



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF THE EASTERN PANHANDLE

**Corporate Office**

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Kay Barkwill Named 2024 Stefani Pierson Champion for Youth**

As a co-founder of Horses with Hearts, Kay Barkwill has donated thousands of hours to improving the lives of youth in the Eastern Panhandle, and that commitment has earned her the recognition as the Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle's 2024 Stefani Pierson Champion for Youth.

"My passion is helping people know their value," said Barkwill. "The children we serve have challenges, but they are still capable of so much. They need to know what they bring to the world. I absolutely love seeing them smile when they make a connection with a horse. That's why I wanted to start this organization." Horses with Hearts provides therapeutic horseback riding lessons that build strength and coordination skills, improve memory, teach responsibility, and promote an overall sense of well-being. Horses with Hearts also provides equine learning programs that enables individuals who are focused on enhancing their emotional and mental health to partner with horses in a way that promotes growth and healing as they address a wide variety of issues including trauma related disorders, addiction recovery, PTSD, and grief. They also provide Equine-Assisted Leadership Development workshops that provide experimental hand-on leadership skills to for-profit, non-profit, military, first responders and at risk-youth to our community members. Since 2020, Horses with Hearts has provided Horsepower Summer camps through Jefferson County Schools and the Boys & Girls Club providing equine learning and horsepower reading to many of our children.

Barkwill, a Berkeley County native and a Martinsburg High School graduate, is the mother of two adult children. She credits her own mother, Naomi Aikens who helped establish Panhandle Home Health and Hospice of the Panhandle, with instilling the importance of giving back to the community.

"Kay is a legacy to the 'can do' spirit of her mother," said long-time Horses with Hearts volunteer J.B. Pike. "She has a gift for knowing what people need even before they know."

Local attorney Tracey Rohrbaugh agrees. "There is so much I could say about Kay, but I can sum it up by saying that she is one of the most selfless people I have ever known. Before Horses with Hearts, there were very few programs available in our community to serve children with special needs; but Kay saw a need, and she stepped forward to meet it. As a result, Horses with Hearts has already enriched the lives of hundreds of children and youth with physical, mental, or emotional challenges, and it will continue to do so for many years to come. I am so thankful for Kay and her servant heart!"

Barkwill will be honored at the annual Stefani Pierson Champion for Youth Dinner on the evening Thursday, April 18 at 6:30 at the Martinsburg/Berkeley County Club at 105 W. John Street. Tickets, which are \$75.00 per person and \$140.00 per couple, are now available online by going to events page on the Boys and Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle website at [www.bgcepwv.net](http://www.bgcepwv.net) or by calling 304-263-1832.

For more information, contact Trina Bartlett, Director of Resource Development and Marketing at the Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle at 304-550-3171 or [tbartlett@bgcepwv.org](mailto:tbartlett@bgcepwv.org).

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The Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle is a 501 c 3 nonprofit FEIN Number 20-2257657