**Quest’s Story of Hope, Heart and Joy**
by Susan Rosenberg

*Every horse that comes through DEFHR’s gates is unique and special. Some of them go through rehab in just a couple of months and are lucky enough to find their second chance home in no time. Others need up to a year to regain health, and over a year at times to have their day in court before being officially turned over to DEFHR. It can take time to find home for some horses.*

No matter how much time they spend with us, each and every one leaves a hoof print on our hearts.

Then there are ones like Quest, who seem to capture the hearts of people across the community, across the nation and beyond. Quest’s story seems to have struck a chord with so many, on Facebook, at events and of course here at the farm. His is a story of hope and heart.

When Quest came to DEFHR in the summer of 2015, not only was he skeletal and riddled with parasites, but he had the worst case of hoof neglect we have ever seen. He and two other horses had been kept locked in stalls for 10-15 years, and their hooves had never been trimmed. Quest’s were 3 feet long!

Chief Executive Officer Erin Clemm Ochoa was shocked when she saw the manure-filled stall Quest was in. It took her a moment to compose herself before she could look into Quest’s eye and whisper, “Your life is about to change.”

Erin was there that day with DeEtte Hillman, Equine Programs Director, who heads up rescue efforts. DeEtte will never forget measuring the manure in Quest’s stall (4 feet) or how she felt when Quest was freed and could be walked out into the sunshine he hadn’t seen in over 10 years. “It was heart wrenching,” she said. “But when he calmly walked over to the first patch of grass and...”

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At that point during Fall Fest, Quest was officially turned over to his new adopter. There were many tears in the audience that day. Tears of hope and heart and joy.

All I have ever wanted for Quest was for someone to love him unconditionally as their own, for the inspiration he is. Jenny loves Quest for his forgiveness, his strength and his gratefulness for life all around him. It would have been a miracle if he could just run in a field again, but Quest surpassed every odd he had against him. When I first started working with Quest, I had no idea he would transform into the pony he is today. After being locked in a stall for over 10 years, everything was new for him. I was there for so many firsts. His first bath. His first ride. His first time off the farm. His first show. His first trail ride. All of which he took in stride. Of everything we have done, trick training and liberty are by far his favorites, and it is because of this that Quest and I have the relationship that we do. “I wish everyone has the opportunity to have a relationship with a horse this powerful. It is something that is so hard to put into words. I think our relationship is so strong because we are both so grateful for each other. I know that he is grateful for his new life, and I am grateful for what he does for me every day. He is just so special. He is one of those golden, once-in-a-lifetime ponies. “All I have ever wanted for Quest was for someone to love him unconditionally as their own. Not because of his story, but because of him. That is where Jenny came in. Just as I do, Jenny loves Quest for him. For the smile that he brings to our faces, for the love he has for people, for the inspiration he is.”

It has been incredible to witness Quest’s growth in personality and communication with humans. He has such heart and willingness to try and has blossomed into a goofy, fun-loving guy who loves being in front of a camera! Quest was a feature presentation at Fall Festival the morning of September 16th, where a packed crowd watched Leigha take him through their at-liberty program. Afterwards she spoke these words: “Quest has inspired me every day with his forgiveness, his strength and his gratefulness for life all around him. It would have been a miracle if he could just run in a field again, but Quest surpassed every odd he had against him. When I first started working with Quest, I had no idea he would transform into the pony he is today. After being locked in a stall for over 10 years, everything was new for him. I was there for so many firsts. His first bath. His first ride. His first time off the farm. His first show. His first trail ride. All of which he took in stride. Of everything we have done, trick training and liberty are by far his favorites, and it is because of this that Quest and I have the relationship that we do. “I wish everyone has the opportunity to have a relationship with a horse this powerful. It is something that is so hard to put into words. I think our relationship is so strong because we are both so grateful for each other. I know that he is grateful for his new life, and I am grateful for what he does for me every day. He is just so special. He is one of those golden, once-in-a-lifetime ponies. “All I have ever wanted for Quest was for someone to love him unconditionally as their own. Not because of his story, but because of him. That is where Jenny came in. Just as I do, Jenny loves Quest for him. For the smile that he brings to our faces, for the love he has for people, for the inspiration he is.”

