

Madeira woman works with Greater Cincinnati Foundation to raise funds for horses

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NEWS

Madeira woman raises \$1.4M in past 21 years for sick, abused and old horses across the country

Jeanne Houck
Cincinnati Enquirer

Linda Pavey's Facebook page introduces her this way: "*Likes Horseback Riding.*"

That's an understatement.

The Brennan Equine Welfare Fund she founded 21 years ago has raised \$1.4 million for grants to help equine rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and retirement operations across the country.

The horses cared for by the operations are abused, neglected, injured, starved and old. Some were on their way to be slaughtered and used in medical experiments.

"Horses are special animals that are very sensitive, intuitive and healing. They have served a great purpose throughout history and continue to help humans in many ways," Pavey, who lives in Madeira, said.

"They deserve nothing less than compassion and care. They depend on us for their needs and because they are living, sentient beings, we owe them that."

Pavey named the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund after a horse that will always be No. 1 in her heart.

Brennan was a Thoroughbred she rode when she took riding lessons at the old Camargo Stables in Indian Hill in the early 1990s.

Pavey grew up in Indian Hill and Madeira, graduating from Madeira High School in 1980.



“When (Brennan) came up for sale, it was a good match for the level of riding that I was doing, so I purchased him,” she said.

“The partnership with him evolved into a special and symbiotic relationship. While I did not show him, there were very many special and educational rides, and many trail rides on the bridle trails of Indian Hill.”

It was Pavey’s love for Brennan, who died in 2002, and the example set by her parents that prompted her to establish the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund in 2000.

Her father’s side of the family had working horses and her mother’s side of the family had show horses.

Together, her parents operated an animal shelter called Creekwood Critters in Indian Hill.

“Animals and rescue were always a big part of my family growing up,” Pavey said.

“I am proud to carry on (Brennan’s) legacy through Brennan Equine Welfare Fund, and through that, he lives with me forever. “

The Brennan Equine Welfare Fund relies on donations, which are tax-deductible. The nonprofit overseen by the Greater Cincinnati Foundation will match any donations up to \$10,000 through Dec. 31.

Pavey, who has a bachelor’s degree in pre-personnel and industrial relations from the University of Cincinnati, worked for a time as an English teacher.

But she has spent most of her life riding, caring for and advocating for horses. For example, Pavey recently asked people on her Facebook page to send a “polite” email to Cincinnati City Council, asking them to ban animal-driven carriage rides. (Council did not.)

“Horse-driven carriages can endanger the safety of horses as they navigate traffic on busy city roads,” she said.



Pavey's memories of her time with Brennan demonstrate how people can come to love animals so much.

“When I purchased him, we were doing equitation and jumping. Hunter Jumper was the discipline. However, it was more fulfilling for both of us to explore the trails in Indian Hill,” she said.

“There was a lot of learning for both of us because we mainly explored the trails alone, no other riders. We learned the various routes, navigating creeks, bridges, traffic, other people and dogs on the trails and sudden surprises like a deer jumping out of the woods in front of us.

“(Brennan) was very protective of me and took care of me in such situations. Those days were very special as I came back to the barn each time feeling totally cleansed of any stresses or worries and very centered. There is something very special about having that human-equine relationship,” she said.

Pavey currently owns 11 horses – mainly rescues and retirees – that are not supported by the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund.

“I enjoy traveling and hope to visit a herd of the iconic wild horses of the American West next year,” she said.

For now, Pavey's largely focused on the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund, which awards grants to carefully vetted equine organizations every year.

The organizations must be nonprofit and fiscally responsible. The horses cannot be bred or raced and organizations that arrange adoptions must do it with contracts that protect the horses for life.

Brennan Equine Welfare Fund has awarded more than 400 grants since its inception.

This year, 14 grants were distributed to organizations in Ohio, Kentucky, California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

These are impressive statistics, but the story of the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund is perhaps best told by the introduction of some of the horses it has saved.

For instance, there was “Timber,” who was found emaciated with wounds and a bone infection trying to fend for himself after being abandoned in the hills of Eastern Kentucky.

There was “Malcolm,” who was found suffering from an infected fetlock, a respiratory illness and muscular atrophy after being abandoned at an auction house in Indiana.

“Catch This T” survived being hit by a truck in Pennsylvania only to end up being dangerously underfed and suffering from a neurological condition that left him uncoordinated and weak.

And “Chino” was found in Maryland – 300 pounds underweight and suffering from severely overgrown teeth and hooves, a parasitic infestation and itchy, painful rain rot all over his body.

To help horses such as these, visit the [Brennan Equine Welfare Fund website](http://www.brennanequinewelfarefund.com) at www.brennanequinewelfarefund.com. You can donate online, by check and by money order.