

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

2022 - 2023

Dear Friends of Horseshoe Farm,

Thirteen years ago, three college seniors somehow convinced their parents that it would be a good idea to come to rural Alabama to spend a year volunteering with an unestablished new nonprofit organization with a curious name. In spite of their housing not being complete, living without central heat through one of the coldest winters in Alabama history, and not having a clear sense of what they would be doing, these three founding Fellows spent the year getting to know a wide range of people in the community, volunteering and helping to lead after school programs, and successfully launching what became Horseshoe Farm's first enhanced independent living program for women.

Since then, more than 150 top recent college graduates from around the country have offered 250,000+ hours of their time, talents, and energies to this rigorous year of volunteer service and learning. These emerging citizen service leaders help children and vulnerable adults while learning about the intricate relational and humanistic aspects of service. They hone teamwork and leadership skills as they learn about effective ways to work with local communities and their key institutions. They engage and participate as citizens in communities as they learn how their efforts, hard work, and sacrifice contribute to a broader framework of community health.

The impact of these efforts has been far reaching over the years. Horseshoe Farm Fellows work closely with the leadership team of Hale County Hospital and helped our small rural county achieve the third highest COVID vaccination rate among all counties in Alabama. Fellows work closely with teachers at Greensboro Elementary School and helped more than 80% of students paired with Fellows achieve better than expected reading gains even in the midst of tragic learning losses due to COVID. Fellows now provide weekly support to nearly 170 seniors, adults living with mental illness, and other isolated or vulnerable adults in our innovative "Health Partners" program. They also work with 4 nursing homes, 2 enhanced independent living housing programs, and 4 community centers to provide volunteer support, assistance with recreational activities, social support, and one-on-one visits with isolated individuals.

In 2018, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) worked with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to study health outcomes in areas covered by the ARC and found Hale County to have better than expected results in 15 of 19 measures. In designating Hale County as the only "Bright Spot" county in Appalachian Alabama, the report identified Horseshoe Farm as one of several local organizations working together to help to address social factors that impact health and to leverage limited resources to meet community needs.

It is clear that communities across our nation are in need of the next generation of citizen service leaders and new approaches to improving community health. With the hard work, sacrifice, and effort of our Fellows, the leadership and teaching of our outstanding Site Directors, and the collaboration with our wonderful partner communities (in Pomona, California, Perry County, Alabama, and Greensboro, Alabama), Horseshoe Farm is creating a new institutional form for preparing these future leaders and building on the strengths of local communities. Please join us in continuing to support this important work that we believe has only just begun - thank you.

Sincerely,



John Dorsey, M.D.



NEWSLETTER

December 2022

WELCOMING OUR 2022-2023 FELLOW CLASS



GREENSBORO, AL

Ally Lehmann - University of Virginia
Chloe Craig - Davidson College
Emma Ellis - University of Georgia
Fedra Britvic - University of California, Berkeley
Hermela Beyene - University of Georgia
Jumoke Sanusi - University of South Alabama
Lauren Widmann - Rice University
Lila Williams - Harvard University
Mackenzie Christensen - Hamilton College
Marina Badir - University of Georgia
Sonja Lazovic - Amherst College
Tommy Oddo - University of Rochester

Amber Parson - Brown University
Breanna Goodjoines -
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Chris Cho - Vassar College
Mary Sophia Reich - Dartmouth College
Sophie Lewis - Bowdoin College

PERRY COUNTY, AL

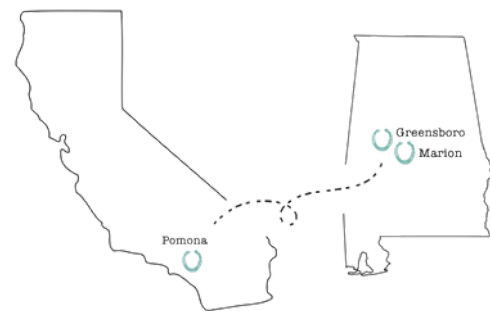


POMONA, CA

Alyssa Fuentes - Stanford University
Isabel Ball - Bowdoin College
Jay Kang - Dartmouth College
Ria Subramanian - University of Illinois at Chicago
Samantha Mayadunna - Wagner College
Samira Asseh - Northwestern University

FELLOW VOICES

Quotes from Current and Past Fellows



"Throughout my life I have seen many physicians open up a clinic to practice or practice at the hospital. Since being at Horseshoe Farm, it has been neat to see the concept of "community health" be played out in Greensboro. It has opened my eyes to create visions of the type of setting I hope to be in as a future physician. Additionally, it has helped me learn what it means to be a active citizen service leader within my community."

