Being only 5 feet tall, I am often assigned the small ponies that not all the other volunteer trainers can ride. Of course, I don’t mind in the slightest because the ponies have always been my favorite. There is something about that silly ‘pony-tude’ and quick trot that I cannot get enough of.

As you can imagine, my eyes lit up with excitement when I heard that three new ponies had come through DEFHR’s doors. I walked into the barn where my eyes went straight to a beautiful bay Welsh-type pony with the cutest white snip on his nose. I could see that as soon as he gained weight, he was going to be picture perfect: flowing mane and forelock, thick neck, great conformation. . . It didn’t take long for me to run to DEFHR trainer Sara Strauss crying, “I call THAT one!” This pony was named Ronan. After fawning over him for a few minutes, I proceeded to look at the other two new arrivals. One of which was a paint named Tonka, and the other, a bay pony named Slick. Slick was about Ronan’s size, but I looked past him quickly. He had the mane of a rat and a puffy forelock and a neck the size of a toothpick. He was obviously gaited and had no muscling. I made fun of him. I told Sara, “Give THAT one to Leigh (another petite training team member), so I can have Ronan.” At the time, I didn’t realize how wrong I was with my judgment of this toothpick of a pony.

As I waited patiently, time went on and all three horses went through their rehab without any problems. Ronan and Slick were then castrated and eventually introduced to the herd. In July of 2014, Scott Purdum held a colt starting clinic, so Sara and Lyn Purdum (volunteer trainer) decided to take Ronan and Slick. Both did great and Sara continued their training for the next few weeks. After what seemed like an eternity, I was finally allowed to get on Ronan. I continued with his training until he was adopted, which definitely

Leigha started volunteering for DEFHR in 2009 at the age of 12. At the time, she had no horse experience, but set large goals for herself to learn. She always dreamed of being on DEFHR’s training team, and with the help of many DEFHR staff and other trainers, she was assigned her first ‘training project’ in November 2012. She then worked closely with DEFHR trainer Sara Strauss as an intern in 2013/2014. Currently, Leigha continues to work closely with a handful of DEFHR horses, preparing them for adoption. The opportunities at DEFHR are endless, and Leigha is very thankful for all the experiences and adventures of a lifetime DEFHR has given to her. As of the end of April 2015, she had contributed 6,159 volunteer hours.
challenged me as he did have much more ‘pony-tude’ than expected.

A couple weeks after I started with Ronan, I came down to the ring to find Sara working with Slick, the ‘gross pony.’ Sara asked me to get on him. I laughed and at first thought she was joking. Yes, I got on Slick: the toothpick pony. I don’t think I’ve ever laughed so hard; his gait was the funniest thing I’ve ever sat. As Sara and I joked back and forth about how funny Slick is and how weird I felt, I was coming down the long side when Slick spooked at something. Let me tell you, it all happened in slow motion. Slick took off bucking, and I was flailing around.

Next thing I know, I am face planted on the ground with a cup of sand down my throat. It wasn’t the best introduction, but that’s how we met. After that, I continued working with Slick. I watched him start getting stronger. It didn’t take long before his neck was larger than toothpick size. We started jumping because I could tell how much he loved it. Then out of the blue, Slick started doing something strange. It took me a while to figure out what he was doing, but in reality, Slick was TROTting. I didn’t see that one coming! With getting stronger, Slick started to pick up the trot instead of his normal gait, so I encouraged it. Yes, I would like to take credit for magically teaching him how to trot, but really, I didn’t do anything. Slick continued to amaze me with his progress and willingness to try. He gave me his all and it wasn’t long before he stole my heart for good.

There is something special about Slick: something that makes him different from all the others, even Ronan. I could swear this pony has more heart than any other pony I have ever worked with. The amount of try he gives you every day is incredible. He is my best friend and he will always have my trust. I don’t know how I ever doubted this pony because he has shown me that he has potential to be anything his adopter wants him to be.

Nowadays, Slick remains at DEFHR waiting for his forever home to come along. I continue to ride him consistently, which has turned him into a very handsome, fit, muscular, ‘stud-muffin’ of a pony. We LOVE to jump and go on trail rides together. We made our public debut at the Pennsylvania Horse World Expo with the DEFHR Drill Team and Slick was an absolute star! We also love to do tricks! We are currently working on perfecting the bow and lay down.

It is hard to describe on paper how much Slick means to me, but just know that he is a very special little pony that will always have a huge place in my heart. Slick taught me to never judge a horse from the outside, but from the inside. He taught me that passion and hard work are more than the most perfect conformation. He taught me that every horse that walks through DEFHR’s doors has potential for greatness. Thank you, Slick, for teaching the lesson I needed to learn, being the friend I could rely on, and for giving me the ride of a lifetime.

Days End Farm Horse Rescue

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DEFHR is a non-profit animal welfare organization established in 1989 to ensure quality care and treatment of horses through intervention, education and outreach. DEFHR exists primarily on donations from individuals and businesses. Donations may be made by check, money order, Visa, MasterCard or Discover. To make a credit card donation, call (301) 854-5037 or (410) 442-1564. Donations are tax deductible under IRS Tax Code 501(c)3.

