

Not Without Challenges

I recently shared this phrase with some fellow fundraising professionals: “Doing good is hard.” Why is that?

Nonprofits like the Reining Horse Foundation (RHF) exist to solve problems, fulfill needs and serve communities. The work delivers satisfaction for staff, volunteers and donors, or else people wouldn’t continue to do it.

What specifically makes it hard? For me, the tendency to instantly criticize programs and activities tops the list. Where is this seen most? Social media.

Gone are the days when the average person with a question, concern, disagreement or idea communicates to learn or effect change. Many find it easier to take to social media and seed discord. Even when their comments hold misinformation, it can be challenging to counter that kind of messaging.

Another challenge is for organizations to constantly evolve. Nonprofit is a tax status not a business plan. Like their for-profit counterparts, nonprofits must remain nimble, as well as plan, execute and operate as sound businesses. Staying relevant in today’s business environment requires creativity.

For board volunteers and staff, the demands of striving for success are ever present, with no off season. In addition to fundraising, attention must be paid to core programs and impact — taking it all back to mission. Constituents are often unaware of the hours of planning and work that go into thoughtful decision-making.

Thankfully, the good outweighs the hard by far. Serving as the RHF’s executive director since

April 2017 and as chief fundraiser prior to that, I am thrilled to share that your reining foundation has many bright spots.

I’m impressed by volunteer leaders, past and present, who have believed in the importance of the RHF since 2001. Naturally, these include our founders and decades of volunteer board members. The commitment extends beyond that to youth reiners, show managers, affiliates and NRHA members at all levels around the globe. They show support in ways small and big that have added up to the RHF being in its strongest position ever.

In 2023, the RHF awarded a record dollar amount in grants to reiners in need through the Dale Wilkinson Memorial Crisis Fund. Another record \$70,000 in scholarships was available. I can also tell you the organization has plans for greater impact in the near and long-term future.

In 20 more years, this could feel like it was just the beginning. There is a plan and vision to fulfill the mission, which is: We care for and honor our reining community. So, while doing good is hard, the rewards are great. The RHF is not stopping now!



Leslie Baker
RHF Executive Director

To donate, visit reiningfoundation.com, or contact the RHF at 405-946-7400, ext. 106, or rhf@nrha.com.



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