

Anderson resident takes reins for horse rescue

By Liz Carey
Community Press Staff Writer

ANDERSON TWP. - For Anderson Township resident Paula Drake, one line from the novel *Black Beauty* guides her.

"The line went something like, 'If we see cruelty or wrong that we have the power to stop and we do nothing, then we are sharers in the guilt,'" she said. "That's true, if you see something and you do nothing about, you're part of the problem, not part of the solution."

For Drake, she made the decision to put her money where her mouth is on her birthday.

On Sept. 15, 2004, a double-decker cattle carrier overturned with 51 horses.

That accident brought Drake, Shelly Price of Falmouth, and Ginger Rood of Union together in the defense of horses.

"We saw the pictures. For us, the story just didn't make any sense," Drake said. "We were trying to figure out how someone could have that many horses on a double-decker cattle truck."

What Drake learned was that the horses were not being transported to a farm.

"We had no idea that 100,000 horses, many of them people's pets, are slaughtered every year, so that people in gourmet restaurants can eat American horse steaks," she said.

Having found each other during their research into the issue, the three have now founded *Speak Up for Horses*, a non-profit dedicated to educating the American public about what happens to discarded horses.

Currently, the women are working for the passage of the *Horse Slaughter Prevention Act*, currently awaiting action by the U.S. Senate, after a vote of approval by the House of Representatives in September.

Additionally, they are working on buying their own horse rescue facility and will do "*Bundles of Books*," a project to put horse books that speak to responsible ownership in rural libraries, under-funded and inner city libraries that may have limited funds with which to buy those sorts of books.

Their main goal is to let people know about what happens to an estimated 10,000 horses in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky alone.

"Horse slaughter is one of America's dirty little secrets. Every week healthy horses are inhumanely hauled across Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana highways in double decker cattle trucks to the three foreign-owned horse slaughterhouses: Two in Texas and one in Illinois," Price said. "The story of the old horse being turned into glue or dog food is a myth."

Drake said the group is also working to create a safety net for people who may need to get rid of their horses.

"People know a lot about dogs or cats, but I don't think a lot of people know about what happens to a discarded horse," Drake said. "We have in place the safety nets for dogs and cats... The other part of our mission is to build a stronger safety net for horses."

Since the group's inception, it has placed several horses, some within a week of their rescue.

"They really are not unwanted. They are discarded, they are caught up in the downward spiral of the kill buyers, they are just horses that need a chance at a new home," she said. "Unfortunately, we live in kind of a disposable society. If your computer is a little slow, get rid of it. If your car is a little too round, get a new one. But a horse is a living, breathing thing. They can live for 30 years. People have to realize the commitment they are making when they take on a horse."

Currently, the group is accepting donations for their capital fund, as well as for their Bundles of Books project.

Donations can be mailed to Speak Up For Horses Inc., P.O. Box 434, Falmouth, Ky., 41040. Contributions can also be made through PayPal or the American Express Giving Program.

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