Information contained in “Horse Talk” is the opinion of the authors and may not reflect the opinion of Days End affiliates.
In July 2014, an animal protection officer from the Montgomery County Maryland Department of Police responded to an anonymous call about a riding stable on Martinsburg Road in Dickerson, Maryland. With search warrant in hand, the officer went to the property where he saw seven horses in various states of neglect. Some had overgrown, misshapen hooves. Two were terribly malnourished. Most of the water troughs were dry, and the hay was weedy and moldy.

Under Maryland law, police officers and authorized humane agents can seize animals to protect them from cruelty and neglect. By law, an animal is defined as “[A] living creature except a human being” Md. Code Ann., Criminal Law § 10-601(b). The Maryland Horse Council publishes Minimum Standards of Care for Equines to let owners know just what this law means for horses. It spells out what is “nutritious food in sufficient quantity,” what is “proper drink” and “shelter,” how much space must be made available. It also provides a guideline on necessary veterinary care.

Intervention for a horse that may need protection starts with the call from a Good Samaritan. DEFHR receives two to three of these calls a month, which we refer to animal protection authorities. After receiving these calls, the agents will go to the scene and call a veterinarian to assess the animals when necessary. The vet provides the owners with a care plan and time to comply with Maryland’s animal welfare law.

When owners fail to comply and/or if the conditions warrant an impound, the agents seek a warrant from the county judge. With warrant in hand, they will call DEFHR, usually with a request to deploy to the scene very quickly. At the time of the seizure, the agent lets the judge know whether charges will be brought against the owner. When charges will be pressed, the impound becomes part of the case. DEFHR helps gather evidence, taking pictures and documenting the scene, facility and condition of the horses.

Two of the severely emaciated horses from the Montgomery County seizure—Yasmine and Zelda—were brought to DEFHR that July. Unfortunately, Yasmine’s immune system was so compromised that she died of pneumonia soon after arriving at DEFHR. Zelda has come a long way and has an adoption pending. It took many months, but there is some justice for Yasmine and Zelda.

Once at DEFHR, the horses are in our protective care and custody. Although the horse is still the property of the owner, DEFHR is responsible for feeding and rehabilitating the horse, as well as documenting every detail in support of the ongoing judiciary process. We keep track of medications, daily care and all expenses, knowing that the court can subpoena evidence at any time.

In Maryland, the owner has 7 days to file a replevin seeking the return of the animal. If he does, a hearing will take place to determine the rightful owner and any possible damages.

Double Dutch was a miniature horse that was impounded for neglect in September 2014 from Washington County. His owner filed a replevin, and DEFHR went to the hearing armed with pictures and documentation. The owner’s attorney advised him to relinquish Dutch to avoid prosecution because the evidence against him was strong enough to convict. Dutch’s ownership was officially turned over to DEFHR, which meant we could seek his second chance home.

In some Maryland counties, the number of animal welfare cases coming before the courts is small, and judges are unfamiliar with replevin hearings involving animals. For the horses involved in these cases, it is best that there is a successful outcome at the replevin hearing, because if not, the case can drag on for months or even years. DEFHR’s longest court case took two years.

When we do go to court, we submit binders of evidence and provide expert testimony for the prosecution of the owner.

In Montgomery County, where the seven horses were seized, the owner did not file a replevin. The county assumed ownership, which it transferred to DEFHR. The owner was charged with 16 counts of animal cruelty and abuse, and it went to court on April 9, 2015. He was found guilty of 12 counts, was banned from owning animals, and was sentenced to three years of supervised probation.

In addition to providing vet care to DEFHR’s horses, Monocacy Equine Veterinary Associates appears in court to speak on behalf of the animals. They do this free of charge. Our farriers are also willing to testify if called to do so, and have provided consultation in some cases. The support of these professionals helps ensure successful legal proceedings.

Within the last 15 years, animal protection agents, with DEFHR’s support, have been seeing more successes in finding justice for horses like Yasmine. The number of cases going to court has increased significantly, and more counties are willing to press charges and prosecute owners, which can only help horses in the future.

Justice for Yasmine
It is natural to feel sentimental about a place where you spent a lengthy amount of time. Any place that is the subject of a magical number of memories can claim a hold on you and cause you to wish to return someday. However, it takes a special kind of place and corresponding experience to take your heart and mind wholly. It must be more than a place, more than a series of postcard pictures from your past.

When I read stories about DEFHR’s horses, their pasts and their recoveries, I cry. When I catch up with my DEFHR friends, I laugh. I follow what new ventures DEFHR is taking on and where the organization is heading next. I think about the farm every single day, and that is not likely to change as the number of hours between the present time and my time there multiply.

When I applied to be an intern at DEFHR, I did not expect to be picked. I had little experience and was not studying animal science or anything similar. So when I received the email telling me that I had been accepted into the program, I immediately felt surprised but also overwhelmingly grateful because I knew that this experience was going to change me forever. What I did not realize right then was how.

One of DEFHR’s main stated goals is to educate, and I think that is really key to their success in the sense that they are consistently, widely and enthusiastically supported and are capable of working miracles every day. I realize that DEFHR did not look at my application and think, ‘Here is a girl who knows lots about horses and is going to be as capable as staff on day one.’ No, I think they thought, ‘Here is a girl who has spent some time with horses, has much to learn, and is eager to grow.’ I think I was picked because DEFHR knew I would get a lot out of the experience.

