

# 2023-2024 PROJECT HORSESHOE FARM ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

## *A Letter From The Director*

Dear Friends of Horseshoe Farm,

At the end of a recent clinic day, a medical student and I were discussing the patients we had seen that day. Though the patients' stories varied, a good number clearly struggled with loneliness, isolation, or chaotic or abusive relationships. Many had experienced childhood neglect or emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Several said they had no one in their lives who they could talk with or lean on through their struggles.



Most physicians recognize that patients with similar relational experiences and stories make up a large portion of patients we see every day in clinics, emergency rooms, and hospitals. These patients include isolated and lonely elderly individuals, people with multiple chronic medical illnesses, and people living with mental illness. Highlighting these challenges, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy estimated that loneliness and social isolation have roughly the same negative health impact as smoking 15 cigarettes per day. So what to do? How can we help ease the distress and help the suffering of these patients?

The current healthcare system is structured around a narrow range of options – prescribe medicines, order tests, perform procedures, or make referrals to specialists. One of the main sources of frustration and inefficiency in the system is that these options are not well matched to the actual needs of the many patients we see nearly every day.

To help with this problem, in 2013 Horseshoe Farm launched our signature “Health Partners” program. Each of our Fellows is paired with 7-10 seniors, adults living with chronic illnesses (often including mental illness), or other vulnerable or isolated individuals. Fellows provide consistent, caring, and empathic relationships while providing home visits, taking their Health Partners for walks and encouraging healthier behaviors, giving rides and accompanying their Partners to doctor’s visits, and providing support in other ways.

Health Partners benefit from the gift of time, presence, and care from Fellows while Fellows develop important social, emotional, and humanistic skills needed for lives of service and leadership. Additionally, Fellows gain a deeper empathy for the many challenges our vulnerable neighbors face. Finally, by volunteering to help our vulnerable neighbors, Fellows tangibly improve the function of the healthcare system and help to strengthen the social fabric in local communities.

I hope you enjoy this year’s newsletter highlighting some of the stories from Horseshoe Farm’s “Health Partners” program. The program is reasserting the enormously underappreciated importance of healthy relationships as an intervention to improve the health and quality of life of our neighbors who often need these relationships most.

Sincerely,

John Dorsey, M.D



Project Horseshoe Farm Welcomes Our  
**2023-2024 FELLOWS**



**GREENSBORO, AL**

- Andrew Gao - *Pomona College*
- Eli Blinchevsky - *University of Texas, Austin*
- Gabriella Hopper - *University of Virginia*
- Walker Ferry - *Washington University, St. Louis*
- Jacquelyn Campos-Araujo - *Pitzer College*
- Jenna Hartstein - *University of California, Los Angeles*
- Karley Belanger - *University of Maryland*
- Mackenzie Christensen (2nd year) - *Hamilton College*
- Thara Ayyar - *University of Texas, Austin*



**PERRY COUNTY, AL**

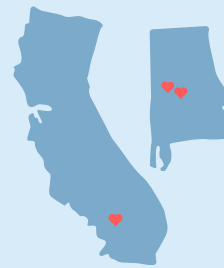
- Chris Cho (2nd year) - *Vassar College*
- Elijah Miller-Wilson - *Bowdoin College*
- Jason Cobert - *University of Rochester*
- Mary Sophia Reich (2nd year) - *Dartmouth College*
- Ryley Boddeker-O'Connor - *Northwestern University*
- Sam Somerville - *University of the South, Sewanee*



**POMONA, CA**

- Brian Egan - *University of Georgia*
- Gillian Northrup - *University of Southern California*
- Katherine Hurd - *University of Alabama*
- Andrea Torres - *University of Alabama, Birmingham*
- Neeral Patel - *University of Alabama, Birmingham*

# Updates From Our Three Sites



## GREENSBORO, AL

We are grateful for our long-standing relationship with Greensboro Schools and Hale County Board of Education. In addition to our work with small groups of students in elementary school classrooms, we have re-launched after school programming at the Horseshoe Farm community center.

