

Equine Rescue

Take Action Project for Students

Identify your Concern

What is my concern?

As a society, we have all been told that an animal is a huge responsibility, one that should not be taken lightly when deciding to adopt a furry friend. Unfortunately for some animals this decision is made quickly and often leads to an equally quick decision to abandon them. Some animals may find refuge in a safe place that can provide a temporary home. Domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, and other small animals have the SPCA while larger animals used for commercial or recreational purposes have nowhere to go when they are no longer deemed to be usable. The social concern that was identified was that of equine rescue. Many horses are abandoned every year due to a myriad of factors. The largest scale and form of this abandonment comes from the horse racing circuit as horses who are unable to perform are deemed useless and are abandoned, euthanized or sold to slaughter. Although the horse racing circuit in New Brunswick is much smaller than in other places, this phenomenon does still occur, especially with harness race horses. These horses often have no physical ailments and can be useful in ways other than racing.

Why am I concerned?

It is crucial that we take action to combat this problem as we have some well-known organizations put in place to take care of abandoned dogs and cats, but we have nothing put in place for horses. We must take care of all the animals that we have domesticated and understand that they are not disposable objects. Once the horses are no longer useful, they are sometimes sold to new owners who neglect or abuse them and eventually leave them abandoned. In Canada, Mexico and Japan, many are sent to slaughter with their meat being sent to Europe for sale. These horses have no physical ailments, often between the ages of 2 and 6, and completely healthy.

There are two organizations that take in retired race horses in New Brunswick. The first is Morning Star Acres that takes in Standardbreds or retired harness racing horses. The second is Earth Spirit Horse Rescue that not only takes in Standardbreds, but all horses in need.



A Standardbred race horse in action. Only 2% of those bred for harness racing ever step foot on the competitive track.



Taken from the Meadowlands Horse Rescue website. Many rescue organizations dedicated to race horse rescue contained similar before and after shots. A number of the horses rescued will require euthanization.

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**A HOME
FOR EVERY
HORSE**

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What do I hope to achieve by becoming involved?

By becoming involved, we hope to educate others on the need for programs and establishments to help our large domesticated friends. People do not realise what happens to these animals once it is decided that they no longer fulfill their job requirements. Our goal is to bring awareness of this issue while also raising money for the organization to become registered and can push for further funding and support. Being registered would allow them to reach out to the public and become recognised throughout the community as a valid organization.

Research Your Concern

When we began our research, it was beneficial to look at equine issues around the globe in order to understand where the horses who are abandoned end up. I found articles and blogs that discussed harness racing all over the world, as well as, in Canada. There are several resources that discussed what happens to these animals after they have failed on the racetrack such as abandonment and slaughter.

It was difficult to find anything that discussed New Brunswick specifically, but the resources that discussed harness racing were very helpful. One such blog or discussion is "Let's Discuss: what happens to racehorses after retirement." This blog discusses the topic of horse racing, but also makes references to other articles from the Washington Post to support its claims. This blog provided up to date accurate information and statistics about the topic and proved to be a resource that would be useful in providing information when raising awareness about the

When researching equine rescue in New Brunswick it was decided that it would be best to first look into the harness racing circuit. This was to identify the market that was available in New Brunswick and what type of facilities are available for breeding and housing horses, as well as, what was available after they are retired. Although a few websites claimed that there were programs available for horses in New Brunswick, when pushed for further information, there were no such programs to be found except for Morning Star Acres and Earth Spirit Horse Rescue.

Morning Star Acres takes in retired harness race horses and rehabilitates them for re-sale or for use in their facility. There are also limitations to the adoption process as not everyone can adopt one of these animals. New owners must sign a waiver saying that if they no longer want or are able to take care of these animals, they must return them to the care of the organization. Earth Spirit Horse Rescue takes in horses from all situations including harness racing. They then rehabilitate them so that they may be used as therapy horses for children and young adults who are at risk. The therapy provided by these horses truly makes a difference in the lives of the young people as they teach patience, caring, and unconditional love which is sometimes new for both the child and the horse.

Find Out Who Supports You

The stakeholders for this particular project would be the people in our social studies class as they would help spread information, contribute new ideas, and provide funding through their support of our fundraisers. The wider community of animal lovers at the University of New Brunswick and that of the University of Saint Thomas would also be considered stakeholders as they provide help and support for our project. Stakeholders would also include the equine community in the province of New Brunswick. The organization Earth Spirit Horse Rescue would also be a stakeholder in this project.

*A horse that weights approximately
450kg will eat on average 7 to 16kg of
feed per day.*

- Horse Illustrated

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Create a Plan

The intention for this Take Action project is to assist with the financial cost attributed to registering a non-profit organization. The original plan involved a bake sale and basket raffle with the funds raised being specifically designated for the approximate registration cost of \$3,000 for Morning Star Acres to attain official non-profit status. However, unforeseen delays and miscommunication with the owner of this organization led us to contact Earth Spirit Horse Rescue, an established organization in the province whose objective is to assist horses abandoned or unwanted horses from all walks of life. All monies raised during the awareness campaign through the bake sale, basket raffle, and donations will be presented to Earth Spirit Horse Rescue to use as needed.