A day did not go by that I was not taught something, whether formally or informally. I learned terminology, handling techniques, the basics of LART, first aid, physiological and anatomical information, trust, patience and initiative. I was never alone in this process but I was given responsibilities and leadership tasks. I met skilled and well-known vets and professionals who gave me further insight to the world of horses. This is a discipline I had followed from a distance my whole life, but had never been a part of in depth. I appreciated DEFHR’s efforts and presence even more once I truly grasped the larger picture.

One can read about horse abuse and animal rescue forever and it is not until one sees an emaciated horse in person and one gives it the sustenance and love it needs to recover, not until one sees a horse improve every single day little by little until it is normal again, not until one meets a horse that does not make it, not until one makes that everlasting connection with a horse - not until then does one understand how necessary and how amazing it is what is done at DEFHR every single day. Many people, when taken on a tour of the DEFHR, were amazed by the cases dealt with there and by the stories commencing at DEFHR. People need to see what is happening and know what is going on in their community and country.

It never ceases to astound me that some people do not care about animals in the same way they care about humans. I don’t know how one could see an animal in pain and not feel anything for it. I do not know how one can look into an animal’s eyes and see nothing at all. It is a mysterious part of human nature and hopefully it is becoming rarer as more people learn more about animals. I spent enough hours with horses to feel a need to understand them. I acted upon that need by coming to DEFHR, where it was fulfilled to the utmost. I believe it is not enough to just read about something; you must go out and learn about it firsthand. And now I can never go back to who I was before. I came to DEFHR seeking an experience for myself (and I got that too) but my journey undoubtedly transformed into something beyond the attainment of personal goals; it became a summer-long endeavor For The Horses.
Sandra Ziołkowski and her children Michael and Rhetta have been volunteering with DEFHR for three years. Sandy has been homeschooling them since they were old enough to attend school. In 2014, DEFHR’s former Community Outreach Director Jill Pokorny approached Sandra with the idea of setting up a DEFHR homeschool class. Here is Sandy’s recap of the program’s launch in 2014.

When I asked Jill how she came up with the idea, she explained it this way:

The idea for the program came from my time working alongside weekday volunteers and leading educational tours. I learned that we had an outstanding asset in homeschool students, and parents who were interested in learning more about equines. They were also available on weekdays to come out to help the horses. Because other students are away at school and so many people work during the week, volunteers who work on weekdays are needed. Plus they truly get to know the staff and the horses. So the idea formed for a program that could provide needed volunteers while allowing for a great bond and personal experience for homeschool students and parents.

I saw the way that Michael and Rhetta had fallen in love with DEFHR and that staff truly enjoyed working with Sandy and the kids as they were sponges for knowledge. They were the foundation of this idea, which is why it made so much sense to ask them to lead it! Who knows better what students want to learn than students themselves? I was delighted when your family was willing to take on the leadership of the program and connecting with homeschool groups. I can think of nothing better to help the mission of DEFHR than to have such a fantastic community of homeschoolers be involved in loving the horses.

Rhetta, Michael and I began volunteering at DEFHR in May of 2012, and have learned so much from the staff and other volunteers that we were thrilled to have the opportunity to teach others.

The homeschool sessions began in September 2014. A new topic is offered each month with two sessions per month. The classes have filled quickly and retained a core group of students. Working with Nicky Wetzellberger [current Community Outreach Director] we have also added another four-week segment to offer to homeschool co-op groups which could not be accommodated in the regular sessions.

We started the series with a Basic Grooming and General Care session, and many of the children were able to work with a horse for the first time in their lives. It was exciting for the children and for us to witness. There are some children who are very tentative around the horses, but having Rhetta and Michael (who are 11-year-old twins) leading the class helps put them at ease.

Other topics we have covered are The Hoof, Body Language and Psychology, Digestion, and Assessing the New Arrival.

(cont’d on pg. 6)
During these sessions, the class has learned how to properly groom a horse, pick a hoof and lead a horse.

During the session where they learned how to lead a horse, there was one little girl who stood out. Isaac was one of the horses we used, and he being challenging. He would eat grass, check out the mares in the round pen, smell the urine in the arena and exhibit the Flehman response [curling back his upper lips and inhaling with closed nostrils]. One of the small, quiet girls in the class approached, took the lead rope and was in total control the whole time. She was focused and confident and Isaac totally respected her. She had never led a horse before in her life and was so proud of herself afterwards. We were amazed and proud also.

Our ultimate goal is to teach proper horse care, confidence and compassion.

When Rhetta, Michael and I were looking for opportunities to volunteer with animals I remembered that I had heard about DEFHR from Sue Rosenberg, who was volunteering here when I first met her way back when. There aren’t many opportunities for children to work with animals at such a young age. When I asked founder Kathy Howe why she set up her organization to allow young children, her answer was very simple: “They are the next generation of rescuers.” She is correct! I hope we are passing this message along.

This program is unique. There are no other farms that offer education and hands-on time with the horse.

We have received excellent feedback about the program. Here are just a few comments:

Sandy, thank you so much for organizing this for our kiddos; your kids were so impressive with their presentation skills and horse care knowledge. It was very nice for my boys who are just starting homeschooling, to see other homeschoolers who are confident and knowledgeable teaching others. We look forward to next month’s class! –Terri

. . . my daughter, Harper, had a wonderful experience at the farm yesterday. Thank you so much for leading this program and making it such a positive experience. She was anxious before she arrived and is now eagerly awaiting next month. –Pam

Kaydence and I had a blast and cannot wait for the next session. –Kasha

This program would not be possible without the wonderful dedication of the staff at DEFHR or the amazing nature of the program horses who lovingly tolerate the sessions.