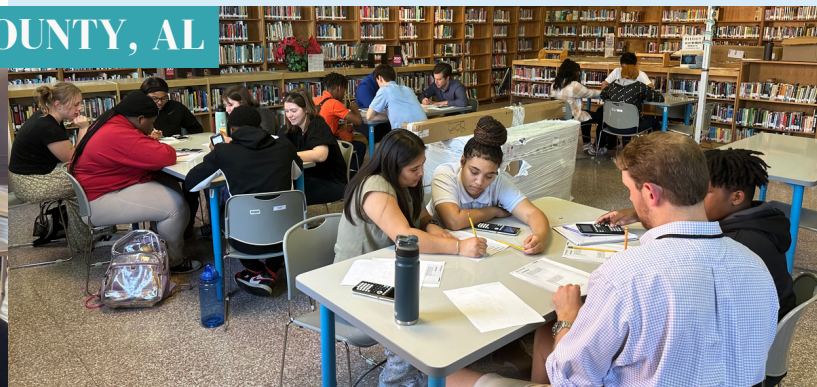


The Horseshoe Farm Enhanced Independent Living Housing program continues to thrive with the hard work and commitment of Fellows, the leadership of Sarah Hallmark, and the courage and strength of the ladies who call it home. We are so grateful to Auburn University's Rural Studio for the beautiful additional units they designed and built to allow us to provide more living options to suit the needs of different women.



## PERRY COUNTY, AL

Our community center program in Marion continues to grow for people of all ages. We are so grateful for our new larger community center space with a kitchen that allows the team to host events like a community Thanksgiving (photo above). We are also now able to provide more transportation to the center, including to residents from the local nursing homes.



We are grateful for our continued partnership with R.C. Hatch Elementary School in Uniontown. In addition to our work with the school, this year we started after school programming at our Marion community center, and Fellows began weekly ACT tutoring sessions for juniors and seniors at Francis Marion High School (photo above). Students attend the tutoring during their free period in the school's library, and they are eager to work on practice problems with Fellows.



## POMONA, CA

We are grateful for our partnership with Pomona Hope, an after-school program catering to children from Kindergarten through High School. We provide tutoring and small group work focused on mentoring and creative learning. In the coming year, we are excited to extend our work with Pomona Hope by offering personalized guidance for college and career pursuits for high school juniors and seniors.



Our support of the Washington Community Center in Pomona has made it a familial atmosphere where we have seen attendance increase and reach maximum capacity. Here the participants eagerly gather, excited to connect with Fellows, staff, and other participants and engage in the day's activities and conversations.

# PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT - HEALTH PARTNERS

*"The Health Partners program has been a light in my life. It's a joy to meet with Jacqui and talk with her, and not only Jacqui but all the fellows -- just learning all about where they are from, seeing them and sharing with them every week."*

**Willette Carter - Health Partner, Greensboro, AL**

*"I've had the opportunity of learning each individual's story, admiring their strength and resilience. Being someone they can trust, rely on, and be vulnerable with is a role I cherish, and I appreciate their openness in letting me into their lives. Seeing everyone set and work towards their goals has been amazing. A special thank you to Ms. Willette for introducing me to the world of cross-stitching. The beautiful pieces we've created together will be cherished and carried with me always."*

**Jacqui Campos-Araujo - Greensboro Horseshoe Farm Fellow**

*"The medical system today is a complicated place to navigate, even for those without significant psychosocial barriers. The Horseshoe Farm Health Partners program is a blessing to many of my patients who have these difficulties as it provides them with a stable, compassionate person who can provide guidance and clarity. The Health Partners act as an extension of the clinic into the patients' homes. It provides a true sense of neighbors helping neighbors, which is the mission of Hale County Hospital."*

**Megan Bonds, M.D. - Chief of Medical Staff,**

**Hale County Hospital, Greensboro, AL (Horseshoe Farm Alumnus '13)**



Willette Carter (left) and Jacqui Campos-Araujo (right)



Ophelia Reed (left) and Andrew Gao (right)

*"I enjoy that any place that I have to go, they will go with me... If I need someone to talk things over, we sit and talk... It's just amazing how sweet Andrew is."*

**Ophelia Reed - Health Partner, Greensboro, AL**

*"I absolutely love getting to know all my Health Partners and their intimate stories. It is not only me helping them, but them helping me. I am so glad that I am now a part of their lives."*

**Andrew Gao - Greensboro Horseshoe Farm Fellow**

*"The Health Partners program brings a restored sense of community and what it means to care for one another through the every-day, moment-by-moment challenges that greatly impact health and wellbeing. During a recent ER shift, I saw a Fellow simply being present with one of my vulnerable patients which reminded the patient she was not alone; presence is powerful."*

**Anna Lovett, M.D. - Hale County Hospital, Greensboro, AL**

*I like the Health Partners program. My Health Partner helps me get my medicine. When I feel sad, she helps me feel better. When I go to the doctor's office, and when my blood pressure goes up, she helps me doing those deep breaths and that makes the pressure go down. I like everything, it helps you get out of the house and gives you peace of mind.*

