



Hooves of Happiness, Inc. Business Plan 2025

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Mobile Equine Emotional Support Visits



"Spreading Joy One Tiny Hoofprint at a Time"

Palm City, Florida

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501(c)(3) Status: Pending



Executive Summary

Hooves of Happiness is a nonprofit organization founded by Lydia Vine to provide emotional support and comfort to elderly individuals and disabled veterans through structured visits with trained miniature ponies.

The mission is to bring joy, reduce loneliness, and promote well-being through the power of human–animal connection.

Vision: A world where the healing bond between people and ponies fosters emotional wellness, dignity, and happiness across generations.

Core Values: Compassion · Connection · Dignity · Respect · Service.



Organizational Overview

The organization will operate in Palm City, Florida, partnering with nursing homes, assisted living centers, and veterans' organizations.

Programs include therapeutic pony visits, volunteer training, and community education on equine-assisted emotional support.

Whenever possible, the organization will rehabilitate, train and utilize rescued miniature ponies in its programs.

Programs

- Nursing Home Visits: Gentle, interactive sessions for elderly residents.
- Veterans' Wellness Program: Focused visits to veteran centers for those coping with PTSD, trauma, or disability.
- Community Education: Presentations and workshops highlighting the benefits of equine therapy.
- Volunteer Training: Equipping volunteers in safe animal handling and compassionate communication.

Market Analysis

Target Beneficiaries

- Elderly residents in assisted living facilities
- Disabled veterans and individuals managing PTSD



- Secondary beneficiaries include caregivers and staff, who experience a more positive emotional environment.

Community Need

Loneliness and isolation among seniors and veterans are major public health concerns.

The area where OHO operates has many retirement homes and veterans centers within a 30 mile radius.

Emerging research and studies show that equine-assisted therapy improves mood, reduces anxiety, and promotes social interaction. Few organizations in Florida provide mobile equine emotional-support visits — creating a unique and valuable niche.

Program Delivery Model

1. Scheduling & Partnerships: Establish recurring partnerships with local care and veterans' facilities.
2. Visit Preparation: Miniature ponies are groomed, transported safely, and equipped for indoor or courtyard visits.
3. Therapeutic Engagement: 30–60-minute sessions involving brushing, petting, and conversation, led by Lydia and HOH's trained volunteers.
4. Feedback & Evaluation: Collect staff and participant feedback to measure emotional impact and program success.

Animal Welfare: All ponies are temperament-tested, receive regular veterinary care, and follow strict safety and hygiene protocols. The organization maintains full liability insurance and partnership agreements with each facility.



Safety protocols

- Clear rules signage; crowd management where applicable.
- Weather policy: reschedule/refund if lightning, severe heat index, or high winds.
- Incident response: documented procedures; vet on call; incident/near-miss log.
- Participant protection: staff/volunteers background checks; twoadult rule; photo consent policy.
- Accessibility: ground-level interactions; visual supports; quiet breaks; ADA-compliant access where possible.
- Animal welfare-first policy
- If a pony shows stress (tail wringing, pinned ears, pawing), remove and rotate.
- Mandatory rest day for ponies after visit.

Organizational Structure

Founder / Executive Director: Lydia Vine

Board of Directors: To include local leaders, equine professionals, and community advocates.

Program Coordinator: Manages scheduling and facility partnerships.

Volunteer Coordinator: Recruits and trains volunteers.

Veterinary Advisor: Oversees animal health and welfare.

Volunteers: Support animal handling and participant engagement.



Legal Compliance / Organization Formation

- Incorporate as a Florida nonprofit corporation; adopt bylaws and conflict-of-interest policy.
- Obtain EIN; open nonprofit bank account with dual controls.
- Apply for 501(c)(3) status with IRS. If projecting under \$50,000/year in each of the first three years, consider Form 1023-EZ; otherwise file full Form 1023.
- Register to solicit contributions with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and renew annually.

Local licensing/permits

- County/City business tax receipt; special event permits as required by municipalities or parks.
- Confirm zoning/animal ordinances for boarding location.
- USDA/APHIS
- Horses/ponies are generally not regulated under the federal Animal Welfare Act for exhibition; confirm current guidance. Maintain best-practice standards regardless.
- Insurance (work with a broker experienced in animal programs)
- General liability (events and premises)
- Animal liability and care, custody, and control
- Commercial auto for tow vehicle
- Property/equipment inland marine
- Workers' comp (if employees) and volunteer accident/medical



- Abuse and molestation coverage
- Special event/umbrella liability
- Contracts and waivers
- Client service agreement with weather/safety policies, load-in requirements, cancellation terms.
- Liability waiver/assumption of risk and photo release.
- Venue COI on request; vendor compliance checklist.

Funding Strategy

Income Sources

- Grants from community foundations and veteran-support programs
- Corporate sponsorships from local businesses and equine brands
- Individual donations through website and events
- Fund raising through platforms such as www.gofundme.com and www.zeffy.com
- Fundraising events: "Pony & Picnic" open house, benefit auctions, and photo sessions
- Branded merchandise: shirts, mugs, and calendars featuring the ponies



Sample Year-One Budget

Expense Category	Estimated Cost
Pony care, feed, veterinary	\$10,000
Transportation & insurance	\$4,500
Equipment (trailers, therapy gear)	\$10,000
Administrative & legal	\$6,500
Marketing & outreach	\$4,000
Volunteer training & uniforms	\$1,500
Total	\$36,500

Impact Measurement

Year-One Goals

- 50 facility visits
- 1,000 elderly and veteran participants served
- 20 volunteers recruited and trained
- 5 long-term facility partnerships established

Metrics

- Number of sessions and participants served
- Pre- and post-visit mood and satisfaction surveys
- Facility renewal and referral rates
- Volunteer engagement and retention statistics



Marketing & Outreach

- Website & Social Media: Share photos, stories, and volunteer opportunities.
- Local Media: Collaborate with newspapers, radio, and community TV stations.
- Community Events: Attend fairs, equestrian shows, and veteran gatherings.
- Strategic Partnerships: Connect with the VA, AARP chapters, and other nonprofits serving seniors and veterans.

Sustainability Plan

- Develop a recurring donor program ("Friends of Hooves").
- Apply for multi-year grants and foundation funding.
- Build a strong volunteer leadership pipeline.
- Expand outreach to neighboring counties as resources grow.
- Long-term vision: establish a permanent equine-therapy training and education center.

Conclusion

Hooves of Happiness is dedicated to spreading joy and emotional healing — one hoofprint at a time.

Through compassion, expertise, and the gentle presence of miniature ponies, the organization will provide meaningful and measurable emotional support to two of society's most deserving groups: our elders and our veterans.



About the Founder



Lydia Vine is a lifelong equestrian and a Certified Equine Therapy Practitioner based in Palm City, Florida.

Her deep passion for both horses and helping others inspired her to found Hooves of Happiness — a nonprofit dedicated to sharing the healing power of miniature ponies with the elderly and disabled veterans.

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