Grapes of Hooves

Our 8th annual Grapes of Hooves event took place at Dutch’s Daughter Restaurant in Frederick on March 28. During this silent/live auction, guests enjoyed fine wines from around the world paired with foods selected to complement each other. Winning bidders left the evening with trips, overnight experiences, gift certificates, tickets to the arts, limited edition prints, original paintings and artwork, jewelry, gift baskets, riding lessons and more. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers who solicited most of the auction items and helped make this a successful event. We raised close to $38,000 for the horses!

In April, youths came to DEFHR to volunteer and learn during the Junior Legacy Breakout session.

Volunteers from Junior Legacy

Rod and Patti Turk (front), Evan and Susan Rosenberg (back) enjoyed DEFHR’s 2015 Grapes of Hooves event.
My family’s choice to give to DEFHR and other charities began with my father, who was a dairy farmer. He believed in, and encouraged others to live, a life of service and duty to one’s neighbor. And he served as an example. One of his favorite charities was the Heifer Project in Central Pennsylvania, an ecumenical effort to process/can donated beef for distribution to those in need.

I worked for more than 38 years as a nurse, a different kind of service. Some time ago, I read an article about a family that felt that Christmas gifts had gotten ridiculously expensive and less meaningful, predictable and “did-you-really-want-me-to-have-another-necktie” kind of thing. The mom decided to make a donation to her husband’s favorite charity. She put the thank-you note for the contribution in a white envelope in the Christmas tree. It was a success and became a tradition. The seeds were planted in my mind.

In the past 5 years, my husband and I have had 5 biological grandchildren and 2 older granddaughters by marriage. After the first couple Christmases with the little ones, new grandparents and blended families, the level of gifts was out of control. In the past, we’d given to the American Red Cross, animal shelters, churches. Somehow, the Heifer Project popped in my head and I looked up Heifer International. That was the start of my husband and me selecting a gift to give on behalf of the family.

The first year, we chose a llama to give through Heifer International. We sent in our contribution, received some lovely thank-you note cards to use, bought some small stuffed llamas and wrapped them up. When we had our family Christmas gathering, we sat the kids down at the end of the gift madness and talked about all the things they’d received and how other children/people and families in the world weren’t so fortunate. We explained what we had done: provided an animal that a family could use for transportation, for wool, for milk, possibly another little llama and then gave them each their stuffed llama. We gave the thank-you cards to their parents.

While that first year was a surprise for the children, the next year, they were prepared and wanted to know what we were doing. We looked for something a little different and found Oxfam, another program where you can donate an animal to someone in need. We chose a goat this time and bought little stuffed goats for the grandkids. My husband had the opportunity to babysit our oldest grandson after the holidays and brought up the llama and goat. Colin knew right away what he was talking about, went and found both toys and told his Grandpa what they meant.

For 2014, we wanted to do something closer to home. Our previous gifts had been for people and places far away. Even the farmer’s daughter, I was looking for a way to give to farmers in need but didn’t find a source. Then I saw something about Days End. I have loved horses all my life and am very grateful that DEFHR exists to help these magnificent animals.

So I checked the website and found that Days End is in Maryland where we live. I didn’t know at the time that Days End has souvenir stuffed horses or we would have gotten those. Instead we got little stuffed Clydesdales to represent the gifts, and we explained that this time we would be able to visit the place where our gift went. And instead of a one-time gift, we elected to do a monthly donation for ongoing care. We received a lovely sponsorship certificate for a horse named Eloise, and hope to visit the farm and her soon.

We grandparents also get stuffed animals for ourselves, which we keep on the mantle. The kids see them when they come to visit and we continue to discuss what they represent. Overall, this has made us all (kids and grownups alike) more aware of those people and animals who are needful. It helps put the gift in perspective. In addition, when the parents sort through existing clothes and toys, they use the stuffed animals to talk to the kids about what they need to keep and what to give away.

For me, this is a way to continue my father’s legacy. Even though he did not live to meet these grandkids, he would be pleased that we are encouraging them to think about others in need. We are hopefully planting the seeds of service at an early age.

As the grandkids grow, we will look for other opportunities and encourage the support of those less fortunate and will solicit their input. It also makes a great gift for our adult family members (only the kids get the stuffed animals). They have appreciated the nature of this gift much more than another item they could have gotten for themselves. There are so many people and animals in need that this is a great way for a family to give together.

The Mansir’s grandkids, Easter 2015 (all but one who lives in Texas). From left: Colin (5), Lily (5), Ethan (2) Emma (5), Becca (4), and Tori (19) holding their stuffed animals and Eloise’s sponsorship certificate.
My daughter, Allison Hanna, was bat mitzvah’d on May 2, 2015. This was the culmination of years of religious school training she got through the Matan program, an organization headquartered in New York with the mission to expose Jewish children with learning differences to the wonder of Jewish life and to foster literate and engaged Jews through creative and multi-sensory approaches.