At that point during Fall Fest, Quest was officially turned over to his new adopter. There were many tears in the audience that day. Tears of hope and heart and joy. 🐴
Meet Sara Strauss, DEFHR Head Trainer

DEFHR has partnered with The Right Horse Initiative to help reframe the conversation around horse adoption in an effort to make it the new norm for people looking for their next horse. Together we are working to massively increase the number of horse adoptions nationwide.

Head Trainer Sara Strauss (pictured here riding behind Assistant Trainer Leigha Schrader) has worked at DEFHR for 9 years, training the horses for potential adoption and working with adopters to find their right horse.

In that capacity, she fields adoption calls and emails, meets with potential adopters, oversees people sponsoring a horse on site (grooming and/or riding), trains/evaluates rehabilitated horses, educates the public and animal control officers, showcases adoptable horses at off-site events and assists with impounds/seizures.

We asked Sara to tell us more about her role in adoptions.

How has your role as trainer changed over the years?
More horses have needed our assistance over the last few years [65 in 2016; 59 as of October 2017], so the number of horses going through the training/evaluation program as well as the adoption program has increased greatly!

You are known as the “matchmaker.” Describe what that means. What is the process like for someone considering adoption?

Our adoption program is tailored to finding the “right” match for both the human and the horse involved. It can be a tricky process as most people have an idea of what they want in a horse: what breed, age, color, disposition, etc. Often that list of ideals is actually not what they need in a horse. My job as a matchmaker is to know the horse, always look out for the horse’s best interest and also for the person’s safety and growth as a horseman/woman. The goal is for the person to be matched with the horse best suited for them, regardless of who they originally inquired about.

Our adoption process entails a few steps that allow a relationship to develop between the horse and the potential adopter. We meet the adopter several times. The first time the person catches the horse in the field, grooms it and does any groundwork they feel comfortable doing. During the second and third times the adopter gets to observe the horse going under saddle before saddling and riding him—or herself. People are welcome to bring their own trainer or instructor for at least one appointment so they can weigh in their opinion about the fit!

DEFHR also visits the farm/facility where the horse will be going before the horse is transported. The application and the new home report are reviewed by the Equine Health Director and me to ensure that the facility will be a proper match for the horse involved. We love receiving updates and pictures of our adopted horses; it is always a great feeling knowing that we played a role in finding the horse the right person for them and vice versa!

What would you say to someone who asks, Why should I adopt when there are so many horses available on the market?

Looking at the big picture, you are not only providing a home for a horse that once was neglected, you are opening up that spot for another horse to come in and receive the care that they deserve. DEFHR prides itself on finding the right match between the human and horse. The details of the horse’s training, quirks, behaviors, rehab program and the current care are all disclosed to the adopter.

RESCUE HORSES NEED EVERYONE’S HELP!

How can anyone hurt an animal? It’s not an easy question to answer, but abuse does happen. Fortunately, there are many hardworking animal lovers out there trying to make the world a better place for animals. They need animal control to step in when proper care is denied. They need voices to speak on their behalf in court. They need homes! Even if you can’t adopt, you can read about them and help get the word out!

We hope the next time you’re looking for a horse, you’ll adopt one who really needs you. Even if you’re not ready for a new horse, there are so many ways you can help. You can bring rain sheets and blankets to horses waiting for homes. You can think of ways to raise money for them. Or you can show photos of DEFHR’s adoptable horses to your friends and neighbors—they’re available on our website: defhr.org.
A Rescue Horse Can Be Your #RightHorse

You Don’t Have to Ride Them
by Sigrid C. Haines

Like probably everyone involved at DEFHR, I have loved horses since I first set eyes on them. My plastic horses had many adventures, and as soon as I was old enough, I was allowed to take riding lessons. As I grew up, I could no longer take riding lessons, but I never outgrew my love for horses.

When I hit middle age, I started riding lessons again, but I found that I was more interested in the horse than in my riding. I have a stressful job, and I didn’t like having to work hard in my spare time. Also, I no longer bounce. I wanted to get off the horse and get to know her.

Volunteering for DEFHR for 25 years helped me be around horses, but I wanted more, so I began to foster a DEFHR pony. That was fun, but I wanted a horse of my own. One day I saw an ad on the Horse.com newsletter that a retired therapeutic riding horse needed a home, and I figured I would inquire. You know what happened: I adopted him, and then another, and when he died, I couldn’t decide between two DEFHR rescues, so I got them both. So now I have three horses! Two are lightly rideable, but I haven’t been on a horse in a couple years, because I have so much fun with ground work.