-Jumoke Sanusi, 2022-2023 HSF Fellow



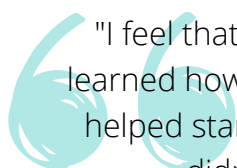
"I wanted to become a Fellow because I was eager for a year of intensive service. I found that I had become increasingly self-focused during college. I wanted to make a change after graduation, yielding myself to others instead of prioritizing my desires. I hoped a year of service would cultivate habits of mind and action that I could carry through my life as a citizen servant leader."

-Lila Williams, 2022-2023 HSF Fellow



"I am so grateful for the variety of interactions built into the fellowship, from tutoring to community program planning to one-on-one socializing to helping out other organizations and groups in town. It's hard to pick only one favorite because I specifically so value the dynamic and holistic picture of life in Greensboro that this paints for me. Understanding each dimension feels crucial to getting an integrated, people-centered approach to not only healthcare, but any act of service."

-Sonja Lazovic, 2022-2023 HSF Fellow



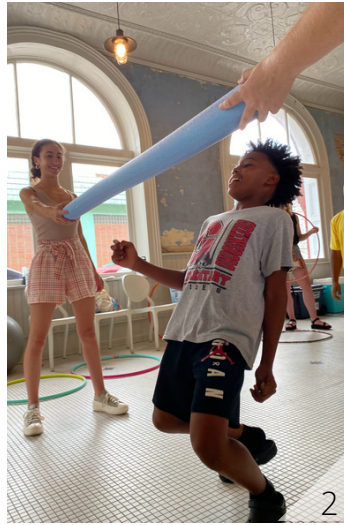
"I feel that my time at Horseshoe Farm influenced my future career. We learned how to adapt to challenging circumstances and be creative as we helped start a new organization (although we did threaten to strike if we didn't get at least one air-conditioned room to work in during the Alabama summer). We learned the importance of trying even when things get hard. These leadership skills have allowed me to be flexible, determined, and creative in my leadership roles."

-Katie Jordan, 2009-2010 HSF Founding Fellow (Inaugural Class)



GREENSBORO, AL

EST. 2007



(3) The Greensboro site has two enhanced, independent living homes that support women, including those living with mental illnesses.



(2, 4) Fellows assist teachers in the local elementary school three times a week, providing mentorship and small group instruction in math. They also serve as role models for their several youth Health Partners, who are in elementary, middle, or high school. This year, Fellows have begun working with the captains of the Greensboro High School Football Team and have launched the Project Horseshoe Farm Leadership & Service Academy.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: BLACK BELT FOOD PROJECT & RURAL STUDIO FARM



Sarah Cole's Black Belt Food Project and Abadir's have brought a new spark of energy to the wonderful food culture of our region. Sarah, whose father is from Demopolis and whose mother is from Egypt, draws on ingredients and flavors from her southern heritage as well as her north African roots to create truly original delights. She started Black Belt Food Project as a nonprofit to foster opportunities and connection through positive food experiences. Two Horseshoe Farm Fellows volunteer ½ day per week with the Black Belt Food Project and the Rural Studio Farm in a wonderful partnership with these organizations. Each week, Rural Studio Farm and its incredible Farm Manager Eric Ball graciously donate fresh produce that is distributed at the Horseshoe Farm community center. The Fellows describe how much they enjoy their work on the Rural Studio Farm and Black Belt Food Project and how inspiring it has been to support Sarah as she has turned her vision into a reality.

PERRY COUNTY, AL

EST. 2018



(1, 2, 5) The Fellows in Perry County have enjoyed watching the community center programs grow this year. They now lead dominoes tournaments, exercise activities, and arts & crafts two days a week. Favorite activities among the participants include Balloon Volleyball and Family Feud.