**Sheila Williams - Health Partner, Marion, AL (Perry County)**

*I am constantly inspired by Ms. Sheila's resilience. I admire her steadfast commitment to her family and her compassion for others. Through the Health Partners program, I have learned the importance of patience, consistency, and empathetic listening when building supportive relationships.*

**Ryley Boddeker O' Connor- Perry County Horseshoe Farm Fellow**

*Horseshoe Farm's integrative community approach to the broken healthcare system and the ways the Fellows are plugged in holistically with their patient partners has impacted many lives. Fellows spend much of their time closely building relationships, coordinating patient appointments in order to reduce no-show rates, transporting patients to see their providers, and so much more. I am beyond grateful for this program, and how they have made a dent in the universe one patient at a time"*

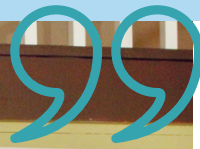
**Katlyn Norris - Physician Assistant, Cahaba Medical Care, Marion, AL**



Sheila Williams (left) and Ryley Boddeker O' Connor (right)



**Sam Somerville (left) and Mathaleen Gooden (right)**



*“Sam helps me, he’s a good fellow. He helps me go around and shop, he takes me to the doctor. He’s nice to me and comes and sees me. He’s a good fellow, he’s nice and cares about me. But I hate next year when he do leave, I’ll miss him next year. I like when he sits and visits. Sometimes we sit around and visit, sometimes he takes me to the doctor. I love the both ways he sees me.”*

**Mathaleen Gooden - Health Partner, Marion, AL (Perry County)**

*“Developing a Health Partner relationship with Ms. Mathaleen continues to reward, move, and challenge me. With her larger than life personality, and her ability to make her presence known in any room she walks into, I feel very lucky to be able to be a part of her life and work towards her health goals with her. To see a relationship that you’ve formed start to have tangible effects on the health of a friend is a really incredible thing to observe.”*

**Sam Somerville - Perry County Horseshoe Farm Fellow**

*“The Health Partner program through Project Horseshoe Farm is a huge asset to our community! So many of my patients are challenged with transportation issues, poor social support, and health illiteracy. The Health Partners program addresses all of these issues and allows us to better care for our patients. Sam has made a huge difference in the life of his Health Partner — bringing her to appointments, picking up her medications, visiting her in the hospital, and communicating with her family and long term care facilities. The attention and care he shows her is such a kindness.”*

**Hannah Zahedi, M.D. - Vaughan Marion Clinic, Marion, AL**

*“The Fellows have helped our family through our hardest time. It’s like a complete 360 that the kids have done. Their social skills are amazing now. They talk to everybody and are more outgoing now. It’s the best feeling for me that I’ve gotten as a mother, to see that my kids are thriving and doing better than before, so thank you.”*

**Juana Nuñez and her children Joseph and Jennifer - Health Partners, Pomona, CA**

*“The relationships I have with each of my Health Partners are special in their own way — they really have welcomed me into their lives as one of their own.”*

*“Seeing my Health Partners grow and change over time is incredibly rewarding. I love learning more about them each week and supporting their health journey.”*

**Neeral Patel and Gillian Northrup - Pomona Horseshoe Farm Fellows**

*“The Horseshoe fellows have proven to be a consistent presence in the lives of our students and have made great strides in building personal connections not only with the students, but their families as well. With this in mind, referring families as Health Partners has been a doubtless decision. The intentionality that the fellows provide in serving others makes us confident that these families are in good hands.”*

**Miriam De La Torre - Youth Program Outreach Director, Pomona, CA**



**Neeral Patel (left), Joseph, Jennifer, Gillian Northrup (right)**



**Brian Egan (left) and Johnny Cortez (right)**



*“Working with my Health Partners gives me peace. They keep me alive spiritually and encourage me. Every time I see them I feel blessed.”*

**Johnny Cortez - Health Partner, Pomona, CA**

*“I am thankful for the relationship I have formed with Mr. Cortez as he inspires me daily with his resilient and selfless nature. The impact we have on each other is what makes the Health Partners program so special.”*

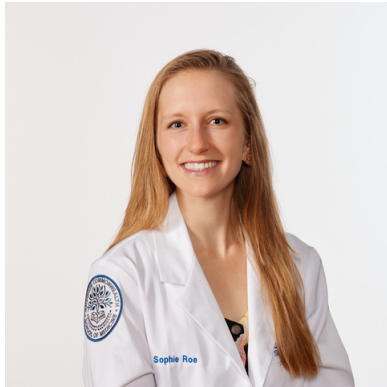
**Brian Egan - Pomona Horseshoe Farm Fellow**

