

# PTHA POST



## IN THIS ISSUE

- PTHA President's Corner, Robert Hutt
- Horsemen Update from Executive Director Jeffrey A. Matty, Jr.
- PTHA 2025 Elections: Meet the Candidates
- Attention Horsemen
- Caretakers Day at Parx
- Around the Oval
- Breakfast on the Apron
- Congratulations, Dick Jerardi!
- Turning For Home Update
- HPA
- PTHA Trophy Race Winners
- Heartbeat of the Backstretch
- Christmas Lunch on 12/25 sponsored by PTHA & Parx Racing
- Thanksgiving Day: Thank you!
- From the Racetrack Chaplaincy

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Hutt, President  
Jeffrey Matty, Jr., Executive Director  
Jack Armstrong, Owner/Director  
Charles Asensio, Owner/Director & Treasurer  
John Fanelli, Owner/Director  
John Julia, Owner/Director  
Jeffrey Matty, Jr. Owner/Director  
Edward Coletti, Jr., Trainer/Director  
Kathleen Demasi, Trainer/Director & Vice President  
Scott Lake, Trainer/Director  
Robert E. Reid, Jr, Trainer/Director  
John Servis, Trainer/Director

# DECEMBER 2025

*We hope your holidays are filled with joy and that we continue to share mutual success in the coming year. Cheers to a wonderful 2026!*



Tribal Ruler: a four-year-old Boisterous gelding donated to Turning For Home by the Butch Reid barn and owner Gary Barber.

## SPECIAL THANK YOU

BRIAN MERMELSTEIN  
EQUI-PHOTO

# PTHA PRESIDENT'S CORNER

PTHA PRESIDENT  
Robert "Bob" Hutt



At age 80, the time has come for me to ride off into the sunset. Not because I've lost any of my drive, desire, or passion for the sport of horse racing—G-d knows that fire still burns as strong as ever—but because every chapter deserves a proper ending. Truth be told, I can still run rings around men half my age... or at least I'd like to think I can.

As I wind down my administration, I'd like to reflect on some of my proud accomplishments. Instead of waiting nearly 21 days for your money, we cut the waiting time down to 7 days by signing a waiver.

The previous administration was using a bank that was paying you horsemen \$20,000 in annual interest. I changed banks; and today - the PTHA is receiving ten times that amount or \$200,000 per year.

WiFi is now available on the backstretch. The half million dollar project was orchestrated by John Julia who somehow was able to get Comcast to pay for the entire project. Thank you John.

And the crowning achievement of all is come late summer - you the PARX horsemen will have a brand new state-of-the-art turf course with all new irrigation equipment that will be the envy of the Mid-Atlantic region! PARX horsemen for the very first time will receive priority when making entry - before out of towner's.

As I step aside, you are faced with the most important task of all: electing a new President and Board who will shape your future. Three years ago, I ran for President on a law-and-order platform to expose the alleged corruption of the previous administration—one that ruled with secrecy and required Board members to sign NDAs (Non-Disclosure Agreements). You honored me with your vote, and to every horseman and horsewoman who came to me for help, you know I gave you every last ounce of my energy. I fought for you as hard as I possibly could.

To my incredible crew at Let's Go Racing—Dani Rodriguez, Hall of Famer Dick Jerardi, and the creative force behind 34 consecutive years of our great show, Bruce Casella—thank you for your friendship and for making me look good every week as Executive Producer. You are the best team anyone could ask for.

To my hardworking PTHA employees: your devotion to our horsemen is unmatched. I hold the deepest respect for each of you, and I thank you sincerely.

I'd also like to thank my sparring partner, Parx COO Joe Wilson. Yes, we certainly had our differences—as we serve two different masters. But over time, respect grew on both sides, and we always found a common ground. Thanks to Joe, next year Parx will feature the finest turf course in the Mid-Atlantic. Thank you, Joe.

Serving you - our outstanding horsemen has been one of the great honors of my life. I promised you truth and transparency, and that is what I delivered. Now it is up to you to choose a new President and Board who will put your interests ahead of their own—a true Horsemen First agenda. You have an impressive slate of new candidates, many with remarkable credentials. Choose wisely!

Ballots have been mailed, so please exercise your patriotic duty. Vote for the candidates of your choice. Remember: apathy has always been the enemy of the people—because a vote is a terrible thing to waste. Visit [Parxtruth.com](http://Parxtruth.com)

As we enter the holiday season, I wish you and your families health, peace, and prosperity. May the New Year bring you many joyful trips into the Winner's Circle of Life.

