

A second life for thoroughbreds

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(Photo: Provided)

When is it a good thing to gain 450 pounds?

When you are an emaciated thoroughbred horse named Malcolm with an infected fetlock, a respiratory illness and muscular atrophy so severe you cannot right yourself without human help.

That's when.

The facility that nursed Malcolm back to health — and helped him put on hundreds of needed pounds — is Friends of Ferdinand Inc. of Indianapolis, a nonprofit equine-welfare organization that helps retired racehorses find second lives as everything from sport horses to companions.

Friends of Ferdinand is one of 15 horse rescue/rehabilitation/retraining and placement facilities across the nation to receive Brennan Equine Welfare Fund grants this year.

Indian Hill native Linda Pavey of Madeira founded the fundraising nonprofit in 2000 for horses like Malcolm.

She's concerned for horses who are old, injured, abused, used in medical experiments or about to be killed.

"Friends of Ferdinand took (Malcolm) in after he was discovered abandoned at an auction house in Indiana in late 2014," Pavey said.

"Friends of Ferdinand and their veterinarian doubted Malcolm would bounce back, but through dedication, perseverance and Malcolm's will, Malcolm has now gained over 450 pounds, re-built muscle through electro-magnetic stimulation and has graduated to full-pasture turnout where he has learned his limitations but, nonetheless, is fully intent on pestering his pasture-mate," Pavey said.

Pavey comes from a long line of equestrians and horse lovers.

Her parents were involved in animal rescue and she formerly boarded horses at Camargo Stables at 8605 Shawnee Run Road in Indian Hill and managed a private barn in the village.

Pavey said she got the idea for the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund from her horse Brennan, an off-the-track thoroughbred that became her first "equine partner" in 1990. He died in 2002.

"(Brennan) taught me patience, trust, bonding and that a horse, while not successful at his original career, can have a big role in his second career and that all horses deserve all the best for their lives because they give and have so much to teach us," Pavey said.

In addition to Friends of Ferdinand, this year's Brennan Equine Welfare Fund grant recipients focused on thoroughbreds are:

- Bright Futures Farm of Cochran, Pa.
- CANTER Kentucky of Louisville.
- Equine Encore Foundation of Tucson, Ariz.
- Glen Ellen Vocational Academy Equine Retirement Foundation of Glen Ellen, Calif.
- The Exceller Fund of Lexington.
- Thoroughbred Athletes of Guthrie, Okla.

Grant recipients that help different kinds of horses are:

- Days End Farm Horse Rescue of Woodbine, Md.
- Heaven Can Wait Equine Sanctuary of San Miguel, Calif.
- Kentucky Equine Humane Center of Nicholasville.
- Mitchell Farm Equine Retirement of Salem, Conn.
- Speak Up For Horses of Falmouth, Ky.

Other grant recipients are:

- Cincinnati Therapeutic Riding and Horsemanship of 1342 state Route 50 in Milford.
- Duchess Sanctuary of Oakland, Ore.
- Longhopes Donkey Shelter of Bennett, Colo.

The shelter has posted an entry on its Facebook page thanking the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund for its grant, which will provide dental care for the shelter's donkeys.

"Dental care is vital to donkeys and so often overlooked," the entry reads.

"We are pleased that this great foundation (the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund) recognizes that and supports our mission."

Visit <http://bit.ly/1zvrhdH> to donate money to the Brennan Equine Welfare Fund, to apply for a grant or for more information.

Want to know more about what is happening in Indian Hill? Follow me on Twitter [@jeannehouck](#).

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