



In the News: Horse Network

Struggling To Care for Your Horse? Maryland Rescue Provides Help to Owners When They Need It Most

In today's challenging times, many people find it harder to make ends meet. For some owners, these circumstances make it difficult or even impossible to properly care for their horse. That is where the [Owner to Owner \(O2O\) Program](#) run by Days End Farm Horse Rescue (DEFHR) in Woodbine, MD, comes in. In this [Horse Network](#) article, Brittney Vallot, the O2O Program's Owner Assistance Manager, explains how the program was developed and the extensive support it offers to help owners decide the next steps for their horse during what can be a stressful time.

The Quarter Horse gelding Zippin' To The Doctor (Doc) was successfully rehomed through the Owner to Owner Program. Photo by [High Ridge Farm LLC](#)

In May 2024, the elderly owners of Zippin' To The Doctor (Doc) reached out to the [Owner to Owner Program](#) at Days End Farm Horse Rescue for help rehoming him because they needed to move into a smaller living arrangement.

Doc, a registered bay Quarter Horse, was in his early 20s and had been born, raised, and trained by his owners. He had a successful career in both the English and Western show worlds, but hadn't been ridden in several years. When I met him, I could tell he had been very well trained and appeared to be sound and healthy, but it was unclear how he would fare going back under saddle at his age.

One month after entering our O2O program, he found a home with Candy Cole of [High Ridge Farm](#) in Manchester, MD. A licensed Maryland Horse Discovery Center, offering a safe, friendly, educational experience, High Ridge is big on community outreach and caters to children through lesson programs and camps. They have taken several other horses from our O2O Program over the years, and we were elated when they took Doc in.

Data shows that, on average, horses are transitioned between homes seven times during their lifespan. Each time they are transitioned, they face an increased risk of falling into an unsafe situation. When an owner decides they can no longer keep their horse for any reason, it can be unclear where to turn. Our goal with the O2O Program is to provide expert advice to help owners explore their options and take appropriate steps to keep their horse safe.

An example of an Owner to Owner listing on the Days End Farm Horse Rescue website.

In 2018, the Maryland Horse Council launched the program, originally called the Maryland Equine Transitions Service (METS).

As one of the first horse councils in the United States to oppose horse slaughter, it also recognized the need for an alternative solution for surplus horses that would otherwise go to slaughter. After evaluating options for a brick-and-mortar shelter facility, they decided on a system where horses would stay with their owners while the program helped find safe, new homes.

Along with providing resources and support to owners, the program helped reduce the burden on Maryland's equine rescue facilities, which frequently received surrender calls but couldn't fulfill the requests due to limited space and/or funding.

[Read the Full Article](#)

[Owner to Owner Available Horses](#)

Tremendous Transformation: Brite Bodie

Former racehorse Brite Bodie arrived at DEFHR in July 2024 as a severe neglect case. His body condition score was 1.5 out of nine on the Henneke Body Condition Scale, and he was suffering from starvation. He had raced less than a year earlier, but a horse's condition can deteriorate quickly without appropriate care and nutrition.

After undergoing rehabilitation at DEFHR, Bodie is now fit and healthy and ready to compete with DEFHR Trainer Leigha Schrader in the 2025 [Retired Racehorse Project](#) at the Kentucky Horse Park in October to showcase the Thoroughbred horse's second career capabilities in all disciplines.

[Support More Horses Like Bodie](#)

[Horses Currently Available for Adoption](#)

Calling All Scouts

Looking for an exciting, hands-on experience with horses? Bring your troop to Scout Day at DEFHR on October 25 for an unforgettable adventure suitable for Scouts of all levels. Whether it's your scout's first time around horses or they're already a seasoned pro, Scout Day has something for everyone. Topics include horse grooming, leading, and learning how we rehabilitate horses, plus a full farm tour and an awesome riding demo.

[Register Now](#)

Celebrating Adoptions

Congratulations to DEFHR alumni, Lance, Nori, Felix, Ninja, Fionn, and Gallant, who recently found their forever homes. Check out our currently available horses — the perfect partner may be waiting for you at DEFHR.

[Horses Available at DEFHR](#)

Liberated Equestrian Podcast

In this episode of the Liberated Equestrian Podcast, hosted by Lisa Pulliam, DEFHR Trainer Leigha Schrader shares what life is really like behind the scenes at an industry-leading horse rescue and how it positively impacts both the horses and the people involved.

Leigha specializes in liberty horsemanship, colt starting, and trick training, while also competing on the hunter/jumper circuit. Here, she discusses trust, healing, grief, burnout, and resilience, as well as how to balance caring for horses with tending to your own mental health.

[Listen on Spotify](#)

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Start Your Volunteering Journey

Are you interested in lending a hand at DEFHR while enjoying fresh air and getting to know our rescue horses? We want you! New volunteer orientation sessions are held on the second Saturday and fourth Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. A parent or guardian must accompany children under the age of 18. We can't wait to welcome you to the farm! [Register here](#) or contact our Volunteer and Education Coordinator, Mattie Hoover at volunteer@defhr.org or 301-854-5037 x2100.

[Discover Volunteering Opportunities](#)

[Register for Orientation](#)

Official Equine Rescue Charity of WIHS

DEFHR is delighted to partner with Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) as the Official Equine Rescue Charity of the 2025 edition of this prestigious show. DEFHR ambassadors Mini Mick Jagger and Zillow will be on-site during Barn Night on Friday, October 24, while Zillow will showcase his liberty demonstration during the Accumulator Costume class course walk.

At Kids' Day on Saturday, October 25, Zillow returns with his liberty demo, while Mini Mick Jagger is on hand at the pony kissing booth. Meet these remarkable rescue horses at WIHS and learn how together we can transform the lives of equines and prevent equine cruelty.

[Buy Tickets Now](#)

Featured Horse of the Month: Ipsy

Two-year-old 15hh Standardbred

Ipsy arrived at DEFHR in 2024 and is a brave, smart young lady who is queen of the field. She has been in training since June 2025 and has soaked up knowledge like a sponge. We've introduced new skills, including yielding the hindquarters and forequarters, backing, and coming to the fence to prepare for mounting. Ipsy has worked on tying and trailer loading, and she is self-loading like a pro onto our stock trailer. She's also conquered our obstacle course, including bridges, a cowboy curtain, a tarp, pool noodles, and standing on the pedestal. She's a sensitive and responsive mare who will make someone a nice riding partner when she is all done growing. Come and meet Ipsy!

[More About Ipsy](#)

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Share DEFHR's story! For media inquiries, editorial content, or interviews, please contact alice@jumpmediallc.com.

Photos courtesy of DEFHR and Shawn McMillen Photography.

Days End Farm Horse Rescue - www.DEFHR.org
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