(3, 4) As part of the Health Partners Program, Fellows provide support to community members who are isolated, vulnerable, or living with mental illness. Fellows help their Health Partners work towards educational, health, and social goals. Fellows visit the homes of their Health Partners, attend their medical appointments, accompany them on a walk, provide social support, and encourage other healthy behaviors.



COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SOWING SEEDS OF HOPE

Sowing Seeds of Hope (SSOH) is a local nonprofit that was founded on the belief that Perry County's future could be as rich as its Black Belt soil. SSOH has improved the health, housing, and resources available to residents by providing education, economic development, and concrete support around these areas. A Fellow spends ½ day per week with SSOH and works closely with Frances Ford, the Perry County Healthcare Coordinator, to invest in health promotion for the area. She co-hosts a health topics segment on a local radio show, assists with weekly blood pressure clinics, and supports various community health events that are put on by SSOH. Fellows also volunteer at SSOH community events, such as health fairs and diabetes support groups.



POMONA, CA

EST. 2020



(2) Gustavo "Gus" Ramirez is one of the participants in Horseshoe Farm's Health Partners program. As he has navigated several challenges in his life, he always expresses his gratitude for the social and emotional support provide by the Fellows and Horseshoe Farm. Gus is currently writing a mini poetry book, compiling a resource page for those in need, and is working towards becoming a motivational speaker. Overall, we love having Gus in the Health Partners program!

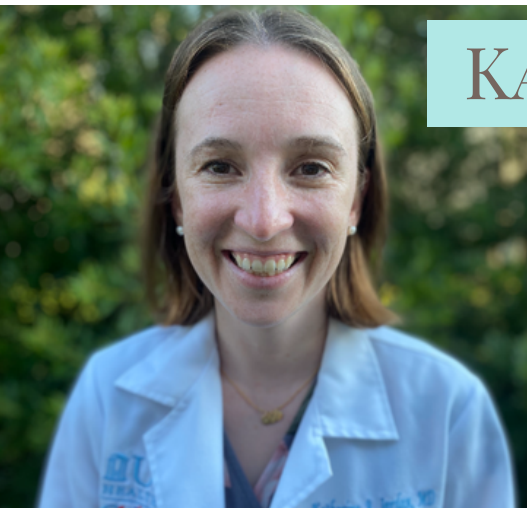
(3) Through Horseshoe Farm's adult programs, we focus on areas that improve health and quality of life but that are often neglected in our current healthcare system. These areas include dance, art, music, cooking, fitness, diet, exercise, purpose, daily structure, healthy relationships, play, transportation, and countless others. These areas are important to us all, but are of particular importance to the seniors, adults living with mental illness, and other vulnerable or isolated adults we serve.



COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: LOCAL COMMUNITY CENTERS

It has been wonderful watching the Palomares, Washington Park, and Adult Day Care Center programs come back to life this year. Fellows volunteer with seniors, adults living with disabilities, adults living with mental illnesses, and others as participants enjoy recreational and social activities and the always popular hot meals.

THE FOUNDING FELLOWS



KATIE JORDAN 09-10

Katie came to Horseshoe Farm from Brevard, North Carolina by way of Williams College. She was known in her class for her unfailing positive outlook and enthusiasm, her warmth and deep care for others, her contagious laugh, and her quiet toughness and resilience (including on the soccer field where she tormented Dr. Dorsey and others with her skills -- always with a big smile on her face!).

After completing the Horseshoe Farm Fellowship, Katie went on to medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (she returned to Horseshoe Farm to complete a fourth-year elective rotation during medical school). She stayed at UNC to complete her residency (including a year as Chief Resident) in pediatrics. She is currently a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine where among multiple leadership, service, and teaching roles, she serves as the Medical Director of the pediatrics residency continuity clinic, the Pediatrics Residency Associate Program Director, and an Inpatient Consultant for the Child Maltreatment Team. When Katie and her husband Andrew are not chasing their spunky 3-year-old daughter, she enjoys hiking, playing soccer, and reading. She states, "I have visited Greensboro many times since we graduated from the fellowship, and am so grateful for the lifelong friendships that were formed there."