So what is ground work? I had barely heard of the discipline until I decided to adopt my first horse. For me and my horses, it means having a blast with each other with no riding involved.

With the help of my wonderful trainer, I have turned my horses into oversized dogs, but it’s so much fun, I don’t mind the heckling I get at my barn about my oversized dogs. I love to teach stupid tricks. Nothing is better than that “light bulb” moment when they figure out what I want. Of course, we use food rewards, because that is what I would work for if I were a horse. There are lovely commercial snacks, but also carrot coins or sugar cubes work well. For certain tricks, we also use a clicker.

So far, my various horses have learned to bump balls, pick up their feet when I am sweeping under them with a broom, bow, select an object amongst several choices (e.g., yellow buckets have food while blue ones don’t), select a picture from amongst several, stand still on command, match me step for step, walk backward through a set of poles, unroll a carpet, turn their head away if they want a treat, and climb on a mounting block. My trainer has taught her horses to untie a rag on their leg, play catch and fetch. I haven’t gotten there yet, but I’m working on these important goals.

As a bonus, my horses tend to come running when they see me, because they know that the only work I will make them do is pretty fun for them, and it’s definitely fun for me. Another benefit is that, like people, horses have very different personalities. When you work with them from the ground trying to reach certain goals, their personalities really come out. Maybe you’d like to adopt a non-rideable horse and have some fun with it too!

My Horse Found Me
by Joni Miller

I wasn’t looking for a horse, until one found me. I hadn’t ridden in 45 years, and wasn’t looking to support a horse for the rest of its life. I had enjoyed fostering, first Dante, who was adopted, and then Charlestown (aka “Charlie” to his friends). However, after living at DEFHR for over a year, I suspect Charlie realized he needed to take matters into his own, um, hooves, to find his forever home. He did his best to ingratiate himself with gentle greetings, horsie “hugs” and soulful looks, and voila – I fell for it! I realized how much our weekly time together meant to both of us, and decided that life would just be better together. It wasn’t a decision made lightly, as I committed to both the financial and lifestyle changes needed to give Charlie the best home he deserved, starting with an intensive schedule of riding lessons for myself.

Adopting a rescue horse had tremendous advantages, starting with – we were already friends! Volunteering and fostering provided Charlie and me the opportunity to get to know each
other pretty well, so there were no surprises when I brought him home. I knew his normal behavior, and could recognize the temporary behavioral changes associated with settling into a new home. I'm certain his transition was helped by already knowing me; I was the familiar face in his changed world, and for a few days, he was quite the “mama’s boy” until he made some new equine friends. (I admit to being both flattered and amused when my “needy baby” charged across the field to greet me the morning after he arrived!)

It's been both informative and entertaining watching Charlie learn his new home and its occupants, to include dogs (fine until he sniffs noses with them, then the ears go back!) and chickens (he seems to think they are odd, but harmless). He looks for the little black mare who flirts shamelessly when he’s near the mares’ fields; alas, that relationship is not going anywhere! Amongst the geldings, Charlie has created his own “mini-herd” of three friends and they keep a respectful distance from the beefy quarter horses that are in charge. (I suspect he's biding his time to lead a coup!)

Since bringing Charlie home, I now spend part of every day at his boarding stable, only 10 minutes from home. Whatever expectation I had of good times together has only been surpassed by the reality of our days so far. We spend time just hanging out together in the field, with Charlie's three new best friends also wanting to be made over. After greetings all around, Charlie grazes and secretly laughs while I search the fields for his missing fly boots and mask. Some days we'll do groundwork, and have progressed to groundwork with no line. I realize Sara or Leigha probably taught him this, but I was nonetheless so impressed by Charlie's brilliance in walking, trotting, slowing, stopping and following just based on hand and body cues.

Other days we ride in the ring, practicing circles, serpentines and diagonals, and maintaining a nice relaxed pace. In my lessons I ride a variety of horses to improve my skills and experience, but with Charlie the focus is on our development as a team, learning with and from each other. Though Charlie is very sensitive to pressure, I've learned he relaxes with “more leg,” and we're practicing communicating with the slightest cues possible. While we started with a Western endurance saddle, Charlie voted for a dressage saddle, and he was right - I like it too!

