

Purple Haze Standardbred Adoption Program nears grand opening

April 9, 2019, by Tim Bojarski, for the PHSAP

Oxford, NY — There is good news on the horizon in the Empire State for Standardbreds who are closing in on the end of their career. Prominent New York philanthropist and noted horse owner Wanda Polisseni has announced that the site of her new Purple Haze Standardbred Adoption Program (PHSAP) is nearing completion.

The PHSAP is Polisseni's latest effort designed to ensure a safe route for retired Standardbreds to transition to their life after racing. The base of operations is a 105-acre farm located in Oxford, N.Y., that was purchased in November 2018.

Although it was a working horse farm at the time it was acquired, it still needed to be tailored to the needs of the organization and its mission and has been undergoing modifications over the past several months. So far 20 new stalls have been built with turn-out paddocks coming soon.

The property includes two barns and a 64' x 112' indoor arena. The main house will become the headquarters of the PHSAP as well as the new home of the Harness Horse Breeders of New York State.

When in full swing the program will be able to accommodate a maximum of 20 horses at a time. The horses will come from owners or trainers who are looking to find a forever home for them after they are done racing.

There will be a written application process, a small placement fee that will go to offset the cost of retraining and all candidates will be vetted before acceptance. Once the program reaches capacity, applicants will go on a waiting list and be accepted in the order they applied. New York-bred horses will receive preference in the application process.

Once in the program the horses will be retrained, adopted out and tracked after they move to their new home. If there is a circumstance where a horse is not in a good situation either for itself or the adopter, that horse will come back to the farm and be placed again. The group hopes to take the first horse on the property by the beginning of June.

The program will be looking for volunteers to help with the day-to-day operations of the farm and are hoping to offer internships to students from neighboring colleges where they can earn credits to work with these horses. The farm is in close proximity to both SUNY Morrisville and SUNY Oneonta.

An outreach program with clinics and educational seminars for schools and other interested groups is also in the planning stages.

A Board of Directors was named to run the day-to-day business of the PHSAP and includes Wanda Polisseni (President), Paul Kelley (Vice-President), Dave Hanson (Secretary), Michael R. Miller DVM (Treasurer), Rita Scharman, Claire Chappell and Richard Gutnick and special advisor Kenneth Jacobs. Betty Holt is the Executive Director. They will hold their first meeting on Thursday (May 16) and begin taking on the work of the organization.

The PHSAP is a 501c3 and will be funded through fundraising and grants. The group has already received donations from Ted Gewertz, Lakeview Equine, Oneida Veterinary and others who are all trying to help get the program underway. But there is still a list of immediate needs that includes Western or English saddles/pads/blankets, bridles, riding helmets, feed tubs, rubber mats, halters and grooming supplies. The PHSAP would be grateful for any help it might receive.

Another major contribution that has been announced is a breeding to the New York stallion In The Arsenal that was donated by the In The Arsenal Syndicate. The breeding will be put up for bids at Ongait.com starting on Tuesday (April 9).

The winner of the auction will receive a 2019 breeding and be guaranteed a live foal. If the mare fails to catch or fails to have a live foal, the successful bidder will be able to breed back again in 2020 at no charge. The winner will also be eligible to the incentive program where if they breed back in 2020 and again in 2021 they will be awarded a share of the syndicate.

News and more information about the Purple Haze Standardbred Adoption Program is available on their Facebook page (www.facebook.com/purplehazestandardbredadoptionprogram/).

A new website is in the process of launching and should be online by June.