As I sign off for the final time, I have one other person to thank and that is my beautiful fiancée, Lina. Thank you for sharing me with our horsemen as I put you through so much. I wish our next President the very best in leading the PTHA forward over the next three years. I know our horsemen will be in very capable hands. Until we meet again - Happy trails to all of you.

Bob out.

# HORSEMEN

Update from  
PTHA Executive Director

Dear Horsemen,

As we prepare to close out another year at Parx Racing, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to each member of the Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association. Our membership is the heartbeat of this backstretch, your time & effort, your belief in this industry, and your resilience are the reasons we continue to move forward regardless of the obstacles placed in front of us.

From the day I was hired, I said clearly and without hesitation that this is not a job, it is a responsibility. A responsibility to represent, protect, and serve the Horsemen of Parx Racing with integrity, transparency, and commitment. I have not taken that responsibility lightly for one single day.

This past year, these past 3 years, have tested us in ways few could have anticipated. We faced external challenges from an industry navigating constant change and intense scrutiny. Regrettably, we also endured the internal obstacles, unnecessary noise, rumors, and the occasional false accusation fired by those who should be leading with unity rather than division. Our leadership, in particular, has offered their own creative interpretations of reality throughout the year, but the work of this Association has spoken louder than any commentary, and the work has been real.

Despite every headwind, not one day passed where our team did not go to bat for you. From regulatory battles, to purse protection, to safety and welfare, to day-to-day barn needs, we remained focused. The foundation we have created together is solid, meaningful, and built to last.

Looking ahead, we continue forging progress that will benefit our horsemen for decades to come. March is right around the corner, and with it the next phase of the much-anticipated Turf Course project. While it will take time to complete and perfect, we fully expect this new turf course to be available to our horsemen at some point during the 2026 season, likely August / September. This is a monumental investment in your future, our future, and the future of Pennsylvania racing.

As we approach our upcoming election, I want to wish every candidate the best of luck. I believe in the democratic process of this Association, and I believe in the membership that drives it. Regardless of the outcome, my vision remains unchanged: I look forward to representing you in 2026 and well beyond.

Every decision made in that boardroom must benefit the those in and around the barn, not the ego. It must protect the livelihood of horsemen, not the politics. And it must strengthen the future of racing at Parx and throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, not just the present moment.

Thank you for your trust, your perseverance, and your belief in what we can accomplish when we work together. I promise you that our mission remains unwavering.

Wishing you and your families a safe, peaceful, and happy holiday season.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey A. Matty, Jr.  
Executive Director



PTHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Jeffrey A. Matty Jr.

# 2025 PTHA ELECTIONS



## 2025 PTHA ELECTIONS MEET THE CANDIDATES

### PRESIDENT CANDIDATES



KATE  
DEMASI



JOHN  
JULIA

### OWNER DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



JACK  
ARMSTRONG



CHARLES  
ASENSIO



MICHAEL  
DAY



ANGELO  
DEFILIPPIS



JOHN  
FANELLI



ROBERT  
HUTT



JOSEPH  
LYNN



RICHARD  
MALOUF, SR.



GREG  
NEWELL



RON  
OCCHINO



JOHN  
O'HARA



CHARLES  
ZACNEY

### TRAINER DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



JOSUE  
ARCE



JORDAN  
BULLOCK



MICHAEL  
CATALANO, JR.



EDWARD  
COLETTI, JR.



JOHN  
KIRBY



SCOTT  
LAKE



ROBERT  
MOSCO



ROBERT  
REID, JR.