*“Social aspects can be a barrier to health care and can be a determinant of health. By helping with high need patients, the Health Partners program enhances the overall healthcare outcomes and well-being of the community, alleviating some of the burdens that might otherwise overwhelm our clinic. The work that they provide is vital to the wellbeing of patients within our care.”*

**Christian Custodio, DNPc - Family Nurse Practitioner, Reddy Care Medical, Pomona, CA**



# Alumni Spotlight

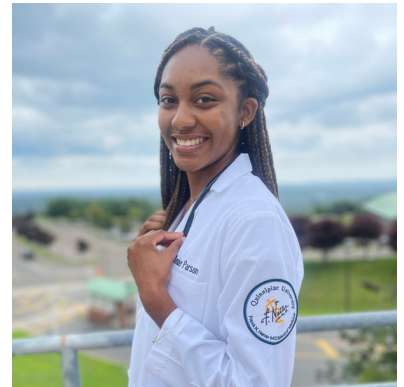


*"From my time at Horseshoe Farm I learned that public health interventions should be specific to communities they serve. I also learned about teamwork, conflict mediation in teams, and the importance of every team member being fully engaged in the program's mission. I am hoping to earn an MPH in a gap year between my third and fourth years of medical school. I am currently interested in combined internal medicine and psychiatry or family medicine and psychiatry programs. And then perhaps a community psychiatry or addiction medicine fellowship? I hope to use my education and experience in public health to build programs to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness and people with substance use disorders using a community engagement framework."*

**Sophie Roe - 2019-2020 Pomona Fellow  
Second Year Medical Student  
Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine**

*"As a Horseshoe Farm Fellow, I am glad to have been part of continuing dialogues with people about community and health. The relationship-oriented nature of the fellowship and its programs has thus been helpful in shaping me into a future physician that is able to develop longitudinal relationships which holistically support and empower others. I am currently looking to explore entering a field in primary care such as pediatrics or family medicine following my next few years in medical school. I am also hoping to get involved in health policy and community engaged initiatives throughout my career journey."*

**Amber Parson - 2022-2023 Perry County Fellow  
First Year Medical Student  
Frank H. Netter M.D. School of Medicine**



*"My time as a Horseshoe Farm Fellow shaped my understanding of how closely health and community health are intertwined with social factors. The experience of working and building personal connections in Greensboro has had a major impact on my growth, both as a doctor and also as a person. It helped me develop skills in leadership, adaptability, and relationship-building that I continue to use every day as a psychiatry resident. Next year, I'm going to do a Women's Mental Health/Perinatal Psychiatry Fellowship in Providence, RI and plan to become a psychiatrist who specializes in working with patients who are pregnant, postpartum, or hoping to become pregnant."*

**Molly Chodakewitz, M.D. - 2015-2016 Greensboro Fellow  
Program Chief Resident  
Harvard University Psychiatry Residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center**

## 1st Annual Alumni Gathering



In spring of 2023, past Horseshoe Farm Fellows and Interns traveled from across the country for a wonderful weekend of reuniting and reminiscing, seeing old friends, meeting alumni from other classes, and meeting current Fellows. Thank you to Brooke Hess (HSF '19) and Michelle McKinlay (HSF '18) for doing an incredible job organizing the weekend and leading our alumni association. Please reach out to Brooke and Michelle ([alumni@projecthsf.org](mailto:alumni@projecthsf.org)) with any updates in your contact information or if you would like to be involved in applicant interviews, recruitment, speaking with current Fellows, or getting involved in other ways.