The bake sale will take place on February 22, 2012 on the UNB campus. Rather than a traditional stationary event, we will be combining with another awareness group to provide a travelling bake sale, targeting Marshall D'Avary Hall. All of the items will be donated by the organizers so all proceeds will be divided evenly between the two groups.

The basket raffle and main brochure distribution will occur at the 2012 MQHA Equine Review on May 5th and 6th. We will set up a booth either in conjunction with Earth Spirit Horse Rescue or independently selling tickets and explaining the needs and means to help rescued horses in NB. The basket will contain donated items that will be solicited from various organizations around the Fredericton and Oromocto areas.

"SPCAs are not equipped to foster these large animals, and they are the 3rd most neglected animal in the province, next only to dogs and cats."

earthspirithorserescue.com



Important Steps to Remember

- Contact local rescue organizations.
- Select the right fit for what services we can provide compared to the organization's needs.
- Budget for expenses and potential fundraising.
- Determine a list of activities/goals and prioritize.
- Re-examine the previous steps and adjust needs/services as more information arises.
- Be prepared to adapt to changes made by the organization or as complications/opportunities arise.

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“There is life after the race track!”
Morning Star Acres motto

Take Action!

- Bake sale Feb. 22: to ensure optimal return on the baked goods donated everything was divided into two serving trays to target two different areas of the school simultaneously. Money jars were clearly marked “In Support of Retired Racing Animals: Standard Bred Horses and Greyhounds”, causing most supporters to inquire as to why these animals needed support. Along with the original plan of targeting Marshall D’Avary Hall, the bake sale travelled to the nearby STU campus. This was a successful addition that more than doubled the donations made for the sale.
- Raffle: due to the number of projects looking for donations in the same geographic area, we decided not to have a basket raffle but instead found a potential donor of harness racing equipment that could be raffled. This avenue is still being investigated so may be an activity for a future date. Due to the change in product being raffled, the lottery license has been delayed. Therefore, we are uncertain if we will be able to have it ready for the Show. If it is not processed in time, we will focus on promoting awareness through brochures.
- Distribute brochure at Show/Tack shops/large animal vet offices

Evaluate the Plan

Choosing a reputable and reliable organization with which to associate is very important. The first race horse rescue association that we contacted was unregistered and difficult to tie down on specific needs that we could target for fundraising and/or awareness. We originally thought that identifying the need for registration funds would provide a straightforward goal but the lack of clear direction on the part of the owner made it difficult. In the future, doing this activity with students, I would focus on established charities or organizations with specific needs that will give students direction on how to proceed. Mosquito nets to fight malaria and Food Banks, for example, are straightforward causes where students can identify a clear need yet be creative in how they will meet that need. The second and final organization we contacted falls into this category, allowing us to implement our Take Action plan without having to also negotiate the uncertainties of a new organization.

A second important lesson from this experience is the need to resist the tendency to create a large, unmanageable task that is doomed for limited success, if not complete failure. In our excitement to provide a service to a worthy cause, we overlooked the small contribution that we could have focused on: adopting a fence post through Earth Spirit Horse Rescue. For \$25 per post, the donor can personalize it while helping to provide much needed enclosure space for rescued horses. This could be incorporated into a field trip to give students the opportunity to see firsthand the beneficiaries of their efforts. This would also be a sustainable activity with future classes that would also enable students to leave a legacy of sorts for future classes. The adage “keep it simple” applies quite aptly when attempting a civic action project of this nature with students.

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Apply Your Learning

This organization has an on-going need with which students of all ages can easily identify. Based on age and interest, a class can set a goal at the beginning of the school year and work together throughout that year to achieve their goal. Aside from the specific curriculum outcomes outlined below, students will learn to appreciate that many organizations have an ongoing need that is not satisfied by one fundraising event, yet each contribution regardless of size can make a difference!

Grade 6 Social Studies

- take age-appropriate actions to demonstrate an understanding of responsibilities as global citizens (6.5.3)

Grade 8 Social Studies (Atlantic Canada)

- from personal experiences or those of others, appreciate the importance of belonging to a group (2.4.4)
- identify qualities and attributes that individuals need to be effective global citizens (5.3.1)
- suggest ways that students can increase awareness of global citizenship in the community at large (5.3.4)
- develop a definition of responsible citizenship (9.4.1)
- plan and carry out age-appropriate actions that demonstrate responsible citizenship (9.4.1)

Celebrate Your Successes...even the little ones!



Rehabilitated Standardbred race horse waiting for adoption in NB.