Before adopting, I promised Charlie he could have his special treat of baby carrots every day of his life if he came to live with me, so every visit ends with the deluxe grooming session and a serving of baby carrots. Thanks to my husband, Charlie is also addicted to peppermint horse treats, and has a few of those to “cleanse the palate” before returning to the field. Whatever our activities, our time together brings me such joy as our bond grows and I watch this amazing animal adapt to his new life and forever home. I could have leased or bought any horse – but fostering and adoption let me find the special horse that was meant for me.

Providing a Better Life for a Rescue Horse
by Grace Balkeney

I pretty much always knew that whenever I got my own horse I wanted to adopt, so I started seriously looking about two months before I found Delmar. I wanted a rescue horse so I could be a part of helping them have a good life after being treated so badly before.

I have been familiar with DEFHR since I started riding when I was 8 years old and I’m 17 now. I raised some money for the farm back when I first found out about it and I always liked looking on the website and “shopping” for all the horses I wanted. So, it was really cool when I realized I was actually going to be getting one of those horses.

My first appointment at Days End was actually to meet Charlie but after the trainer Sara looked at my application and discussed with me what I wanted to do with my new horse, she suggested that Delmar might be a better fit for me. I had seen Delmar’s ad on the website when I was first looking, but did not choose him because I wanted a bit taller and darker horse. However, once I met Delmar I knew right away that he was definitely the one. He had the cutest baby face and such a big, goofy personality. I knew I wanted him even more after the first time I rode him. He was so fun to ride. But I also wanted a horse that wasn’t going to be super easy to ride, that was going to make me work, and still had things to learn. Delmar was perfect for that.

After Delmar settled into his new home this August, I began working with him to be more balanced and more consistent in his gaits. After that, I will start doing some basic dressage work and hope to enter in some pre-season winter shows, and then the spring show season depending on how we are doing.

I would recommend adoption to everyone. It feels so good giving a horse a better life, and DEFHR is such a great organization, it’s nice to be able to give back to them.
Helping Others Heal

by Alicia Burns

At Cross Keys Equine Therapy, a Virginia non-profit counseling organization where I serve as Executive Director, our mission is to provide hope, healing and opportunities for emotional growth to people of all ages using horses. What we have found during our time doing this work is that horses that have been abused, abandoned or neglected have a unique way of connecting with clients who have been abused, abandoned or neglected – those who have experienced hurt in relationships.

We learned of Days End through a friend of one of your interns who had a particular fondness for Truffles. We wanted to bring a small horse to the farm for our clients who are timid, and Truffles was perfect. She is small in stature, quiet, kind and gentle. She teaches people how to build relationships by giving clients a safe place to learn how to trust. She also requires people to be self-aware as she will be quick to walk away if she is approached in a way that feels intimidating to her. For children who have trouble with self-regulation, she gives them immediate feedback about their body language and how they need to approach her calmly. But she is so quick to be with clients as soon as they soften – she will stand with them and nurture them in a really sweet way.

On her days off, Truffles gets to play with her two mini buddies, Buckshot and Gizmo, as the “three amigos” are our welcoming committee to the farm! Being the only girl in her paddock, she definitely rules the roost!

Adopting a horse is such an amazing experience. Horses just seem to know when they have hit the jackpot, and give you so much more than you ever give to them. The work being done at Days End really does allow those who want to provide good homes an opportunity to do that. We love Truffles and couldn’t imagine our farm without her!
The Passing of a Legend
by Brittney Carow

In May we had to unexpectedly and suddenly say goodbye to our dear, sweet, handsome, wise Equine Ambassador, Joker’s Jinx. Almost 8 years ago, this gorgeous boy came into our lives from Baltimore City, where he served many years as an Arabber cart horse. We were told he used to give children rides around the city streets with little more than a halter and lead rope for steering. When Jinx came to us in October 2009, we knew that he was a special boy. His quiet and gentle demeanor instantly won the hearts of everyone at the farm, and we knew that he would become an important part of our team of Equine Ambassadors.

Over the years with us, Jinx’s service as Equine Ambassador meant that he touched the hearts and lives of upwards of 100,000 people. He helped us to educate visitors about horses, from small children to professional animal control and law enforcement officials. Jinx taught people how to halter, lead, groom, bathe, and simply love a horse. He participated with volunteers, grooming and riding sponsors, home school groups, field trips, Scout Days, volunteer groups, pony rides, special events both on and off-site, clinics, parades, Horse Expos and more. If you could clone a horse, he would be worth the investment.

