day **Equine Assisted Therapy training** in **April 2026**, presented by Dr Jeanie Cavé. This is a meaningful step forward in deepening our practice and sharing knowledge within the wider equine-assisted community.

Growth, after all, happens best when we grow together.

ARE YOU AN MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL
OR EQUINE PROFESSIONAL?

INTERESTED IN
EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY TRAINING?

EAT TRAINING
Impact TRAINING

Equivalence is proud to host a fully CPD accredited interactive, immersive, experiential, in-person EAT training in the Western Cape through Impact Training.

Anyone is welcome to participate in the Equine Assisted Therapy training, however, you may only practice if you hold a license to provide therapy / psychotherapy and if you are collaborating with a licensed professional.

Investment: R 11,000
3 Days Training
Saturday 25th April 2026 to
Monday 27th April 2026
8AM - 11PM
Garden of Eden, Durbanville

Expert Trainer
Presented by Senior Clinical Psychologist and EAT Trainer, Dr Jeanie Cavé

Interactive Sessions
Engage in dynamic, hands-on activities that allow you to apply what you learn in real-time.

Special Offer:
R 11,500-EARLY BIRD SPECIAL
From now until February 2026
Limited Spots!

Contact Sarah Garland
to book your spot!
072 126 1096
sarah@equivalence.co.za

NPCSA CEU's and SACSP CPD's APPROVED FOR

2025 OVERVIEW

WORKSHOPS

Calm Connections

- 5 x 4-hour workshops
- Average 8 attendees per workshop
- Focus group: Adults

Adaptive & Recreational RIDING / EAL

- ± 1500 sessions
- Average age: 9 years
- ± 35 students per week

EAP

Equine Assisted Psychotherapy

- 30 x Individual Sessions
- 50-minute sessions
- Focus group: Teens & Adults

HOPE

Pro Bono

- 11 x Saturday sessions
Once/month
- 2-hour session
- 15-20 kids per session
- Focus group: 3-13 years
(Altydgedacht farm children)

BUREN HIGH SCHOOL

Pro Bono

- 3 x sessions
- 2-hour sessions
- 30 individuals
- Focus group: school personnel

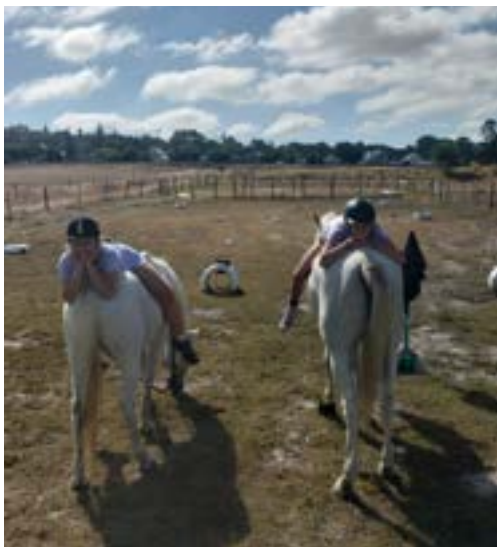
HEALING HOOVES

Funded Programme

- 3 organisations
- 6 x sessions (2-hour session)
- Average 6 participants/session
- Focus group: Care givers

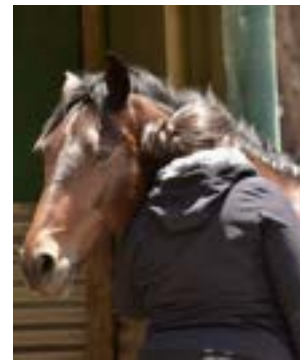
GLIMMERS

2025



Calm Connection

Understanding safety, regulation and connection



This year, our Calm Connection Series consisted of two themed workshops, each thoughtfully designed to introduce and explore the principles of Polyvagal Theory in an experiential and accessible way.

Polyvagal Theory helps us understand how our Autonomic Nervous System responds to the world around us — how sensations arise in our bodies and translate into reactions we often experience without conscious thought. While many are familiar with the fight, flight, or freeze response, an equally important concept is the Safe Zone: a regulated state where we feel grounded, connected, and able to engage with life. This is the state our nervous systems are designed to return to.