# IN MEMORIAM

remembering the Health Partners we lost this past year



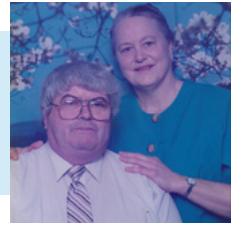
**ANNIE COLEMAN**

SEPTEMBER 12, 1946 — MAY 31, 2023



**MARY COLLINS**

JULY 2, 1927 — DECEMBER 23, 2022



**ELIZABETH COCHRAN JOHNSON**

APRIL 17, 1944 — SEPTEMBER 15, 2023



**JIMMY JONES**

JUNE 24, 1953 — JULY 7, 2023



**JULIA MARSH**

NOVEMBER 1, 1927 — MARCH 30, 2023



**ROBERTA SILVA**

AUGUST 2, 1959 — SEPTEMBER 6, 2023



**GILBERT TOLEDO**

JUNE 26, 1951 — SEPTEMBER 17, 2023



**WILLIE NELL WASHINGTON**

FEBRUARY 27, 1957 — AUGUST 14, 2023



**GREG WOOD**

JULY 28, 1950 — NOVEMBER 19, 2022

# INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST SITE DIRECTOR, *LASHANDA RICHARDSON*

Born and raised in Demopolis, Alabama, LaShanda has known since childhood that her purpose was to help others. LaShanda came to Horseshoe Farm after serving in adult and youth services programs and later as the Service Supervisor leading a team of caseworkers at Marengo County Department of Human Resources. Since joining Horseshoe Farm in June, 2023, LaShanda has hit the ground running, getting to know the Greensboro community, diving into programming, and leading and teaching the team of Greensboro Fellows.

**We are so grateful to have LaShanda as part of the Horseshoe Farm team!**



**Mary Sophia Reich**



**Christopher Cho**



**Mackenzie Christensen**

*meet our Senior Fellows  
completing their  
second year with  
Project Horseshoe Farm*

## LEADERSHIP & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### LEADERSHIP DONORS

*We want to thank the many individuals, foundations, and organizations whose generosity has been critical to supporting and sustaining Horseshoe Farm's work. We would especially like to thank and recognize the following **Leadership Donors and Supporters** for putting their trust in Horseshoe Farm and for their extremely generous contributions:*



**Sarah Hallmark**  
Assistant Director



**LaShanda Richardson**  
Greensboro Site Director



**Jennifer McMillan**  
Perry County Site Director



**Nicole Zermeno**  
Pomona Site Director

- Mr. Julian Abdey and Mrs. Sabrina Moyle
- Adam Clark and Meagan Yoshimoto-Clark, The Ebbtide Family Fund
- Alabama Business Charitable Trust Fund
- Anne B. LaRussa Foundation of Hope
- AT&T of Alabama
- Alabama Black Belt Foundation
- Alabama Civil Justice Foundation
- Alabama Power Foundation
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Dr. Ann Bahrani
- Benny and Anne LaRussa, Sr. Family Charitable Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation
- Black Belt Community Foundation
- Caring Foundation - BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama
- Mr. Robert Cavill
- Dr. Jeffrey Chodakewitz and Dr. Vera Wolowodiuk
- Daniel Foundation of Alabama
- Dr. Ray Dorsey and Ms. Zena Shuber
- Dr. Richard and Mrs. Sally Dorsey
- Dr. Nathan and Mrs. Lisa Every
- Fidelity Charitable
- Fox Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Mike and Brenda Fuller
- Mrs. Lisa Glass
- Dr. Daniel Huang and Mrs. Ling H. Pan
- James I. Harrison Family Foundation/Renaissance Marion
- Jessie Ball duPont Fund through Auburn University's Rural Studio
- JHM Roddy Foundation
- John and Ilene Kennedy Foundation
- John and Mary Franklin Foundation
- Mr. Peter Kaufman
- Mrs. Anne B. LaRussa
- Mrs. Mary Lawson
- Mr. Hunter Lewis
- Mr. Bartley McCorquodale
- Dr. Gwenyth Jaye McCorquodale Charitable Giving Fund
- Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation
- Ms. Lindsey Miller
- Dr. Gautam and Mrs. Mrid Mishra
- Mr. Barry Noebel
- Peoples Bank of Greensboro
- Mrs. Carroll Phelps
- Praktikos Institute
- Protective Life Foundation
- Mrs. Frances Roberts
- Dr. Virginia Saft
- Mrs. Carolyn Walthall Smith
- Mr. and Mrs. Murray and Nancy Smith
- Mr. and Mrs. Joe and Murray South
- Dr. Austin and Lucie Temple
- Theodore Cross Family Charitable Foundation
- Tombigbee RC&D Council
- Mr. and Mrs. Jim and Lois Turnipseed through Auburn University's Rural Studio
- United Way of West Alabama
- Uniti
- Vulcan Materials Foundation
- Mr. and Mrs. Tom and Twyla Walthall

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Tom Dwyer, MBA**  
Director of Financial Planning, Amherst College

**Susie Harris**  
Community Relations Manager, Hale, Greene, and Pickens Counties, Alabama Power

**John A. Dorsey, MD, MBA**  
Psychiatrist, Hale County Hospital

**Marietta Holmes**  
Public Information Officer,  
Marion Military Institute

**Michael Ryans**  
Superintendent, Hale County Schools

**Frances Roberts**  
Community Leader,  
Demopolis/Greensboro Alabama