The Kinder Cowboy

Gabriel Norlin, owner of The Kinder Cowboy, overcame a challenging past involving drug use, dealing and time in federal prison. His turning point came when a counselor at Rocky Mountain Treatment Center offered him a position in the equine therapy program. This opportunity, coupled with steadfast support, set Norlin on a positive path toward recovery — and eventually, entrepreneurship. As an enrolled tribal member, Norlin has always felt a strong connection to horses and recognizes their profound cultural significance. Guided by his experience and passion for horse training and trail riding, he found his calling in working with horses.

Launching Kinder Cowboy involved overcoming several hurdles. Encouraged by a counselor at Vocational Rehabilitation, Norlin reached out to the Montana Small Business Development Center, collaborating to craft a solid business plan. The SBDC's unwavering support helped Norlin secure an Indian Equity Fund grant through the Montana Department of Commerce. Receiving an IEF grant played a crucial role in Norlin getting his business up and running. Utilizing both the grant and his own investment, Norlin was able to lay a strong foundation for future growth.

Today, with the SBDC's guidance, Kinder Cowboy is expanding — bringing on part-time staff this summer to meet growing demand, offering more trail rides and lessons and forging new partnerships. Norlin is working with AmeriCorps to offer free horse access, allowing more people to experience Montana's distinctive heritage. As a proud citizen of the Little Shell Tribe based in Great Falls, Norlin is also developing tourism packages that highlight Native American cultural events, promoting cultural awareness and cross-cultural appreciation.

Business Advisor Rich Gannon noted, "Addiction and mental health issues affect many in our communities. The work Kinder Cowboy does strives to be a tool and an experience that helps those facing these challenges. It not only impacts individuals, but also strengthens our communities."

ECONOMIC IMPACT

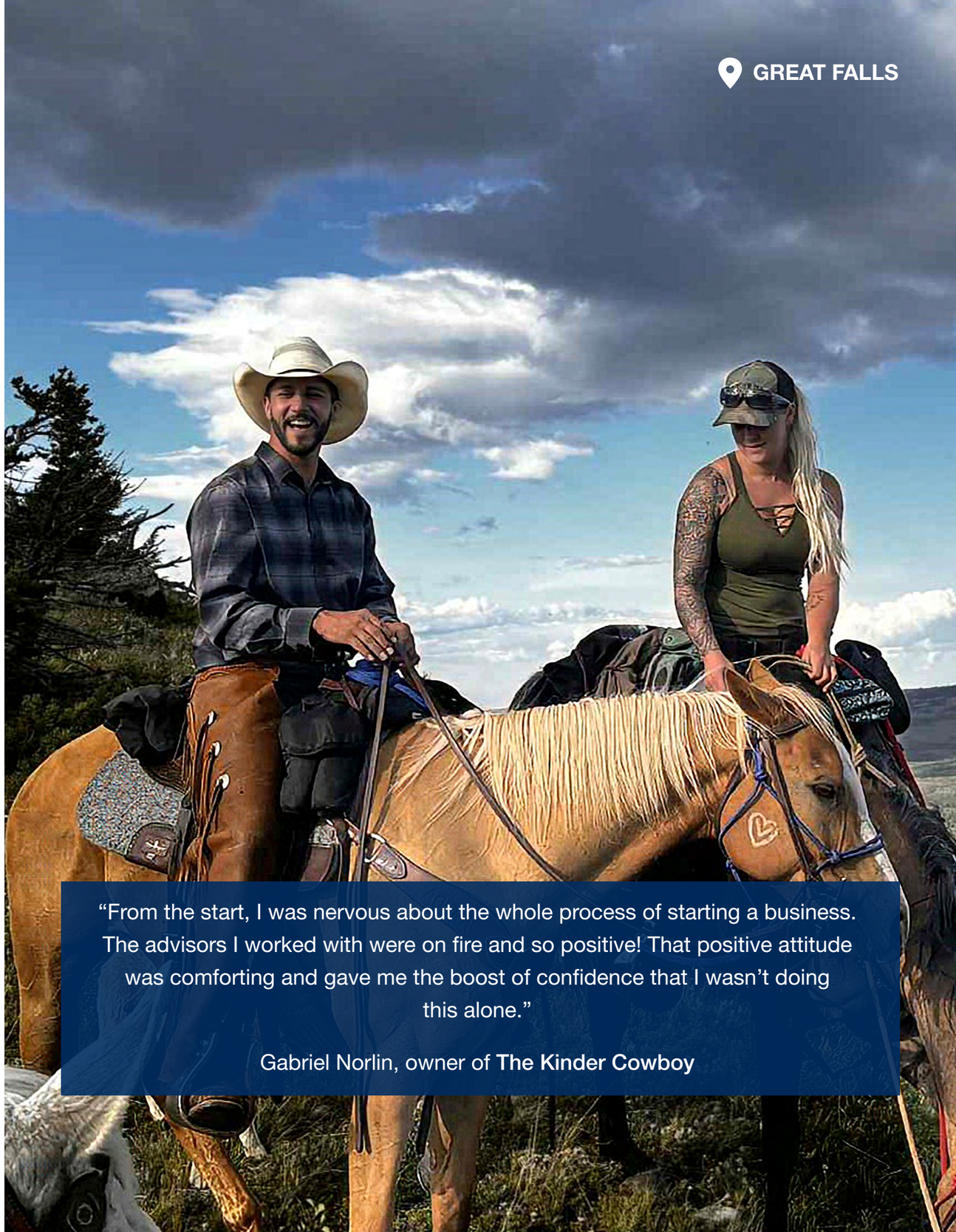
- **Business Start**
- **Secured Indian Equity Fund Grant**
- **Partnering with AmeriCorps**

Deb McGregor
Regional Director

Rich Gannon
Business Advisor

Christian Nichols
Business Advisor

Great Falls DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE
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"From the start, I was nervous about the whole process of starting a business. The advisors I worked with were on fire and so positive! That positive attitude was comforting and gave me the boost of confidence that I wasn't doing this alone."

Gabriel Norlin, owner of **The Kinder Cowboy**