



Client:
Hold Your Horses



SECURING YOUR NONPROFIT'S FUTURE

Before Cozen O'Connor began representing Hold Your Horses (HYH) on a pro bono basis, HYH had spent years bouncing around from place to place, disrupting the lives of their already vulnerable clients, and sometimes balancing care and mission with the concerns of the property owners who loaned them temporary space. HYH provides equine-facilitated psychotherapy to people with a range of physical, cognitive, emotional, communication, and sensory impairments. Horses (and a psychologist and occupational therapist) work with kids, teens and adults to improve their physical condition and communication, self-regulation, and coping skills; riding horses provides movement in a way that engages young children and a slightly high-risk activity that holds teens' interest; learning the steps involved in caring for a horse builds confidence.

But last Spring, HYH concluded that it would have to stop providing its services if it could not move into a permanent space of its own. A donor offered approximately \$300,000 toward the purchase of a horse farm from which to operate, but the complexity of the transaction remained daunting. The acquisition only became possible when Steven Katkov got deeply involved. Steven negotiated multiple real estate agreements (an early access agreement, a lease agreement, and a purchase agreement). He also negotiated and prepared mortgage documents that provided financing on top of the original gift. Finally, he convinced the board to amend and restate bylaws to meet new statutory provisions and ultimately did a complete triage on the organization.

Executive Director of HYH Janet Weisberg, a licensed occupation therapist who is also board-certified in hippotherapy — using horses' movement to help the kids walk, talk, and breathe better -- said that moving to their own property was like "opening the curtain on a new performance ... there was a great energy change, and staff, parents, and volunteers invested in a way they couldn't before. Without Cozen O'Connor's pro bono work, we wouldn't have been able to do this. We might have had to close our doors."

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