

Spring Hill Horse Rescue (SHHR)

Responsible Horse Ownership Form

Thank you for inquiring about adopting a horse! Below is a brief description of our adoption program and what you can expect as a potential adopter. Please read this document and go over the adoption application before inquiring about any horses. Before an adoption is finalized, this form AND the adoption survey form must be read, signed and submitted.

Why Adopt a Horse?

People choose to adopt horses for various reasons – most of our adopters opt to rescue a horse in need rather than purchase, just as they opt to adopt dogs and cats from animal shelters. Rescued horses make wonderful family members. They are extra special because of what they've endured and quickly gallop their way into the hearts of many people that believe in animal welfare and compassion.

Adoption is generally more affordable to those who wish to own a horse but just don't have the means to purchase a horse from the market. Our goal is to take horses out of bad situations and place them with correctly matched families for lasting relationships. It's in the best interest of our program and the horse that all known information (good and bad) about the horse is revealed before the adoption.

~Anyone can buy a horse but it takes a hero to rescue one.

What is Responsible Horse Ownership?

We expect all of our adopters to be responsible horse owners. Irresponsible horse ownership is 99.9% of the reason why a horse needs to be rescued. Responsible horse ownership is caring for a horse's physical and mental needs at all times. As well as finding a proper home for it when the horse is no longer wanted. Below are some examples of what we expect from our adopters in being responsible horse owners:

- ▶ Tending to any behavior or training problems which may mean seeking outside professional help.
- ▶ A responsible horse owner should know basic first aid for horses including what to do until the vet comes and classic signs of illnesses such as colic. There are many books and videos available on the market and the internet is loaded with information too. Most vets are more than happy to educate their clients as well.
- ▶ Providing adequate facilities with shelter and daily turnout, good quality feed and water, a proper deworming schedule, hoof care, and dental and medical attention as needed.
- ▶ If you can no longer keep the horse, owners should try their best to find a good home for the horse. In the meantime, the horse should be well provided for until another home is found.
- ▶ If at any time a horse needs to be put to death due to medical conditions and is suffering, it should be done by a certified veterinarian. **Shipping a horse to auction, slaughter, or to a livestock/horse dealer is unacceptable.** Euthanasia is a much deserved and dignified means for a horse to be put down.
- ▶ Horses should be provided with some form of shelter, ideally a run-in shelter with at least 3 sides so the horse may go in and out at will. Stalling a horse for long periods of time is unhealthy, unnatural, and can contribute to many medical problems such as respiratory disorders, navicular or other lameness issues. At the very minimum a horse should be allowed access to being outside for 5 – 8 hours per day to help prevent vices such as cribbing, pacing and weaving. Also, there should be enough shelter for every horse if there are multiple horses on the property.
- ▶ A horse should have adequate room for exercise daily. A large paddock or pasture with adequate run-in shelter is best. The rule of thumb is one horse per accessible acre. Housing multiple horses in a small area is unhealthy and does not provide the room necessary for exercise plus causes stressful living conditions as some horses are more aggressive than others.
- ▶ Providing for the horse financially. Horse owners can expect the following expenses for one horse per year. These costs are based on the minimal requirements for maintaining the proper physical wellbeing of the horse, but does not include tack, facility erection, maintenance, grooming, barn supplies or training:

Feed: Hay – Again, depending on the horse and the weight and quality of the hay bales, you will go through roughly one full 35 – 40 pound bale of hay every 1 ½ days per horse. Cost (depending on where you live): \$2.00 - \$7.50 per bale. Most horses can thrive on free choice hay alone. The hay must be free of mold and dust. Quality first cut hay is ideal as 2nd cut can be too rich for horses (plus it's much more expensive). The average horse will eat at least one 35 –

40 lb hay bale per day if fed free choice. You must provide free choice of mixed vitamin/mineral supplement. Approx. Yearly Expense: \$490 - \$2500+.

Grain – Depending upon the horse you can expect to feed approximately (1) 50 lb bag of grain every 10 days. Cost: \$8.50 – 15.00 per bag. Approx. Yearly expense: \$365 – 850. Approx.

Total Feed Care Expense: \$850 – 3200+ per year.

Supplements: Although most of the horse grain on the market today is fortified with all of the proper vitamins and minerals needed for a horse, some horses may require other supplements as well such as glucosamine or other joint care medicines. We will not include a cost for supplements as it should be considered on an individual basis.

