



**Alejandra Lara (18)**, born and raised in Chile, began coming to Park City 22 years ago, first part-time, living the ski bum life style of following winter from South to North America and later, fulltime so her son Sebastian could attend school in Park City.

***“Having grown up under the dictatorship of Pinochet, as a young woman I dreamed of traveling and experiencing new places and cultures.”*** At the time, the economy was depressed in Chile so having the opportunity to work during the winter season at Deer Valley and during the summers in La Parva ski resort in the outskirts of Santiago, Chile was great.

Alejandra was encouraged to apply for Leadership by others who saw she had something to offer to the community. ***“I thought I would not be accepted so, when it happened I was really, really excited! I have been involved in projects, committees and groups helping our Latino community for years which gave me a perspective to share with our class project.”***

Alejandra’s connection to horses proved to be a life line for her after moving to Park City. ***“I didn’t speak the language; didn’t have any friends in this country and fell into a deep hole of loneliness, and longing for connection. In 1999 I started volunteering with the National Ability Center at the equestrian center which saved my soul.”***

She may not have been fluent in English but she could ‘speak horse’! ***“Little by little my English improved and I was able to develop relationships in the community, which have lasted for over 20 years.”***

Nine years ago she founded the Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) program at the National Ability Center as a way to give back to the community. ***“My passion is to partner with horses and provide a safe place for people to learn about themselves. I’ve seen people come back from the gates of suicide or years of isolation just to be with ‘their’ horse***

***once a week. I've seen kids in the autism spectrum learn to form friendships and connection by learning to connect with horses. As the mother of a US Navy veteran, know some of our loved ones come back changed from the war and how horses offer a fresh breath of peace."***

The process of humans and horses working together can be very rewarding. ***"Every week I witness wonderful insights, aha's and transformations. One example is of a shy teen age girl who experienced great anxiety at school with great difficulty creating friendships. Through working with the horses she developed techniques to calm her anxiety and build self-confidence. She learned she could control a 1,000 pound animal and her own anxiety giving her the confidence to connect to others outside the barn."***

The EAL program has been very successful. In the third year only, it grew 468% and continuous to partner with substance abuse recovery centers, military organizations, and other local and out-of-state organizations ***"We are booking the EAL program up to a year in advance! We are now even growing the EAL team so we can serve more people and open more program offerings in the community."***

***"In partnership with Wasatch Mental Health, we are conducting research on a teen's drug and alcohol prevention program. We are inviting teens between 13 – 18 years old of all abilities to participate. We know our program works but now Wasatch Mental Health wants to know how it works. Our goal is to make it an evidence-based prevention program state wide and offer it to the community on a regular basis. To register please go to [www.discovernac.org](http://www.discovernac.org) or email me at [alejandra@discovernac.org](mailto:alejandra@discovernac.org) "***

This summer, Alejandra started her own business, Park City Horse Experience at [parkcityhorse.com](http://parkcityhorse.com), where she shares the power of the horses with the community-at-large with an emphasis on partnering with horses for the exploration of self- awareness, connection to self & nature, and to gain new perspectives on life.

***"In my own practice I get to explore many different modalities such as mindfulness, meditation, somatic practices, yoga and much more."***

Her dream is to be able to share the power and beauty of the horses to serve individuals and groups of all walks of life, including individuals, families, groups, corporations and spiritual gatherings through each of the equine opportunities available in the community. ***"The Equine Assisted Learning EAL program at the National Ability Center and my own Park City***

***Horse Experience venture, both offer unique qualities and emphasis which can facilitate learning, growth, transformation and healing.”***

***“I am thankful for the amazing opportunity to participate in the Park City Leadership program which opened my understanding of all the possibilities to get involved in this amazing community but, above all, for the opportunity to form deep connections with my incredible brilliant and big-hearted Class 18 classmates.”***

Alejandra would like Leadership alumni to know that the equine work offers a return to our own nature and power. We can all cultivate a new form of leadership, one that values feeling and reason, empathy and assertiveness, transparency, cooperation, and mutual empowerment skills necessary to take ourselves, our families and this community to new levels.

***“The most effective historical leaders – from Alexander the Great to Katherine the Great, George Washington, Winston Churchill and Ronald Reagan – were skillful riders and equestrians who had close relationships with horses. These people exhibited exceptional poise under pressure, clarity of intention, courage, and conviction. Presenting a level of leadership presence capable of motivating others to face incredible odds and create innovative, highly ambitious ventures. “***

***“I extend an open invitation for alumni to come explore how the horses and I can serve you to your next level of leadership in your own life and at work.”***

Here is my contact information:

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For more insight and information visit these websites and links

[www.parkcityhorse.com](http://www.parkcityhorse.com)

A moving YouTube video from one of the veterans I work with: <https://youtu.be/h2yzPjMUIFU>

National Ability Center website: <http://www.discovernac.org/equestrian-programs/>