

How to Place Special Needs and Unrideable Equine



SPCA of Texas



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SPCA OF TEXAS

- 2 shelters
- 3 spay/neuter clinics
- 2 mobile spay/neuter vehicles
- 1 mobile adoptions vehicle
- 1 animal rescue center

Located in Dallas and Collin counties

Maintains a team of animal cruelty investigators who respond to thousands of calls in 7 North Texas counties.



The SPCA of Texas is dedicated to providing every animal exceptional care and a loving home.

Who We Are and What We Do



- All current horses come from Animal Cruelty Investigations
- Body condition score of 1-2
- Can house 40-50 horses onsite
- Utilize boarding facilities for overflow
- 3 FTE, 1 PTE (3 FTE joining soon)
- 15 active volunteers (2x/month)

Path to Adoption



- **Rehabilitation Process**

- Horses are seen by a veterinarian ASAP
- Individualized veterinary care plan, including basic care and addressing any specific medical needs
- Teeth are floated when horse is BCS 3
- Stallions are castrated at BCS 4 (30 days recovery after)
- When medically cleared, training level evaluated

Rehabilitating & Training Special-needs Equine



- Identifying, training, rehabilitating and making special-needs equine adoption-ready
 - Companion only – shy/fearful
 - Limited riding
 - Behaviorally challenged horses
- Professional trainers start our horses under saddle

Adoption Process and Policies



- Application approval process
- Prerequisites required for adoption
- Fees are \$100 - 1,500

Recruiting, Nurturing & Maintaining Volunteers



- All volunteers recruited by Volunteer Department
- Equine Volunteers receive general safety training
- Past equine experience not required
- Must be 16 years or older
- We ask volunteers to help network our special needs equines
- Volunteers help with medical rehab and with our refeeding program
- Constant reinforcement through appreciation

Marketing and Messaging



SPCA of Texas
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Meet Iceman! This #TransformationTuesday is all about him; Iceman came to the SPCA of Texas' Russell H. Perry Animal Care Center in McKinney last June through our Animal Cruelty Investigations Unit. Iceman was severely underweight and had been neglected medically. We're happy to report that after months of care from our livestock team and volunteers, Iceman was adopted!! He now enjoys spending time with his new family at Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, TX and will become a member of the school's, Six White Horses team! To learn more about adopting livestock from the SPCA of Texas please visit, www.sPCA.org/livestock.

👤 18,222 people reached

- Website
- Social Media
- TV/Newspaper/Radio
- Horse-specific adoption websites
- On- and off-site events
- Collateral

Most effective messaging

- Glamour shots
- Specific details



Marketing and Messaging



Promoting & Matching Special Needs Equine



- **Providing rehabilitation and training is key**
- People adopt horses with stories
- Details are important
- Being honest and realistic with adopters
- Post-adoption support and returns welcome

Resources for Effective Marketing



- **Resources to increase reach and/or defray costs**
 - Seek funding from foundations and individual donors
 - Engage board
 - Partner with local trainers, barns, milling company, feed stores, veterinarians, etc.
 - Show off equine or even just trailer at events

Lessons Learned, Moving Forward



- Accuracy matters
 - Openness and honesty is key
 - Post-adoption support
 - Don't be afraid to steer people towards the right match
 - Don't rush horses through the process
 - Don't limit yourself to volunteers who only have equine experience

Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society

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Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society

- Founded in 2005
- Serve the state of Texas
- Focus on law enforcement cases
 - 1 paid staff
 - 60 foster homes
 - 150 volunteers



Horse Statistics for Bluebonnet

- Intake over last five years (276 horses total)
 - 63% from neglect cases
 - 16% donated
 - 10% stray
 - 6% born at Bluebonnet
 - 5% transferred
- Adoptions
 - 415 adoptions – 12% were unrideable



Getting Horses Ready for Adoption

- Intake procedures
 - Donated horses
 - Law enforcement cases
- Foster Homes
 - Application
 - Match-making
 - Mentoring
 - Adoption priority



Getting Horses Ready for Adoption

- Basics
 - Re-feeding
 - Farrier and deworming schedule
 - Routine veterinary care
 - Non-routine veterinary care



Getting Horses Ready for Adoption

- Training
 - Foster homes
 - Training Fund
 - Deciding who gets training
 - Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenge



Finding Homes

- Advertising
 - Website
 - Social media
 - Local horse publications
 - Internet ad sites



Unrideable Horses

- Therapy programs
 - Therapeutic riding
 - Equine-assisted therapy
- State or charter schools
- Pets/Companions
- Pasture ornaments



Lessons Learned

- **DO** give horses value.



- **DON'T** believe a history of abuse is insurmountable.



Lessons Learned

- Give adopters a chance.



- DON'T fall into the trap of believing you are the only one.



Lessons Learned

- **No one timeline for getting horses out the door.**



- **DON'T** rush the process just to increase adoption numbers.





Equine Webinar Recordings

ASPCAPro.org/webinars

- **Expert Tips for Telling, Pitching & Sharing Your Stories**
- **Horse Matchmaking 101: Evaluation and Training**
- **Recruiting and Keeping Equine Volunteers**
- **Supercharge Equine Adoptions with Innovative Marketing**