SABRINA THOMAS 09-10

Sabrina Thomas came to Horseshoe Farm from Talladega, Alabama after graduating from the University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB). She was known in her class for her big heart, her love for her family, her love for all things Alabama and UAB, her southern manners and sassiness, and her proclivity for baking to deal with stress.

After Horseshoe Farm, she returned to UAB to pursue the Accelerated Masters in Nursing Pathway program on her way to becoming a Family Practice Nurse Practitioner. Drawn to her small-town roots, she began her career practicing as a Family Nurse Practitioner in a small rural clinic in Crossville, Alabama. She saw the full gamut of patients from newborns to the elderly, and enjoyed caring for the primarily Spanish speaking population. In 2016, she moved back to her hometown to be closer to family and began her work in correctional health care. As a nurse practitioner for the Federal Corrections Institution (FCI) in Talladega, she provides the full spectrum of primary care to inmates. Sabrina states, "Every day is different at FCI, but for the most part it is just like any small-town primary care office."

In 2017, Sabrina married her college boyfriend, Tyler, who became part of the Horseshoe Farm family while Sabrina was a Fellow. They just celebrated their 5th wedding anniversary and live in Lincoln, Alabama. Tyler teaches middle school math and is the school's football and wrestling coach. Sabrina reports that they have one "dog-child," Bella and that Tyler and she enjoy traveling and college football - "go Blazers!"



JODIE SIMMS-MACLEOD 09-10

Though Jodie grew up in Auburn, Maine and attended Amherst College, she has deep family roots in Alabama. Her great uncle, Daniel "Chappie" James was a fighter pilot with the Tuskegee Airmen, and the first African American to become a four-star general in the United States Armed Forces. With her genuine kindness, warmth, and empathy, Jodie showed herself to be a leader, a bridge builder, a counselor, a facilitator, and a peace maker during her Fellowship year. After earning her Masters in the Family Nurse Midwife program at Emory University, she has gone on to help to build the University of Tennessee Medical Center's first midwifery practice where she continues to serve as the Midwifery Director.

Embracing her role as a citizen service leader, Jodie has shared her time and talents as a member of the leadership team of the non-profit "Embrace - Refugee Birth Support" where she helped train doulas and provide support for refugee women during pregnancy and childbirth. She now volunteers at a local free clinic and works on health equity issues with the March of Dimes and University of Tennessee to reduce health disparities. She also enjoys teaching and received Vanderbilt University's Preceptor of the Year Award.

In her free time, Jodie enjoys cooking and going on outdoor adventures in Tennessee with her husband Ian, their "wild, curious, and goofy toddler" Ewan, and their dog Juno.

"Horseshoe Farm was the place that I began finding my way as an adult leader, independent thinker, engaged community member and educator. I loved being a part of building the organization from the ground up and making sure it was rooted in the needs of the community through the relationships we built. For me, being in Alabama was a return to my family roots, and felt like home, even though I had never lived there before. I will never forget the incredible people we met and am so proud of the organization it's become!" - Jodie Simms-MacLeod



PICKLEBALL

HSF's New Racquet Club

Pickleball has become the fastest growing sport in America. It creates opportunities for fellowship across different ages and backgrounds, fosters healthy connections and relationships, and allows people of all fitness levels, abilities, and ages to exercise and engage in play. These features are all core parts of Horseshoe Farm's approach to improving community health.

After more than two years of planning and hard work, Horseshoe Farm is excited to introduce this wonderful activity to our region. Our youth program and adult program participants have already begun to catch the pickleball bug, and we are excited for the opportunities this new addition to Horseshoe Farm's community center will create for our participants and our broader community.



LEADERSHIP & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Site Directors



Jennifer McMillan
Perry County Site Director



Sarah Hallmark, MSW
Assistant Director and Greensboro Site Director



Nicole Zermeno
Pomona Site Director

Leadership Donors

We want to thank the many individuals whose generosity has been critical to supporting and sustaining Horseshoe Farm's work — we are grateful for each and every donation. We would also like to especially thank and recognize the following Leadership Donors and Supporters for putting their trust in Horseshoe Farm and for their extremely generous contributions.

- Adam Clark and Meagan Yoshimoto-Clark,**
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- Uniti**
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