When we started to plan for Allison’s bat mitzvah, we were fortunate enough to meet an amazing rabbi who developed a course of study designed to help Allison understand her Torah portion, connect to her Jewish identity, and realize the importance of being a responsible person by serving her community.

At the beginning of our time together, the rabbi asked us to find a community service project that Allison could participate in. I imagine he initially expected we would volunteer at a food bank, or a homeless shelter, or Goodwill, or someplace similar; all worthy undertakings but not ones that I felt Allison would connect with. Given her love of animals, the rabbi suggested we try to find an opportunity to help in a way that had an animal connection. I Googled “horse volunteer opportunities Maryland” and with a little navigation, found DEFHR.

When Allison and I came for volunteer orientation in April 2014, I had no idea what a phenomenal operation we’d find. I can say that the DEFHR experience has had a profound impact on Allison. From the first day, volunteer coordinator Carrie has been amazing, and all of the staff members have treated Allison with kindness and patience. We have volunteered most weekends over the past year, and it was clear from Allison’s bat mitzvah speech that her time at DEFHR has been very positive for her. Here’s an excerpt:

“When I started studying to become a bat mitzvah, we talked about why it is important to make the world a better place. I think we should not litter, smoke, drink alcohol, and should not commit crimes. That’s how I think we can make the world a better place. Rabbi Lowell asked me to think about a service activity I could do to make the world a better place and I chose to volunteer at the Days End Farm Horse Rescue, called DEFHR, where volunteers help horses that have been abused or neglected. I think it is important to help the horses so that they don’t get sick or need to get help from a vet. I get to muck fields and stalls, feed the horses, and take care of them. I also get to groom the horses, hang out with them, pet them and play with them.

We go there almost every Saturday. It is important because it makes the horses happy, and it is something that helps them live a better life. During my time at DEFHR, I have learned that horses that have either been abused or neglected or both might be scared of people at first, and that horses love people when they realize that they’re nice. I really enjoyed my time at the horse farm hanging out with Addie, Juliet, Nate, Danto, Inka, Atlas, Kaboom, River, Toby, Isaac, Ozzie, Boston, Bam Bam and Flyer.

To Carrie and the rest of the DEFHR staff, my sincere thanks for having such a positive influence on Allison and for making DEFHR such a fantastic experience for her.

—Erin Ochoa, Executive Director

Q. I’m thinking about getting a horse and am considering adopting. I’ve heard that horses rescued from bad situations can have behavioral problems. Is that true?

A. It can be, but it’s not typical. You have to remember that all horses that come to our rescue are here because their prior lives were less than ideal. It is our job to rehabilitate them physically and psychologically. Luckily, 98% of our horses make full recoveries and 94% are adopted. Many of our adopted horses have gone on to become successful in various careers, including eventing, hunter/jumper, games, competitive trail and dressage. Some have gone on to be champions, even WORLD champions. And many of those horses had behavioral quirks either when they arrived or when they were adopted. It just takes time and patience from those who interact with them to work through those issues, bring them to their full potential, and let them shine.

“I’m always in awe of how horses at DEFHR invite you back into their lives, no matter how they have been treated by humans in the past. They are so forgiving.”

—Erin Ochoa, Executive Director

Do you have a question for IPod? Email: info@defhr.org
Steuart Pittman: Champion of the Thoroughbred

by Mark McGowan of McGowan Content

Steuart L. Pittman, Jr. is the 2014 recipient of the DEFHR Distinguished Equine Citizen Award. This honor is given annually to an individual who exemplifies Days End’s goal of ensuring the humane and healthy treatment of horses. The award was created in memory of Brenda Curry who served Days End as a donor, volunteer, Board Member, Board Chair and friend.

Steuart Pittman’s passion for Thoroughbred horses began developing early in his life. As a teenager, Steuart learned about dressage and evented on a Thoroughbred mare named Hurricane Hannah. Later, Steuart’s Thoroughbred stallion Salute the Truth (aka Willy) reached the highest level of American eventing. While working in his roles as trainer, coach and competitor, Steuart’s tireless work as an advocate of Thoroughbred horses has won him the respect and recognition of the animal welfare community, and his work continues to have a positive impact in both the horse riding and horse racing worlds.

In 2014, more than 20,000 Thoroughbred foals were registered in the U.S., according to the Jockey Club. For several decades, though, Thoroughbred horses have been largely overlooked as recreational and riding horses at the end of their racing careers. Breeds such as Quarter Horses and Arabians have been more successfully promoted in those roles. Aftercare organizations work to overcome this challenge, providing a safety net and giving Thoroughbreds a space to heal following their racing careers. Retired racehorses, also called Off-Track Thoroughbreds (OTTBs), typically make up 30 percent of DEFHR’s population.

Steuart Pittman, through his Retired Racehorse Project (RRP), is working to increase demand for retired Thoroughbred racehorses and place them in second careers “by educating the public about the history, distinctive characteristics, versatility of use, and appropriate care and training of the iconic American Thoroughbred,” as stated in RRP’s mission statement. Steuart would like to see demand for OTTBs increase to where Steuart Pittman, through his Retired Racehorse Project (RRP), is working to increase demand for retired Thoroughbred racehorses and place them in second careers “by educating the public about the history, distinctive characteristics, versatility of use, and appropriate care and training of the iconic American Thoroughbred,” as stated in RRP’s mission statement. Steuart would like to see demand for OTTBs increase to where Thoroughbreds are more profitable as riding horses than as racers at the lower levels of the sport. This increase in value would allow the racing industry to retire horses earlier when they are more sound and would alleviate the need for long recovery times for OTTBs prior to their second careers.