Looking back on all that Jinx has done with and for us, it’s hard to imagine that he’s no longer here. A definite hole has been left in the hearts of all who knew this kind and regal gelding, and our hearts go out to all those he touched over the years.

Jinx, Jinxy, Jinxy Poo, Jinxy Boy - We love you and always will. You were one in a million. Rest in Peace.

Our Beloved Joker’s Jinx

Connecting Beyond DEFHR

Texas Disaster Relief
A King Sports Construction convoy left in early September filled with donations collected from DEFHR’s Hurricane Harvey Equine Relief Drive. We are so grateful for the incredible outpouring of support to help those affected by hurricane Harvey.

Homes for Horses Coalition
Chief Executive Officer Erin Clemm Ochoa, Outreach Director Nicky Wetzelberger and Equine Programs Director DeEtte Hillman attended the 2017 Homes for Horses Coalition conference in Los Angeles in September. “It was wonderful spending time meeting with and learning from so many amazing rescue groups from across the country,” said Ochoa. “I can’t wait to return next year. Homes for Horses Coalition is a fantastic resource, and I’m grateful for HSUS, ASPCA and AWI for hosting this event.”
Former Interns Recall Their DEFHR Experience

Lucky Me?!
by Alex True, Summer 2017 Intern

These were all statements I heard after the 18 horses were seized in Carroll County and brought to DEFHR on that memorable June day. I could not help but think about the irony of these words as I looked around at the 18 starving horses; these horses were fortunate enough to have ended up at Days End, but unfortunate in that they had to be rescued in the first place.

When all of the interns were called to the feed room without any indication of what we were meeting about, all of us knew something important was going to happen. Then when we heard there was going to be an impoundment, we immediately got excited. Our first impounded horse, Udaya, came in earlier in June, and her rehab process had been smooth sailing with lots of teachable moments that we interns craved. We got a little worried when we heard the number 18, but were too distracted by our excitement and the flurry of action that comes with a large impound.

The first time someone called me lucky for helping out with this impound was the very next day, and at that point I had to agree with them. Here I was, an aspiring veterinarian with little experience caring for sick horses, given the chance to play a huge role in caring for 18 starving horses. My mind was like a sponge as I was given lessons in refeeding, skin care, taking vitals, and so much more. At that point the novelty still had not worn off and I felt almost like a superhero who was learning to save other creatures in need. Being stuck in quarantine [once you’re working in the quarantine area, you tend to stay there for long periods to avoid decontaminating yourself on exit] also gave me the chance to meet and connect with many amazing volunteers who spent the day toiling with us in the main barn and suffering through the chaos that occurs when there are 18 stalls to muck and 18 horses to groom, medicate and feed. But overall, I felt that I should be saying lucky me!

Then I experienced my very first 2 AM check. There are not sufficient words to describe the grogginess and dread of the next day’s fatigue that hits you when you drive to the farm in the wee hours of the morning only to be confronted by a closed gate and chilly night air. These 2 AM checks happened every other night for seemingly endless weeks and the superhero feeling started to wear off as I continually tried to shove warm grass gruel into the mouth of an obstinate quarter horse in a sleepy haze. By this time, I started to think that maybe the luck had worn off.

As the vitals checks started to become tedious and it seemed as though every horse was getting treated for the same dermatitis, I knew that my luck was definitely gone. Then I started to question if I was ever lucky to care for these horses in the first place. Sure these horses were lucky to have been taken to Days End, where top-notch care is guaranteed, and the knowledge I gained in this time was invaluable, but these horses weren’t lucky to have ended up in this situation and I, along with the other staff, interns and volunteers, certainly were not lucky to have the extra work added to the normal load. But that is when I realized that luck had nothing to do with the

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Where Is She Now?
by Emma Krakoff: Summer Intern 2014

My internship was in equine care and rehabilitation during the summer of 2014. I interned with four other girls who quickly became my close friends. I am now a veterinary student at Colorado State University and, of the many experiences I’ve had in preparation for vet school, this one remains my favorite.