Our bodies are built to protect us. However, life experiences, upbringing, and trauma can cause the nervous system to become oversensitive to certain triggers. When this happens, we may get stuck in survival states, feeling constantly unsettled. Over time, this can present as anxiety, depression, or other mental health challenges.

By gaining a better understanding of our body's natural defense system, we can begin to work with it rather than against it.

During the workshops, we shared practical tools to help regulate these different nervous system states — exploring what influences them and how co-regulation plays a vital role. We are not meant to regulate alone; the people around us can help us return to safety and balance.

This is where the horses come in.

Horses are masters at regulating their autonomic nervous systems. Their ability to move fluidly between activation and calm offers us a powerful model of healthy regulation. Through their presence, participants were able to experience the techniques in real time — feeling regulation, rather than just talking about it.

The Calm Connection Series reminded us that understanding, safety, and connection begin in the body — and that sometimes, our greatest teachers walk on four legs.

2025 COMMUNITY GIVEBACK



This year, we continued with our Horses Outreach Program at EQuivalence (HOPE)—a community giveback initiative that has been close to our hearts since 2016.

Over the years, HOPE has taken many forms, evolving as the needs of the children and community shifted. This year, our focus centered strongly on Social and Emotional Learning — helping children explore how they feel, name their emotions, and learn healthy ways to express and use those emotions.

Once a month, between 15 and 20 children living on Altydgedact Farm arrived at the yard on a Saturday morning — often almost an hour early. The laughter, excitement, and energy they brought with them were contagious, instantly filling the space with life.

Our volunteers played a huge role in elevating each session. One of the highlights this year was a scarf-making activity initiated by Jo, followed by a movie day in our hub featuring “Inside Out”, perfectly complementing the emotional learning theme. During the colder winter months, Johanida prepared delicious “bredie” that the children thoroughly enjoyed, and continued making a conscious effort to offer something healthy to eat throughout the year.

Nadine created thoughtful and engaging worksheets that allowed the children to channel their creativity while learning, adding another layer to the experience.

Alongside this, meaningful time with the horses continued

— facilitated by Bronwynne, Christelle, Anja, and Anneke — providing moments of connection, regulation, and joy.

At one point, as session planners, we worried that the children weren’t spending enough time riding the horses. That concern shifted profoundly one day when, halfway through pony rides, we had to ground all the children because the horses were unusually unsettled. Anneke apologized to one of the kids, saying, “I’m sorry you didn’t get your ride today.” The child replied, “Maak nie saak nie tannie, solank ons net kan hier wees en kan kom.”

That moment reframed everything.

HOPE is not about how much horse time happens. It is about showing up consistently, offering a safe space to gather, to belong, and to have fun. It’s about creating good memories — moments these children can carry with them as they grow, and one day look back on and smile.

That is HOPE in action.





NATA, OUR BELOVED YARD DOG

Nata is not an unfamiliar face at the yard, though you may have seen a little less of her this year. In May, she underwent a major operation and has since been recovering off-site to ensure she had the best possible chance for healing.

Her journey began when she suddenly started hopping on three legs, unable to place any weight on one of her hind legs. Over time, Nata has become one of the truly special animals at the yard — especially for those who may not yet feel comfortable between the horses. Knowing the unique role she plays, we felt it was important to do everything we could to help her.

We took Nata to Vetscape, where she was thoroughly assessed and x-rayed. The diagnosis revealed an Achilles tendon tear, which required surgical repair. Just as critical as the operation itself was the aftercare; even a small misstep during recovery could have set her back to where she started — or worse.

What followed was a beautiful example of community in action. A dedicated team of people stepped up in various ways, offering crates,



treatments, financial support, and a safe recovery home. Each contribution played a vital role in giving Nata the care she needed.

We are happy to share that Nata is doing great. She now comes back to the farm for visits whenever we can arrange pickups and drop-offs. For her continued recovery and long-term care, she will remain with Bronwynne's family, who have been instrumental in supporting her healing journey.

