



Hope 4 All



## GRAND PRAIRIE EQUINE CENTER: HORSES HELPING HEROES

*Military veterans, mounted police, retired racehorses, at-risk youths — all will benefit from your donation to equine center*

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — In a first for Texas and a public-private partnership that might be unprecedented in America, the City of Grand Prairie and its police department are teaming with Crow Holdings and the non-profits S.T.E.P.S. with Horses and Hope4All to develop the Grand Prairie Equine Center one mile from Lone Star Park racetrack.

The transformative, multi-pronged project is spear-headed by the Hope4All foundation run by Dr. Taylor Bunn and launched by former Lone Star Park president and part-owner Corey Johnsen. Hope4All will manage the project in conjunction with S.T.E.P.S., whose motto is “Humans and horses stepping toward healing together.”



## The unique collaboration will:

- Launch an aftercare program to **retrain and re-home retired racehorses** for second careers;
- Provide **equine-assisted counseling** for **military veterans and first responders** suffering from PTSD and other disorders;
- Offer **therapeutic riding programs** that enhance the lives of those with emotional, mental or physical impairments;
- House the **Grand Prairie Police Department Mounted Patrol Unit**;
- Work with the Grand Prairie Independent School District to develop an **equine academy program**, educating students on careers in the horse industry;
- Develop initiatives to **help at-risk youths** by teaching social and emotional skills through horses;





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The 65-acre undeveloped property on Wildlife Parkway was donated to the City of Grand Prairie by Crow Holdings, the prominent real-estate investment and development firm headquartered in Dallas with offices across the country. Plans call for three barns with stalls, a covered riding arena, multi-purpose room and multiple round pens, with the additional land used for pasture, grazing and riding trails.

The City of Grand Prairie will lease the property for \$1 a year to S.T.E.P.S. with Horses.





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## **Project's synergy lets donated dollars impact lives in multiple ways; Goal is to raise \$4.5 million of projected \$6 million construction costs**

Dollars donated to the Grand Prairie Equine Center's private-public partnership support these worthy and interrelated projects. The synergy provides a cost-effective way to make significant impact in the community on multiple fronts, with every dollar invested designed to return many more in positive change.

Hope4All's goal is to raise approximately \$4.5 million of the projected \$6 million in building costs through grants, private donations and fundraising initiatives. The target timeline is for the facility to accept its first horses in late 2023.

"The Grand Prairie Equine Center is the ultimate win-win-win-win," said Johnsen, who founded Hope4All after spending decades in racetrack management and ownership, including at Lone Star Park and subsequently at Kentucky Downs. "At the center is the amazing power of the horse, and this project gives back to retired racehorses while helping critical segments of our community get their lives back on track. The Grand Prairie Equine Center is a shining example of public and private entities working together for the greater good."

## **Equine therapy proven to help veterans: S.T.E.P.S. does just that**

According to government statistics, more than 17 military veterans commit suicide a day on average. The Man o' War Project, headquartered at Columbia University and the largest research study of its kind, has documented the science behind the benefits of using former thoroughbred races in trust-building exercises with veterans to treat Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that appears connected to many suicides.

S.T.E.P.S. With Horses was launched in 2017 by Dr. Hallie Sheade, whose dissertation for her PhD was on the effectiveness of equine-partnered counseling in reducing PTSD in military veterans, and her husband, Marine veteran Paul Ziehe. S.T.E.P.S. — the acronym for Spectrum of Therapeutic Equine-Partnered Services — uses techniques that research has shown make a difference in the lives of veterans, their families, at-risk youths and others suffering from trauma.

S.T.E.P.S., established out of Dr. Sheade's private equine-assisted counseling and psychotherapy practice, provides services for free to veterans and their families while offering scholarship support to others with financial need whose mental health and quality of life could benefit from the powerful healing of horses.

"This approach is very unique," Sheade said of the equine center. "It will really allow us to grow and then to have these complementary partnerships that can support each other."

Sheade hopes that the move to the Grand Prairie Equine Center will allow S.T.E.P.S. to double the number of patients receiving treatment each week from the current 60 to 70 and to expand into more areas. For instance, she notes that youth suicides and suicide attempts have skyrocketed during the Covid pandemic.



## **Saddling up for public safety**

The Grand Prairie Police Department's mounted patrol also will be housed at the equine center. Grand Prairie City Manager Steve Dye was formerly the Grand Prairie police chief and a 36-year member of the force, including as a mounted patrol officer. Dye re-established the long-vacated mounted patrol in 2015 to enhance the police department's community engagement. He embraces the equine center collaboration, seeing the benefits of the equine-assisted therapy for first responders in addition to military members and veterans.

Dye also encouraged the venture to open up to the Grand Prairie Independent School District and to help provide at-risk youth "understanding of how to take care of something other than themselves, to help them with empathy and compassion for those that can't feed and water themselves."

Dye said the equine center also will allow for the expansion of the mounted patrol from the current four to 10 to 12 officers, with stabling previously a restricting factor. Dye hopes all future mounted-patrol horses will come from the aftercare program and envisions Grand Prairie donating horses to other police department's mounted units in the metroplex.

"One of the things that excites me is the ability to maybe create a model that other regions of the country can follow," Dye said. "It just sends a good message that your police department and your city are working with your community and charitable organizations for the greater good for the quality of life for not only those who served but those who are served."

## **Finding second careers for racehorses**

The versatile thoroughbred can do many things besides race. The aftercare program at the Grand Prairie Equine Center will retrain and re-home retired racehorses for second careers, including in a variety of show-horse disciplines, trail riding, companion horse or teaming with our friends at the Grand Prairie Police Department.