Deworming: Horses should be dewormed on a regular basis. Depending upon the housing situation and age, deworming should be done every 3 – 4 months. Foals should be done every 1 – 2 months as they are known to eat feces therefore they re-infest themselves sooner. If there is a steady stream of horses coming in and out (such as a boarding facility) you may want to deworm more often. Rotating the deworming products is essential as parasites are known to build up a resistance to chemicals. A tube of dewormer will deworm one 1200 lb horse (one tube can last a foal 2 – 3 dewormings) and can cost anywhere's from \$5 - \$12 per tube. Approx. Yearly Expense: \$18 – 42.

Hoof Care: A horse's hooves should be trimmed every 6 – 8 weeks. Shoes are optional (not recommended!) and can cost up to \$200 per set. Trims are usually between \$25 – 50. Approx. Yearly expense: \$200 – 375 (based on trims only). Shoes: up to \$1600 per year!!!

Routine Vet Care: Your horse should be examined by a veterinarian once a year at the least. At this time the vet will usually administer the proper vaccinations, do a fecal (check for parasites in the feces), look at the horse's teeth to determine whether a float is necessary, and to look at the overall condition of the horse. Approx. Yearly expense: \$150 – 300 (based on routine vet care, doesn't include any injuries or other health problems that may arise).

The approximate total costs for providing for one horse is \$1200 – 5,000+ per year. Please check on feed costs in your area and doing a realistic budget to see if you can financially provide for a horse BEFORE getting one.

▶ Horses are herd oriented animals, which mean they are very social and need companionship. Having at least two horses is ideal, however many family's don't have adequate housing for or financial means to have two horses. If this is the situation you may want to consider another smaller animal to give companionship to your horse such as a goat or sheep. If you are not able to spend time interacting with your horse on a daily basis, we highly recommend getting a second horse (although you must consider all of the costs in caring for another horse).

Horses Available for Adoption

We get horses of all breeds, sizes, riding abilities, and colors. Generally, rescue horses come from auctions where they would then be sold for slaughter for various reasons. Sometimes we acquire horses so they aren't sold to those dealers that don't have a sale facility but truck the horses all over the East coast to resell them at auctions where their fate would be unknown. Many young horses come through our facility as most horse dealers do not buy untrained horses at the sales because they do not want to put the time or money into their training – they want to buy a horse one day and sell it the next so they don't have a lot of money invested. We also get many older horses in that are considered non-valuable for resale or they can no longer endure the rigors of extensive riding hours for lesson programs, guided trail rides, etc. Some of the horses we get may have some form of behavior problem that may or may not be easily fixed or worked with and sometimes the horses have a physical disability which has forced them to retire from their former careers such as jumping, endurance rides, barrel racing, etc.

When the horses come to our facility they are evaluated as to their physical needs first (i.e. malnutrition rehabilitation), deworming, dental float, and any vet care they may need. We then look to evaluate their riding abilities, ground manners and mental state. Some horses have endured physical abuse or suffer trauma from the auction process and need some time to just be horses so we may not do anything with them for a couple of weeks. Horses that are recovering from malnourishment or starvation, of course, are not ridden until they have put on adequate weight. During the riding evaluation we look at the horse's ground manners while being groomed, tacked up and mounted. We determine what style of riding they've been most likely trained to (english vs. western) and how well they respond to general riding cues. If we find a behavior problem that is potentially dangerous we retrain the horse accordingly. From this information we establish what type of rider

would best be suited for the horse. We disclose all of the information possible (both good and bad) about the horse so potential adopters know what they should or shouldn't expect from the horse. Our goal is to find good homes for these horses that will last hopefully for the rest of their lives so it is in our (and the horses) best interest to reveal every detail we can. However, adopters should know that most all of these horses come to us with an unknown history and we can only pass along the information that we know firsthand or have been told. Some horses do have abuse issues but a lot of them have been neglected and uncared for properly. Adopters should be willing to empathize and work with the horse if a problem arises after the adoption or if the horse is adopted knowing the problem ahead of time. Adopters are expected to be responsible for continuing any training or behavior modification techniques when necessary and to work through any issues that may arise throughout the horse's tenure.

Other horses we get in are those that have been donated or relinquished by people who can no longer keep them for various reasons or instead of selling them and keeping the money donate the horse so the money will go toward our rescue efforts. Also, donors like the idea that their horses will be under contract with our organization whereas there would be no contract through a flat sale. Donated horses are generally ones that can be ridden and their adoption fees are nominal, usually only a fraction of what their 'market value' would be if they were sold at a horse sale facility or privately.