And if you're wondering — Diesel and Spotty could not be happier when Nata comes to visit. She is a cherished part of our animal team and truly completes our K9 unit at the farm.

Thank you to everyone who helped make Nata's recovery possible.

HEALING HOOVES

Supporting those who support others

In the horse industry, there is a well-known saying: “No hoof, no horse.”

It speaks to the fundamental importance of hoof care — healthy hooves allow the horse’s body to be carried forward with strength and balance. Within the hoof lies a remarkable structure that helps pump blood back up the leg, stimulating circulation and supporting overall wellbeing.

This philosophy is the heart of our Healing Hooves Program.

Just as horses need strong, healthy hooves to carry them, mental health care workers need care and support themselves in order to continue carrying others. Healing Hooves was created to offer that support — to those who give endlessly to their communities.

Thanks to the generosity of an Angel Donor, we were able this year to offer mental health support sessions to three organisations. These sessions take place once a month for two hours, providing space to slow down, breathe, and reconnect. Time is spent with the horses in a calm, natural environment — offering participants an opportunity to regulate their nervous systems, reflect quietly, and focus on themselves for a change.

Heroes Academy is a remarkable organisation that provides ongoing self-development workshops and programs for boys aged fourteen to eighteen in low-income areas across South Africa.



This year, we were able to offer Heroes Academy our Tame Your Chaos workshop along with two additional sessions. Support will continue in 2026.

Etafeni Daycare Centre is a multi-purpose centre in Nyanga supporting children affected by AIDS and their caregivers. We offered two Healing Hooves sessions this year and will continue providing monthly support in 2026.

Elkana Childcare Centre focuses on transforming the lives of children living in severely adverse circumstances that impact their development and future. We facilitated one session this year for their youth care team, with an additional session planned for 2026.



In addition to these organisations, we also offered three pro-bono sessions to the staff of Buren High School at the beginning of the year. While some teachers arrived feeling sceptical about how horses could support them, many found it difficult to leave the space once the session ended — a powerful reminder of the quiet impact horses can have.

We feel deeply privileged to offer a calm, tranquil, natural space among horses — where those who give so much to others can find moments of rest, regulation, and rejuvenation for themselves. We look forward with gratitude and hope to what 2026 holds for our Healing Hooves Program.





Thank you

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

The work we do at EQuivalence would not be possible without the generosity and belief of those who see the value of our space and the profound role our horses play. Being able to offer programs at no cost to participants, provide extra care for our horses, and cover facilitator expenses is only possible through the financial backing of individuals and organisations who choose to support our vision.

VAN DEIJL
 — SINCE 1964 —

We are deeply thankful to Van Deijl, who has been donating consistently on a monthly basis for several years. Your ongoing commitment has provided stability and made a lasting impact on everything we are able to offer.

Since July, we have also been blessed by the support of an Angel Donor who came on board to support the growth of organisations and offering programs.

A heartfelt thank you goes out once again to everyone who contributed toward Nata's operation and recovery. Your generosity ensured that she received the care she needed and continues to be part of our animal team.

Finally, I am incredibly grateful to our volunteers—Nadine, Jo, Anja, Christelle, and Johanida—who gave their time, energy, and hearts to our HOPE project this year. Your willingness to show up consistently made a meaningful difference in the lives of the children we serve.

Thank you for believing in EQuivalence, in our horses, and in the quiet, powerful work that happens in this space.



Our Horse care Team

It is impossible to care for our horses without the right people around us.

Each of these individuals has contributed tremendously to the health and wellbeing of our horses — whether through hands-on care, professional expertise, guidance, or quiet, consistent support behind the scenes. In their own ways, they have ensured that our horses are seen, heard, and cared for with the respect they deserve.

Our horses carry so much for others. Having a team of people who help carry them makes all the difference. For that, we are deeply grateful.

Dr Arnold Mahne (Equispes) - Vet
 Vetscape Animal Hospital
 Theo Janssen - Hoof specialist
 Corlia Kotze - Osteopath
 Belinda Bain - Saddlefitter



That's a wrap!

Thank you for taking time to read about what we were up to during 2025 and what our hopes are for 2026.

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