

Foundation takes horses to pasture after their days at the track

BY YVONNE ZACHARIAS, VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 2, 2009



Kim Inglis is president of the New Stride Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, which gives old racehorses, like Frank, a new home. Frank was rescued from a neglectful owner at Hastings racetrack.

Photograph by: new stride thoroughbred retirement foundation , Vancouver Sun files

Like so many horse lovers, Meril Agrey has a deep appreciation for the sleek thoroughbreds who spend their peak years thundering around the racetrack.

“They run their hearts out for us, for our entertainment and for profit,” said the Abbotsford equestrian.

She also knows the gentle, even-tempered animals they become when they retire from the racetrack. “At the track, they are on edge. They are ready to go any time. When they come back to the farm and they have a couple of months off to relax, they calm down a lot because there are no demands placed on them.”

After they are retrained, the horses generally love connecting with the people who adopt them.

As a director of the New Stride Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation, Agrey is determined to do what she can to see that the animals are well taken care of when they are put out to pasture after a life at the track.

Founded in 2002, the foundation has arranged adoptions and provides care and retraining for non-competitive and injured thoroughbreds.

Agrey said the foundation now has around 16 horses in its care.

It used to be 10 but a ranch owner in Merritt ran into financial problems and had to turn back a number of them. To maintain each animal costs roughly \$500 a month which comes entirely from donations and fundraising.

An unusually dry summer in western Canada will likely lead to an increase in the price of hay.

“We have empty stalls, boarding facilities and acreage waiting for horses but we can’t care for and feed as many as would like because we don’t have the money,” said Kim Inglis, president of New Stride, in a news release. “Instead, we have a growing list of horses unable to get our help.”

To that end, a fundraising event has been organized for this weekend. With the weatherman promising sunny skies, the Shed Row Farm Market will be held at the Fields and Flowers Farm Store of Langley this Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Admission is \$2.

Gate revenue, as well as revenues from items sold by each participating vendor, will go towards the New Stride foundation. The market will feature products from some of the finest of Fraser Valley artisan food companies and local farms.

Located in south Langley, the store is a supporter of New Stride and the owner of Musing, a former racehorse and a national champion sport sire.

New Stride has counted on the good will of many horse lovers like Southlands rider Sarah Lepage and Genek Kottenaur, who saved a thoroughbred named Frank seven years ago.

Frank had been left in a dirty stall with little food and no water at the Hastings racetrack when Kottenaur saved him. He confronted the owner and rescued Frank. The two used to walk around the backstretch and everyone would feed and pat the animal.

When Frank was well enough to travel, he went to a stable in Richmond where Kottenaur trained him. He has now been adopted to New Stride and will be looking for a good home.

According to the New Stride news release where this story is recounted, the owner has no more horses at the track and will have a hard time getting back there.

Agrey just hopes that everyone will get out and support the fundraiser.

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