I applied to this internship because I wanted to expand my knowledge of horse husbandry and rehabilitation. Although I have taken weekly riding lessons since I was six, I did not grow up around horses. I felt I was deficient in what seemed like common knowledge to other equine vet hopefuls. This internship helped me fulfill my goals and more. I was the primary caretaker of eight horses, including a 16.2 hand warmblood with an autoimmune disorder and a mare with a foal. To my surprise, we were entrusted with much of the veterinary care of our horses, meaning I got to take vitals, change leg/hoof wraps, and help administer daily medical care. We also shadowed vets from Monocacy Equine who visited there on farm calls. This experience confirmed for me that equine medicine is what I want to pursue now that I am in vet school.

The hardest part about leaving DEFHR was saying good-bye to all the friends I made there, especially the four girls who interned with me that summer. Everyone was incredibly hard working, but more than that they were positive, funny and kind. We all had Sundays off each week so we spent a lot of time exploring together. We drove to the beaches in Delaware, visited Frank Lloyd Wright’s Fallingwater house in Pennsylvania, and even made it to Chincoteague Island to watch the pony swim. I’ve been lucky enough to meet up with two of my DEFHR intern friends this past year and we have hopes for a reunion in the near future.

This experience has opened doors for me beyond vet school. This summer I got to do equine research at Cornell University with Dr. Doug Antczak who has played a major role in the Horse Genome Project. I am so grateful for all that DEFHR has taught me and for the friends I made there. I highly recommend this internship to pre-vet students or anyone who wants to learn more about caring for horses.

Emma is a DVM Student, Class of 2020, Colorado State University
Equus Coaching Workshop Comes to DEFHR: Horses Shine Light on Leadership  
by Fred Glueckstein

Days End Farm Horse Rescue (DEFHR) was pleased to host two sessions this year of the popular Equus Coaching Workshop which takes place in a round pen with horses serving as facilitators.

Presented by P. Link Coaching Center for Excellence (PCCE), the one- or two-day Equus Coaching Workshop had DEFHR participants working with a horse in a pen to pursue learning outcomes such as increasing self-awareness around communication and leadership style, enhancing social awareness, and improving self-management skills.

Why are horses used? PCCE recognizes that “horses lives depend upon intuition and communication. They seek unity -among the herd. They communicate nonverbally, and resolve conflict quickly and effectively. Because they don’t use language, they don’t operate off of assumptions, hold grudges, or carry emotional baggage like human beings. Horses will quickly inform us when our thoughts and behavior are incongruent. Lessons from the horses can take communication, leadership, and teamwork to a new level.”

Ann Rodgers, a long-time supporter and volunteer of DEFHR’s, participated in a recent Equus Coaching Workshop at DEFHR. It was a one-day class that ran six hours. Ann decided to participate so she could work with horses, and because she is a supervisor and was interested in learning new ways to communicate with her employees.

When asked to describe the experience, Ann explained: “A horse relies on their senses to figure out if we are friend or foe, and what we would like from them. They feel if we are tense, scared or relaxed. Humans can sense the same. The workshop shows us how others perceive us, what reaction they can have, and how we can be more aware and learn how to get a positive reaction.”

While supported by a skilled coach and working with a DEFHR horse named ZaZu, Ann learned how to communicate nonverbally. Without speaking a word to the horse, Ann learned to maneuver ZaZu where she wanted him to go with hand gestures and body language.

“After each individual exercise we did during the workshop, a coach talked to us one on one and asked how we felt during the exercise,” said Ann, “and if we were satisfied with our performance, or if we could have done something different or better. Then the coach would talk with us to work through all the feelings we had during the exercise.”

Lea Gilbert, DEFHR Office Manager, also participated in the workshop. Lea elaborated on her experience when working with a mare: “I worked in the round pen with a horse, getting her to follow me with no equipment other than looking at her and using my body language. The goal was to connect to the horse. I was able to get her to follow me. I felt a very strong sense of communication with her. It was very powerful and moving. The strength of the emotions really surprised me.”

“We also did an exercise where a team of four of us, without speaking, had to agree on a task for a horse to perform and get him to do it. The goal was to connect and cooperate nonverbally with my teammates. It was frustrating, funny and in the end, very rewarding. We all felt a great sense of accomplishment when we were done. It really brought home to me the power of nonverbal communication, and how important it is to consider others’ insights. Another lesson was to try doing things another way if the first way doesn’t work,” added Lea.

Both Ann and Lea learned the value of teamwork. “Teamwork can be powerful when everyone is working toward the same goal, with cooperation instead of personal agendas,” said Lea. Both found that the experience stuck with them. “The feeling of connection I had with the mare in the round pen has not left me,” said Lea. “It was very powerful. It has made me want to work with horses again.”