As part of its mission, RRP organizes and hosts events around the U.S. that feature OTTBs demonstrating their abilities. Since its inception in 2010, RRP has organized and hosted Trainer Symposia and Trainer Challenges to educate people about the viability of Thoroughbreds in second careers. RRP’s Most Wanted Thoroughbreds competitions (in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Virginia and Oklahoma in 2015) showcase four select horses and are, according to Steuart, “a way to show a large audience what a Thoroughbred can do after it retires.” RRP Thoroughbreds for All events showcase local partners and will take place in Kentucky and Saratoga, New York, this year.

A greatly expanded Thoroughbred Makeover and National Symposium will take place in Lexington, Kentucky, on October 23-25 following two years at Baltimore’s Pimlico Race Track. The Thoroughbred Makeover and National Symposium will leverage $2.5 million in care and training for 350 Thoroughbred horses in anticipation of their transition to second careers. The results of this training will be on display as all 350 horses compete for $100,000 in prize money in one or two of ten available riding disciplines; 200 of the 350 horses will be available for purchase. An online catalogue will be available to prospective buyers prior to the competition. Among the other features at the Thoroughbred Makeover are 10 seminars focused on placing retired racehorses, a Launch Party for the new Off-Track Thoroughbred Magazine, and a sponsor fair with booths for suppliers of tack, art, nutrition, therapy, equipment, education, training and Thoroughbred aftercare.

In advance of the Thoroughbred Makeover, RRP is conducting previews for local audiences at events such as the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event, Thoroughbreds for All (cont’d on pg. 10)
Information about the Thoroughbred Makeover and other RRP events can be found on the Events page of the RRP website (www.retiredracehorseproject.org). Also available on the website are a wealth of tools and information that connect the people involved in transitioning OTTBs to their second careers. A Directory of farms, racetracks and non-profits helps buyers quickly locate the resources they need to find a horse. Sellers can post horse listings for free in the Horse Listings area. A Bloodline Brag section helps buyers research the suitability of horses for second careers by pedigree using ratings posted by owners. RRP website visitors can become RRP Founding Members or click through to Paypal to make donations. Thoroughbred news and advice is available on the site and RRP gear can be purchased in support of the Retired Racehorse Project.

In between RRP events, Steuart Pittman works as a trainer and coach at Dodon Farm Training Center in Davidsonville Maryland. The Pittman family’s roots run deep on this 550-acre tract of land where Steuart and his family reside. Steuart and his siblings are the 8th generation of their family to own Dodon Farm. The farm was purchased in 1725 by Dr. George Hume Steuart, medical doctor, farmer, horse breeder and winner of the first recorded horse race in Maryland colony, the Annapolis Subscription Cup. Dr. Steuart won the race on his horse Dungannon, a Thoroughbred imported from England. Steuart is starting to see the positive effects of his work as people rediscover the myriad talents and merits of Thoroughbreds. Young people are dreaming of training and riding a Thoroughbred horse. As the RRP continues to foster respect and understanding between the racing and riding communities, Steuart looks forward to a time when the next generation of horse people “crave a Thoroughbred.” Thanks to his RRP, that time should arrive very soon.

POLLY (ADP)

Polly is an 11-year-old, 15.2-hand Thoroughbred who came to DEFHR along with a severely emaciated stallion from Prince George’s County in April 2014. Polly rehabilitated quickly and last summer was accepted for professional training with The Equine Welfare Society (EWS) in Keswick, VA. EWS is a non-profit organization whose mission includes providing rehabilitation and training resources to abused and neglected horses with the goal of transitioning them into useful and wanted companions (www.equinewelfaresociety.org). Working with Polly since July 2014 is EWS Head Trainer and 3-Day Eventer, Kate Samuels, who is also a writer/editor for Eventing Nation.

Polly behaves well for vet and farrier visits, loading, is experienced working on the lunge line, riding in the outdoor arena and on trails. She is suitable for pleasure, trails, English and dressage. She passed vetting in September 2014 with clean x-rays. She requires a calm, confident rider. Polly is being promoted on FaceBook and won’t last long! Go to DEFHR’s website, Adopt page for a video of her in action.

DAREDEVIL (SOS)

DareDevil arrived in November 2011 from Prince George’s County, severely emaciated (with a body condition score of 1 out of 9, with 5 being ideal), with neglected teeth and hooves. He had severe thrush in all four hooves and dermatitis. After going through rehab, he was adopted in May 2012, and through no fault of his own was returned to DEFHR in 2014.

DareDevil is a sweet 15-year-old Tennessee Walker who despite being almost completely blind in both eyes, gets around well and quickly learns how to navigate his surroundings. He is available through our SOS (Save Our Seniors) program to a home where he will be loved and pampered. He would make an excellent companion to another horse.
Meet DEFHR’s Equine Programs Assistant: Brittney Carow

Brittney started volunteering at DEFHR when she was in high school. After earning a B.S. degree in Animal Science: Animal Management and Industry with a focus on Equine from the University of Maryland, she took a newly opened Assistant Farm Manager position at DEFHR. It is now nine years since she joined the staff, and she has seen a lot of changes.

