

For Immediate Release—

Jasper Ridge Farm General Manager Alyssa Houk to be honored as the 2019 Kiwanis Angel Award recipient on October 24, 2019

Alyssa Houk has been selected as the recipient of the eighth annual Kiwanis Angel Award for her work as general manager of Jasper Ridge Farm, which enriches the lives of children and adults through the comfort and unconditional acceptance that interacting with animals can provide for people. Programs include HorseBuddies, Animals Helping Children, Summer Camp, and StudentBuddies.

The Kiwanis Angel Award, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto, honors an individual who has had a significant, positive impact on children and youth and provides a \$1,500 contribution to the recipient's organization.

The award reception will be held on October 24, 2019, 5:30–7:30 PM, at the Sheraton Palo Alto Hotel, 625 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. Master of Ceremonies will be Police Chief Dennis Burns (Ret.). Ticket price is \$50 until October 17, \$55 afterwards, and can be ordered online at <http://kiwanisangelaward.org>.

Jasper Ridge Farm was founded ten years ago, and their animal-assisted programs serve children facing life-threatening illness, children living with family challenges such as homelessness or domestic violence, children living with special needs, teens dealing with mental and emotional issues, and adults as well. In 2018, Jasper Ridge Farm served 3,264 children and adults through their programs, which are offered free of charge to the families. They partner with organizations such as Ronald McDonald House, Children's Health Council, SafeSpace, LifeMoves, and Webb Ranch.

Alyssa Houk's background is in marketing for high-tech startups, but when she took a break, she discovered Jasper Ridge Farm. After running a successful fundraiser for the organization, she said yes to becoming the general manager when the founder moved to Arizona. Alyssa is responsible for overseeing Jasper Ridge Farm's programs, staff, operations, and animal care. On any given day she could be seen feeding the animals, helping a child interact with an animal during a program, fundraising, paying bills, making presentations, or filling in wherever it's needed. As her nominator for the Kiwanis Angel Award, Founder and Executive Director Wendy Mattes, wrote, "Alyssa wears many hats for Jasper Ridge Farm, and we believe one of those hats should be a halo!"

For more information on Jasper Ridge Farm, go to <http://www.jasperridgefarm.org>

"During the therapeutic time with the animals, our teens are transported to a place in their hearts and minds in which the darkness of depression and hopelessness of suicidal thoughts are suspended, and they can begin to experience the joys and comforts of life." Ramsey Khasho, PsyD, Chief Clinical Officer, Children's Health Council

“We at Ronald McDonald House Bay Area rely on the generous spirit and dedication of organizations like Jasper Ridge Farm and compassionate staff like Alyssa to help children and families cope with the chaos of hospitalizations, chronic fear and worry, and feelings of isolation.” Bri Seoane, MPA, Ronald McDonald House Charities Bay Area

“It’s absolutely amazing to watch the kids brighten up and squeal with delight... the pure joy that’s in them.” Parent, Ronald McDonald House

“[The program] allows the family to have some normalcy in their life away from what they’re facing every day.” Juan Hernandez, Family Care Manager, Ronald McDonald House

“It’s an opportunity for children living in our homeless shelter to do something extraordinary... It’s wonderful to see them smiling, laughing, and giggling, facing their fears... having a blast.” Ashley Ditmer, Children’s Services Coordinator, First Step for Families