Adoption Contract

All adopters must agree to and sign an adoption contract with the following terms:

- ▶ Adopter must not have been charged with animal cruelty – past, present or future.
- ▶ Adopter must provide yearly photos of the horse and a Statement of Health form (provided by SHHR) must be filled out and sent in by a certified veterinarian. This should not cost the adopter any thing extra as vets will fill it out when they come to vaccinate or float teeth.
- ▶ Adopter understands that a SHHR representative may take the horse at any time. If the horse is ever found to be in an abusive or neglectful situation, the ownership of the horse will be relinquished and the horse repossessed immediately.
- ▶ Generally we do not retain ownership of a horse. Meaning, the horse can be sold or given away if the adopter can no longer keep it for any reason. However, the new owners must sign a transfer of ownership and agree to the same contractual terms and SHHR must be notified. The adopters must make every effort to find a good home for the horse. We sometimes will put a 'cannot sell' term in a contract for older horses, meaning the horse must be returned to SHHR if the adopter can no longer keep it. We expect that the older horses are being adopted into forever homes where they can spend the rest of their lives settled with one family.
- ▶ Under no circumstances is the horse allowed to be traded, sold or given to any auction, a horse/livestock dealer or for slaughter. Auctions are a very dangerous means to sell a horse and slaughter is a brutal, undignified means to end a horse's life. The adopter must agree that the horse will be humanely euthanized by a veterinarian when the time comes.
- ▶ Your equine veterinarians name and contact information must be supplied so we can contact them as a reference or at any time in the future. It is best to let your vet know that we may be calling them.

Adoption Fees

Adoption fees are different for every horse. The fee is determined by the purchase price of the horse (usually slaughter price), transportation (as many of the horses come from out of state), farrier and veterinarian costs including Coggins test and health certificates, medical supplies, deworming products, and we add a nominal care stipend to help pay for feed and supplements. A 20% donation is also added to help pay for other overhead costs such as phone bills, postage, website maintenance, facility and barn supplies, etc. This donation also helps cover the cost of extensive vet bills for horses that need intense medical attention – monies we would not be able to recover through adoption fees. PMU foal adoption fees are normally pre-set. This being said, our adoption fees are **not** negotiable. We cannot continue to rescue and rehabilitate horses if we cannot recover our costs as we are not funded by any outside venues.

Overall Process

If you are interesting in adopting one of our rescued or donated equines you should expect the following:

1. The adoption survey must be filled out and returned indicating which horse(s) you are interested in. From this information we will determine if you are a good match to the horse in which you are inquiring about. Please contact us within 7 days of submitting the forms to discuss the adoption.
2. If we feel you may be a good match with the horse then you can set up a time to come and visit the horse and us. You must call or email to set up the time.
3. If you come and visit the horse you would like to adopt and we feel the horse would be a good match for your family. The next step would be to arrange for transportation. The adopter is responsible for transportation. The adoption contract would need to be agreed to and signed before the horse leaves our facility.
4. SHHR reserves the right to refuse any adoption for reasons upon its own discretion.

(Pre-registered PMU foal adopters will be sent a confirmation of application as well as a letter as to what to expect next, appointments are not necessary.)

Other Expectations

- ▶ Deposits are required on horses wanting to be adopted. There is a \$100 minimum deposit which is non-refundable if the adopter backs out of the adoption for any reason. This is to ensure a commitment from the adopter as we will make the horse then unavailable. We do this because we have held horses for people in the past, turning down other inquiries assuming the horse will have a new home only to have the people later back out of the adoption. This is a missed opportunity for the horse to get a new home.
- ▶ If the adopter cannot take the horse within 7 days of the adoption there will be a \$5.00 per day care fee, long term board can be negotiated.
- ▶ There is no such thing as a perfect horse whether it's adopted for \$500 or purchased from a sale facility for \$5000. If/when the horse needs behavior modification, training or retraining; the adopter is expected to provide the horse with such support using humane techniques (SHHR promotes natural horsemanship and training). This may mean seeking outside professional help.
- ▶ If, at any time, the adopter can no longer keep the horse, they are responsible for finding the horse a good home (unless otherwise specified), following the terms of the contract and providing a transfer of ownership. This is part of responsible horse ownership which we try to promote. This means if you can't keep the horse you must make every effort possible to find him/her a good home rather than expecting we will do all of the footwork for you. We will put the horse on our website if the owner would like to adopt the horse out for the original adoption fee or less. Adopters may choose to donate the horse back to SHHR but should not expect their adoption fees to be returned. SHHR may take the horse providing their facility has room.

 Cut off the below form and submit it to SHHR along with the Adoption Application. Keep the rest of the document for your records.
 Date: _____

I have read the Responsible Horse Ownership form and understand the document in its entirety. I have also read and filled out the Adoption Survey to the best of my knowledge and provided honest, ethical information.

Signed,
 XX _____

Printed,
 XX _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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