For Lea, the most important thing she took away from the workshop “was that verbal communication is not the only, or necessarily, the best way to communicate with others.” She recognized that nonverbal communication was a big lesson for her, “as I am a talker,” said Lea humorously. Horses are naturally adept at using body language to communicate, and humans can read the moods and emotions of equines through their body language. Supported by a skilled coach and gentle horses, Equus Coaching lets you see yourself through the eyes of a horse while practicing new self-management abilities. Clearly, the Equus Coaching Workshop has proven to be a highly effective learning experience to build effective leadership and communication skills.

For further information about the Equus Coaching Workshop, and future sessions at DEFHR, contact Nicky Wetzelberger, Community Outreach Director at 301-854-5037.
Look at Him Now!

Freedom Fighter was on a farm where there was no food or water when he and 17 other horses were impounded by Animal Control in June. His body condition score was 1 on arrival (out of 9). Four months into rehabilitation, he was back to healthy weight! UPDATE 11/14: Freedom has been adopted!

Freedom Fighter on arrival June 2017 (left) and back to healthy weight, October 2017 (right).

Waiting for Adoption

October Orchid

October Orchid has been a farm favorite from the day she set foot at DEFHR in October 2016. She is a brave, confident filly even though she is only a yearling. She enjoys being the leader in her small herd of young horses. Orchid already was a participant in a groundwork clinic with Trevor Carter/Forever Foundation where she learned how to lunge and even load on a horse trailer. She inherited her mama’s good looks with her bright coloring and fun markings as well as her daddy’s striking neck and head and laid back personality! She has patiently been waiting for her right family to come along and give her a bright future. With her bravery, she is sure to make a great partner in competitive trail.

Ugo Uber

Ugo Uber is a member of DEFHR’s elite group, the SOS (Save our Seniors) program. He was a shoo-in because he is over 20 years old and he makes the 20+ group look pretty good! Uber has a long resume as a herd stallion and sire to many even-keeled offspring, but since arriving at DEFHR, his role has changed a bit! Now he is a mellow gelding who enjoys staying in a stall during the hot, sunny days with a fan blowing cool air gently in his face. He enjoyed a few months at the Silver Spring Equine Retreat (the farm of one of our fabulous volunteer trainers) where he was pampered and started under saddle. He continued his training after he returned and has improved daily. He is a smooth ride and was fearless on his first trail ride where he led/followed, tackled fallen logs in the trail, went through streams and trotted in the open field. He’s ready to find a partner who will continue some ring work as well as exploring the trails!
Thanks to record crowds and record funds raised, this year’s Fall Festival was a huge success! The gorgeous weather no doubt contributed to attendance at Friday night’s Kickoff Party, with the 19th Street Band playing as the crowd enjoyed front-lawn games, beer and barbecue, and special appearances by Barney and his side kick Nugget.

During Saturday’s Fall Festival, Barney was once again one of the major highlights. He was a “hippy” for the costume contest, gave rides to two lucky raffle winners, and capped off the arena events with the comic “Golden Donut” routine where he played the “cop” chasing after “burglar” Nugget.

Quest was another highlight of the equine events happening in the arena. His journey from an abused/neglected pony with 3-foot long hooves to a happy, healthy pony loved by many was told by the rescuers, caregivers and trainers who helped him along the way. Even Dr. Peter O’Halloran and Peter Romjue, the veterinarian and farrier who helped his hooves and body heal, were there to share in the experience. After his rescue story was told, Quest performed with Assistant Trainer Leigha Schrader, then was officially presented to his adopter. There wasn’t a dry eye in the audience!
The day was made more complete with DEFHR rescue horses returning to show off what they have learned with their adopters, horse costume contest, pony rides, petting zoo and more.
DEFHR CEO & Howard County Exec Swap Jobs for a Day

As part of Howard County’s Farm-City Celebration dedicated to bringing rural and urban communities together, DEFHR Chief Executive Officer Erin Clemm Ochoa switched places for a day with County Executive Allan Kittleman. When Ochoa reported to the Howard County government office, her first order of business was to sign a proclamation giving her authority in the county and declaring September 26 as “Farmer Allan Day” in honor of Kittleman. Ochoa then met with county officials to explore ways DEFHR can strengthen ties within the county in the area of community service and getting students into the outdoor classroom.

