



**THOROUGHBRED  
RETIREMENT  
FOUNDATION**

***For Immediate Release  
Thursday, June 19, 2014***

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**Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation Celebrates  
30-year Anniversary of its ‘Second Chances’ Program**

**Wallkill, NY** – Nearly 100 supporters of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF), including dignitaries from New York State, gathered at the TRF’s horse farm on the grounds of the Wallkill Correctional Facility June 19.

The event marked the 30th anniversary of the TRF’s Second Chances program – a rehabilitation initiative designed to teach inmates equine management while rescuing racehorses.

The TRF’s founding board of directors established the program out of personal concern for the well being of retired thoroughbreds. One TRF board member and former state Sen. Howard Nolan Jr., conceived the idea to restore the farm at Wallkill and put inmates to work caring for horses. The program, now called “Second Chances,” in partnership with the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) proved to be an unequivocal success. Currently, the program has expanded to nine other states.

In 1984, a horse named Promised Road walked off a van and onto the 80-acre farm, located on the outskirts of the prison. Throughout the years, the farm has been home to retired racehorses, some which are descendents of former Kentucky Derby winners or have carried Secretariat’s bloodline.

Jim Tremper, the farm manager and a vocational instructor, has been there since day one. He has seen hundreds of horses and inmates through the program. He received a plaque presented by Tom Donahue, Executive Board Member of the NYS Public Employees Federation. Tremper also received a gift from the TRF for his tireless efforts.

“The most remarkable thing I have witnessed during the last 30 years is the difference it makes in the inmates who work at the farm, especially those with a history of violent behavior. It is incredible to see how working with horses changes the attitudes and behaviors of these men,” Tremper said.

“This successful program has become a model for other rescue horse farms across the nation,” Donahue said. “For most of the inmates, being in this program instilled more compassion, patience and the reward of caring for something other than themselves.”

Nolan also attended the event and said, “As one of the founders, it is not only rewarding to see how the TRF’s program has expanded during the past years, but the way it has changed hundreds of lives for the better while saving so many horses.”

Other speakers including DOCCS Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci and Wallkill’s Superintendent Timothy Laffin echoed those remarks.

“I am delighted with this program and the changes we have noted in the lives of many of the inmates who have worked with the horses on this farm. As a horse owner myself, I am thankful these beautiful animals truly do get a second chance here at Wallkill Correctional Facility,” Annucci said.

Diana Pikulski, TRF Vice President of External Affairs, said, “This farm is a very special place. It is full of kindness, compassion and respect. The 30-year partnership the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation has enjoyed with DOCCS and the Wallkill Correctional Facility is a shining example of how people and institutions can work together long-term for the good of man and horse and society. We hope it will continue for, at least, 30 more.”

The event featured two graduates of the Second Chances Program, Steven Emery and Dax Rodriquez.

Emery said, “One horse in particular named Energy Flow, who I call “Boodles,” became my inspiration to change my life around. Boodles was injured, infested with parasites and was 100 pounds underweight when he arrived here. I worked with him every day, and he began to heal. I was also healing from being trapped in a life that only brought disappointment to myself and those who cared about me. I feel blessed that both Boodles and I cleaned up really well. This is a good program. If it can help me change, it can help anyone.”

The TRF is the largest thoroughbred rescue organization in the world, and currently cares for 950 horses nationwide.