

THE CAROUSEL OF SMILES

A CENTURY-OLD DREAM.

Coming Back to Life in Sandpoint.

This isn't just a carousel.

It's a piece of history—rescued, restored, and reimagined right here in North Idaho.

Originally built in the early 1900s and silent since 1952, this rare Allan Herschell carousel is being brought back to life by dedicated volunteers, artists, and supporters who believe in something bigger than themselves.

PRESERVING HISTORY
Restoring a rare piece of American heritage.

BUILDING COMMUNITY
Creating a gathering place for families and smiles.

SPREADING JOY
A place where memories are made year-round.

Reno and Clay Hutchison take a test ride on the carousel. Courtesy photo.



“CREATING SMILES FOR THE YOUNG... AND THE YOUNG AT HEART.”



The nearly completed carousel was put on display at an event last year. Photo by Clay Hutchison.

CAROUSEL PONIES READY TO RIDE

COMMUNITY PROJECT GETS CLOSER TO LONG-AWAITED DEBUT

Once upon a time there was a stable of neglected horses that were no longer wanted. The heroic rescue efforts of Clay and Reno Hutchison, however, along with a sizable group of diligent volunteers, have restored these magnificent creatures, and soon the public will enjoy them as well. After nearly 26 years invested into saving a bit of Americana—the Carousel of Smiles—those wooden horses that have captured the hearts of the community are almost ready to ride.

For those who have watched the Carousel of Smiles project unfold, the anticipated debut is near, now that the mechanism and all but two ponies are completed. The next phase is creating a venue for them. Currently the carousel horses reside in the former Bizarre Bazaar building. “At present we are leasing the building and we are negotiating the purchase,” said Clay. “A substantial capital campaign is forthcoming.”

The carousel was set up September 2025 at the Bonner County Fairgrounds. An enthusiastic crowd was thrilled with viewing the carousel powered up in all its glory, complete with music and prancing ponies. Although public rides were not available, the teaser generated plenty of excitement. What was even more exciting was the visit of the National Carousel Association. “One hundred members came to see the carousel,”

said Reno, adding that the association has shown great support for the project.

The Hutchisons purchased the neglected 1920s Allan Herschell carousel in July 2000, and brought it to Sandpoint in 2016, initializing a dedicated community interest. Clay and Reno estimate there are at least 30,000 hours in volunteer service, and with the time and resources contributed by local businesses the restoration represents at least a million dollars in community investment.

While volunteers are busy inside putting the finishing touches on the ponies, another project is ready to go: a second, smaller carousel has been donated for refurbishment. In addition, the pair are exploring options for a mural on the long, back wall of the building. An earlier plan—silhouettes of prancing carousel horses—ran afoul of the city’s signage laws, so Reno is regrouping to develop a new vision. Whatever that turns out to be, “I really want to involve area youth. I want them to feel like they’re a part of it all,” she said.

The Hutchisons are planning summer hours for those wanting a tour of the carousel project.

Learn more at www.thecarouselofsmiles.org

—Pam Webb

SCAN TO DONATE OR GET INVOLVED!



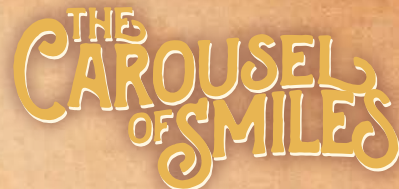
★ BE A PART OF THE RIDE! ★

Your support helps bring this historic carousel to life for generations to come.

DONATE
Every gift makes a difference.

VOLUNTEER
Share your time and talents.

SPREAD THE WORD
Help us build excitement and support.



A COMMUNITY PROJECT
★ IN SANDPOINT, IDAHO ★

www.thecarouselofsmiles.org