During the day, Ochoa spoke with county health officials about the opioid epidemic in Howard County. She learned how to administer the life-saving drug, naloxone, in case of an overdose. During her time at the county’s Public Safety Training Center, she had the opportunity to drive through the collision avoidance training course, practicing maneuverability and quick-response driving skills.

Meanwhile, back at DEFHR, “farmer” Kittleman met some of the volunteers as he cleaned stalls, fed horses, drove a tractor and did other chores. He enjoyed grooming Officer Barney, a former Baltimore Mounted Police horse. Later, in his remarks to the press, Kittleman said, “Days End is more than a horse rescue. This is a place where people can be healed inside as well as helping the horses being healed. It’s an amazing place.”

Ochoa was excited when the county approached her to participate in this year’s farmer-executive switch. After the job swap, she said, “I got to meet with some wonderful people doing fantastic work in Howard County. I’m so thankful for this opportunity. My power only lasted for a day, but I made many relationships that I know will continue to grow for the farm and the Maryland equine industry.

On September 30, Summerhill Polo in Poolesville, MD hosted Polo for a Cause, helping raise funds for DEFHR horses, like Falling For Fable who performed during half time at the event. Fable came from Prince George’s County in November 2016 as a neglected, unbroke 15 year old. She was fearful of humans, and her trainer spent months working to build a foundation of trust. They will both tell you it wasn’t easy. They recently had a breakthrough moment, and Fable has proven to be a wonderful sport horse. Since the polo event, she participated in her first hunter pace event, and she has an adoption pending!
WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING GRANTORS

- ASPCA
- Bernice Barbour Foundation
- Brennan Equine Welfare Fund/Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- EQUUS Foundation
- Frank Ewing Foundation
- Greenberg Animal Welfare Foundation
- Summerlee/Annie Lee Roberts Emergency Rescue Fund
- Mars Foundation
- Maryland Horse Industry Board
- Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen’s Association
- NAVS Sanctuary Fund
- Paul L. Stine, Sr. Memorial Fund/Foundation
- Pennsylvania National Horse Show Foundation
- Community Foundation of Frederick County
- Ray Rowe Trusts for Animals
- Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance Foundation
- Unwanted Horse Coalition

NEW ARRIVALS:

Reggie, Samara, Tia, Udaya, Veda, Windsor, Xodus, Yoseph, Zane, Autumn Afternoon, Bristol Bay, Crystal Clear, Dawn’s Delight, Ensley’s Entourage, Freedom Fighter, Gaia’s Gift, Hopeful Hadley, Ilena’s Intuition, Joyful Johanna, Kit Kat, Lover’s Lane, Miss Margo, Nicola’s Neigh, Outer Orbit, Puzzle Pieces, Quiet Quincy, Rock n Roll, Shannon’s Song, Taylor’s Tune, Unique Udele, Virtual Vloyerager, Walkabout Willie, Xara’s Xpertise, YY, ZZ, Arc Angel Avalon, Big Bad Ben

OFF-SITE TRAINING/FOSTER

Ugo Uber

ADOPTED

Frega, Instant Inferno, Helena Handbasket, Perfectly Platinum, Red Rover, Quitie, Poptart, Have a Happy Holiday, Nickels, Zeppelin, Isadora, Tobias, Sophia, Iris, Harlequuin, Fancy Free, Wishing Well, Just Jumping Jupiter, Xee Xalted, Santana, Kandy Kane Kisses, Athena, Que Queso, Krispy Kreme, Yana, Aztec’s Autumn Adventure, Ginny’s Gracious Gift, Delmar, Have a Happy Holiday, Charlestown, Ebba’s Everlasting Eternity, Quest, Jessie James, Carrie’s Cowboy Casanova, La La Lucy, Fruit Fusion, Freedom Fighter, Gabe

RETURNED

Have a Happy Holiday, Outbourne Osbourne, Torque, Xpedition, Loki

RIP

Crystal Clear, Percy, Hopeful Hadley, Big Bad Ben

THE ESSENTIAL JOY OF BEING WITH HORSES IS THAT IT BRINGS US IN CONTACT WITH THE RARE ELEMENTS OF GRACE, BEAUTY, SPIRIT AND FREEDOM.”

~ Sharon Ralls Lemon
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