

10

PEOPLE TO KNOW

THEY'RE MAKING A
DIFFERENCE

“It is prodigious, the quantity of good that may be done by one man if he will make a business of it,” Benjamin Franklin once said. This feature focuses on 10 heroes doing good in their communities, raising others up, helping animals in need, and making the world a better place.

These people are leaving their mark. Their generous spirits send a ripple effect of positive change to the world around them. The equestrian world and the world at large are fortunate to have them at work on our behalf.



A 2021
EQ Living
Gold List
Winner

7

TEN PEOPLE TO KNOW

DeETTE
HILLMAN

DAYS END FARM
HORSE RESCUE

BORN ON A DAIRY FARM in rural Wisconsin, DeEtte Hillman, equine programs director at Days End Farm Horse Rescue (DEFHR) in Woodbine, Maryland, was horse crazy as far back as she can remember. Her path to a career in equine welfare, however, was somewhat unconventional.

Throughout her teens, she spent considerable time traveling throughout Europe with her family, and it was this experience that helped shape her desire to be part of something that contributed to the greater good.

As a result, her first foray into the professional world was as a founding partner of Hearts for Home, a grassroots nonprofit organization that sought to professionalize motherhood. When her passion led her back to horses, she first became a volunteer at DEFHR and then assumed a part-time role before moving to Illinois and becoming an equine humane investigator for the state. Soon after, she became the head of the Humane Society of Central Illinois' animal shelter, where she ran all aspects of the facility and had the unique



DeEtte Hillman, Equine Programs Director,
Days End Farm Horse Rescue.

opportunity to work directly with the state's attorney in the prosecution of felony charges for animal cruelty. This work didn't go unnoticed, and three years into the role, she received an offer from Days End Farm Horse Rescue's CEO, Erin Ochoa, to take on the role of equine programs director.

Since returning to the organization in 2013, Hillman has served as the liaison between DEFHR and calls from law enforcement for equine intervention. Her role includes involvement in the seizure and impoundment of

equines suffering from abuse and neglect. She also oversees the horses' rehabilitation journey and subsequent training in preparation for adoption. While Days End Farm Horse Rescue's top priority is rescue, rehabilitation, and adoption, Hillman is quick to point out that education and community outreach are also core to DEFHR's mission.

"Because we are limited in our resources, and we recognize that opportunities to learn about equine welfare are not mainstream, we make the

biggest impact through community outreach, education, and engagement," she said. "In the end, helping even one person interpret the needs of a horse can have a significant effect."

With this philosophy, DEFHR educates both law enforcement officials—through its ongoing professional training series—and the general public through its daily farm tours and various youth programming. In addition, though the organization mainly responds to law enforcement's calls for help in Maryland and in the mid-Atlantic region, Hillman shares that DEFHR staff view equine welfare as a national need and work hard to create opportunities for educating and sharing knowledge to a much broader audience.

From young elementary school students to law enforcement officials to state senators, Hillman notes that everyone at DEFHR is passionate about finding innovative ways to connect with all types of individuals and groups in an effort to promote equine welfare.

EQ+ CONTACT INFO | PAGE 94