You work full time with horses, you own two, one of which you ride weekly, and you take care of a boarder’s horse. How did you come to be so immersed in horses?

No one in my family is into horses, yet they are ingrained so deeply into who I am today. When I was about five or six I had a friend whose family was in the horse industry. Their pony, Penny, gave me my first experience on a horse and after that I went to summer camps and took lessons. When I was about ten I leased my first horse, Annie. Then in 1995 my mom purchased my first horse for me, a 10-year-old Quarter Horse gelding named Magnolia Super Jack, who I still have today. [Jack lives in Brittney’s backyard along with Dandelion, a Days End horse Steve and Mary Ann Erlitz adopted. The two horses are over 30 years old and are great buddies.]

To earn community service hours for high school, I started volunteering at DEFHR, then worked as an intern here while attending the University of Maryland. In college, I started out in pre-vet but switched to animal management when I realized that animal welfare and ensuring proper care was more of an interest to me. Soon after I graduated college, an Assistant Farm Manager position opened up at Days End.

Most of what I know today was mainly learned by working at Days End – the hands-on medical knowledge came through having to do it in the job. We always have horses with medical issues that need to be addressed. When it’s your job to care for them, you get adept in providing them with specialized treatments very quickly.

During your tenure here you’ve been Assistant Farm Manager, Education Coordinator, Farm Manager, and now Equine Programs Assistant. I imagine you’ve seen a lot of changes?

It’s hard to believe I will be here nine years in August. Things are always changing and evolving, which means things are never boring. When we outgrew the old facility and moved to this new one in 2008, it was exciting. I got to be part of building a new facility from the ground up.

DEFHR has grown exponentially in so many areas. Our community of supporters has grown. The horses are coming in larger groups and we are seeing more extreme cases. In education, the internship and Legacy programs have grown. We now have the Legacy barn, which opens education up to more people. We’re finding new ways of carrying out our mission, which branches out to helping horses outside of our farm. It builds awareness, which opens the eyes and ears of people not just on Days End’s property, but within the community.

Brittney with Gracie

It’s good that I live close since I’m on the emergency response team and have to be ready to respond quickly at all hours of the day or night. I enjoy the feeling of knowing I’m making a difference in a horse’s life and being part of the effort to save that life. I also love working with people who share that same passion.

I’m a results-oriented person. I love looking at the before and after. The bumps and tears along the way are worth it knowing you’ve helped that one animal. And you never forget the first horse you cared for all the way from rehabilitation to adoption; mine was Baker Bean.

What does your current position as Equine Programs Assistant entail?

My main focus is on growing adoptions and sponsors. I take initial inquiries from those wanting to adopt or those wanting to come to our farm to sponsor a horse. I’m responsible for updating our adoption website pages and for marketing our horses through the website, Facebook and other venues. I also work on maintaining open communication between DEFHR and its adopters after our horses have been adopted so that they know we are their support system.

I oversee the barn’s operations and horse care by working closely with our farm manager, so I don’t lose contact with the horses. I work with the interns year-round and as an emergency responder I get to go out on rescues. I went on the West Virginia impound [Madison County, WV, May 1st involving 14 horses scattered across 106 acres], which was exhausting, both physically and mentally. There were dead animals on the property; that’s never a good experience. As tired as I was at the end of the day, it felt good to know we were helping those still alive to get them into a safer environment.

I also assist with teaching our Equine Cruelty Investigator classes, Horse Care Clinics, Volunteer Continuing Education

(Cont’d on pg. 12)
Series, and other educational courses that we offer, both on and off-site. I like teaching. It’s a way to help the horses. Building that passion in others is so rewarding. I get that opportunity every day with volunteers, interns and staff. You can never know everything about horses, there’s always something new. Horses are so expressive. You can tell a lot about yourself in their presence—how you’re doing, your mood and how you’re projecting onto others, whether you’re doing a good job – it’s an eye-opening experience to work with them.

They’re so forgiving. It’s hard to think about what their lives must have been like before Days End, yet they move on and they’re happy. They put their pasts behind them, which is such a good life lesson. No matter what happens, you can go on. There’s so much they can teach us if we just take the time to listen.

I adopted a mare from Days End in January 2014, a 14-year-old paint named Dora. I’m finding that she lacks a good bit of self-confidence, especially on the trail, so I’ve been working on that with her. She’s definitely taught me patience in the last year and a half.

**What do you do outside the horse world?**

I love all kinds of music and going to concerts, spending time with friends, spoiling my other pets (dog and cat), and traveling. If I had enough time and money, I would be traveling all the time, all over the world!

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**2015 Horse World Expos**

Thank you to everyone who volunteered or attended the 2015 Horse World Expos and helped make them successful events! DEFHR’s Drill Team did a wonderful job showcasing the rescue breed and teaching the public why there is no greater reward than giving a second chance to a horse in need. The stands were packed with people watching the horses and riders perform their choreographed maneuvers to music. They were astounded to see each horse’s remarkable transformation. It was hard to believe how far they have come in the short time since their arrival at DEFHR.

