



HIPPOTHERAPY

Goals

To help Kharberd Orphanage advance their hippotherapy program, which will enable children with disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, autism and Down syndrome to decrease depression, become more physically active, and improve their concentration and social interaction skills.

Objectives

- To purchase a special carriage designed for group hippotherapy sessions.
- To purchase a specific saddle needed to attach said carriage to a horse.

Project Description & Background

Located just a few miles outside of Yerevan, Kharberd Orphanage is home to around 240 children with different physical and mental disabilities. The orphanage also owns 5 horses, which are trained to do hippotherapy with children who have cerebral palsy, autism, and Down syndrome.

Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational, or speech and language therapy treatment that utilizes equine movement. Hippotherapy literally means "treatment with the help of the horse" from the Greek word "hippos," which means horse. Specially trained physical and occupational therapists use this type of treatment for clients with movement dysfunction and cognition problems. In hippo therapy, the movement of the horse influences the patient. The patient is positioned on the horse and actively responds to the horse's movements¹.

This particular program started at Kharberd in 2012. Three therapists at the orphanage are specifically trained in hippotherapy and are currently working with five to six other staff therapists to conduct therapy sessions for sixty children. Children are separated into different groups according to their disabilities so treatment is tailored appropriately. In the case of cerebral palsy, for example, the most important aspect is to help kids increase their mobility and become more physically active, whereas for children with autism the therapy is tailored to help them improve their focus and concentration.

These therapy sessions are beneficial for the kids in Kharberd Orphanage not only physically, but in psychological and cognitive ways, as well. The children here are relatively isolated from their community and the rest of the world. They have no family and the orphanage is their only home. As orphans they are already in a situation that can bring on depressive feelings and these can be deepened when struggling with a disability. In this respect, horses have become part of the "family" at the orphanage through which children can find meaning in their lives, ease their pain and find some joy or relief.

To advance the tremendous work the therapists in the orphanage do, Ayo! is raising funds to purchase a special carriage so they will be able to conduct group therapy sessions. This will not only enable therapists to impact more children overall, but it will also enable the children to interact with each other during the sessions. Communication between the children is very important. Group hippotherapy will encourage healthy communication between these children during therapy sessions and create a more friendly atmosphere. With the introduction of a carriage, therapy sessions will be better suited to improve mobility and focus, as well as social skills.

1. <http://www.childrenstheraplay.org/hippotherapy>

Budget

ITEM	QTY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL USD
Carriage	1	\$3,000 + 33% tax*	\$3,990
Specialized Saddle	1	\$168	\$168
Transportation	1	\$105	\$105

*According to the Armenian Law of Income Tax 10(6), given our contract, we as the buyer are required to absorb sales tax on behalf of the carriage builder.

GRAND TOTAL OF THE PROJECT

\$4,263