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**Your Empty Feed Bags = Cash for Days End**

The Southern States Special Horse Organization Winner’s (SHOW) Program enables non-profit horse associations like DEFHR to earn 25¢ for each proof of purchase seal from Southern States, Legends® and Triple Crown® horse feed bags. All you have to do is collect the proof of purchase seals found on the back or side of horse feed bags and send them to:

DEFHR
P.O. Box 309
Lisbon, MD
21765

DEFHR can even earn $10 per ton on Southern States, Legends and Triple Crown pelleted feed. For bulk feed purchases, you need to submit the original customer copy of the delivery tickets.

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Many thanks to Anytime Tack (www.anytimetack.com) for the new logo vests for DEFHR’s show team.
Eagle Scout project: Run-in shed renovation

Junior high class at St. Matthew’s Presbyterian Church in Aspen Hill, Maryland, made horse treats for the horses and raised funds for DEFHR. Volunteer Kelly Seganish (on the right) spoke to the congregation about DEFHR.

Volunteers came to a painting class, creating their own masterpieces to take home.

Volunteer appreciation picnic
Good News! Our adoption radius has been expanded to include all of Virginia!

Volunteers needed at Woodbine and Rohrersville Facilities!

Volunteers needed at Woodbine and Rohrersville Facilities!

Volunteers are needed 7 days a week from 8 am to 5 pm. Please help!

Days End Farm Horse Rescue

Adopt Your Champion Today

40 Horses Ready for New Homes!

CALL NOW!
301-854-5037

www.defhr.org, programassistant@defhr.org
1372 Woodbine Rd, Woodbine, MD 21797

© Equine Welfare Society

On November 2, 2014, we held a training for new DEFHR Volunteer Farm Inspectors in Keswick, VA. We'd like to thank all those who attended! Thanks to all of you, we now have the manpower needed to carry out more adoptions into the entire state of Virginia! We'd also like to send out a huge thanks to Erica Stevens and the Equine Welfare Society for enabling the class to happen by graciously hosting the event at their gorgeous facility!

After being sponsored for training for the past couple of months, Eloise's sponsor, Tracy, made it official, adopting her on May 26, 2015. Tracy has loved this mare for a long time and dreamed of having her as her own, so we are happy that she is now living that dream. Congratulations, Eloise and Tracy! Here's to many happy years together!
WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE
THE FOLLOWING GRANTS
Received 11/21/14-5/22/15

- Frank M. Ewing Foundation
- Community Foundation of Frederick County: The Paul L. Stine Sr. Fund
- Maryland Thoroughbred Horsemen’s Association Tony Stewart Foundation
- Maryland Horse Industry Board
- American Humane Association: Meacham Foundation Memorial Grant
- The Snyder Foundation for Animals
- The Mars Foundation
- Prince Charitable Trusts

New Arrivals
Atlas, Boston, Casper, Dante, Éclair, Fleur, Geronimo, Harlequin, Inka, Juliet, Kaboom, Loki, Munchkin, Nugget

Returned
Mika, Xpresso, Remington, Hannah, Irish I’s

Off-site Training/Foster
Gwen, Huckleberry, Jeremiah, Macintosh, Navigator, Anastasia’s Ally, Poker, Dulcie, Poptart, Lola

Adopted
Ronan, Walker, Banjo, Country, East of Eden, Valentino, Charming Chester, Eloise, Zelda, Zoey

RIP
Frequent Flyer, Double Dutch, Harriet

Special thanks to:
Rebecca Gaffney, Contributing Editor
and
Bette Dolan, THE OUTER OFFICE,
for printing this issue of “Horse Talk.”

WISH LIST

For the Horses
- Box fans
- High-velocity floor fans
- Fly spray
- Sunscreen
- Ivermectin paste
- Panacur paste
- Breakaway halters

For the Barn/Facility
- Hose nozzles
- Hose shut offs (brass)
- Plastic pitchforks
- Wheelbarrows
- 8-liter feed buckets with handles
- Cosequin
- Corn oil
- Mineral bricks and blocks

For Education
- Walkie talkies
- Stethoscopes
- New desktop computers
- Lamination sleeves
- 15-tab dividers
- 3-inch black binders
- Clipboards
- Dry-erase markers

For the Office
- Copy paper
- Forever stamps
- Laminator
- Paper cutter
- Shredder
- 3-hole punch
Thank you for your support. Together we are protecting horses and educating people.

UPCOMING EVENTS
2015

June 7  Trainers Challenge
July-TBD Drag Bingo
Sept 19 Fall Festival
Oct 24 Scout Day
Dec 12 Holiday Party

Days End Farm Horse Rescue
1372 Woodbine Road, Woodbine, MD 21797
(Mail) P.O. Box 309, Lisbon, MD 21765-0309
(301) 854-5037, (410) 442-1564; www.defhr.org, info@defhr.org

Contribution Form
Spring/Summer 2015 NL

YES! I want to help the horses!

___Please contact me: I would like to pledge a multi-year donation of $_______ for ___years.

___Please contact me: I am interested in monthly horse sponsorship opportunities.

I am enclosing my tax-deductible contribution of:
$5000 $1000 $500 $250 $150 Other $________

Charge my gift to: Visa / Mastercard / Discover (please circle)
Card #:________________________ Expiration
Date:________________________

Print Full Name:________________________ Phone Number:________________________
Address:_______________________________________________________________________
Email:_________________________________________________________________________

We promise not to share your contact information with others.