JOHN C.  
SERVIS



J. TYLER  
SERVIS



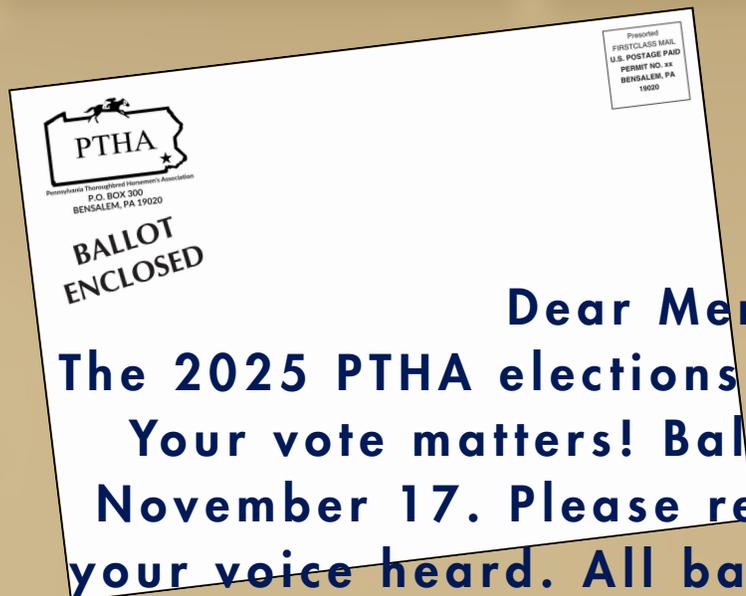
RICHARD  
VEGA



DANIEL  
VELAZQUEZ

FOR MORE INFORMATION: PLEASE CONTACT  
THE PTHA OFFICE AT 215-638-2012

# Attention Horsemen



# PLEASE VOTE

Dear Members:

The 2025 PTHA elections are fast approaching. Your vote matters! Ballots were mailed on November 17. Please review them and make your voice heard. All ballots must be received by December 31, 2025. If you have any questions, please contact the PTHA office at 215-638-2012.



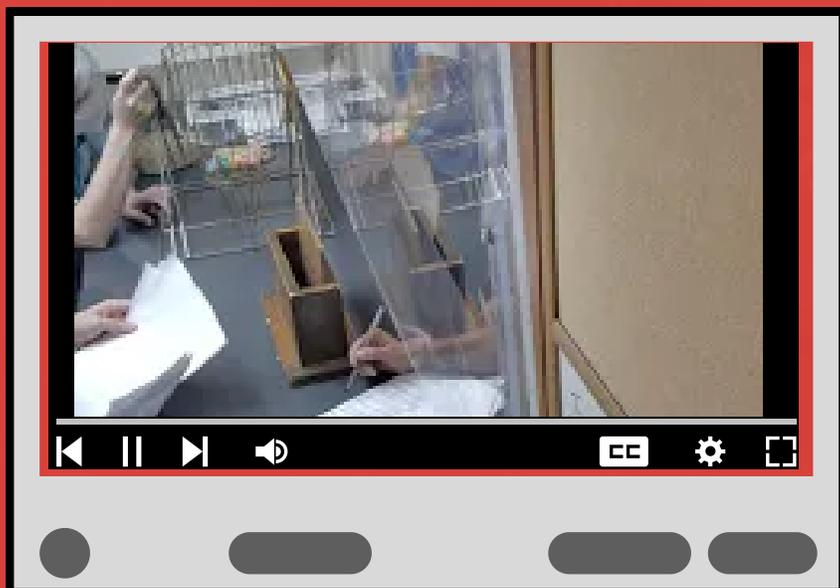
Watch the Meet the Candidates Meeting full video on our YouTube channel or website: [www.patha.org](http://www.patha.org)

# NOW

**LIVE**

## LIVE POST POSITION DRAW

Tune in to watch Parx Racing live post position draw on: [PARXRACING.COM](http://PARXRACING.COM)





**STAY INFORMED BY  
VISITING OUR  
WEBSITE:**

**[WWW.PATHA.ORG](http://WWW.PATHA.ORG)**

**FOR THE LATEST  
UPDATES.  
YOU CAN ALSO  
SIGN UP FOR TEXT  
ALERTS AND OUR  
NEWSLETTER.**

**CONÉCTATE  
AL SITIO WEB  
DE LA PTHA  
QUE TAMBIÉN  
ESTÁ  
DISPONIBLE  
PARA TI**

**EN  
ESPAÑOL**

*Trainers: the end of the year is fast approaching! Check your starts and percentages to maintain your health insurance eligibility. You must have a minimum of 25 starts with 75% based at Parx, as well as being stabled here for six months. A complete copy of the health and pension guidelines can be found on our website [PATHA.ORG](http://PATHA.ORG) or stop by the office and see Jaclyn DeSanctis.*

**Smarty Jones Jerseys  
for Sale benefiting  
the PTHA Charities & Turning  
for Home.  
Stop by the PTHA office.**

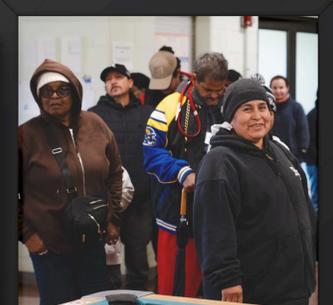




# CARETAKERS DAY

On November 19th, the Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (PTHA) and the PA Horse Racing Association (PHRA) dedicate a special day to honor a vital yet often overlooked part of the sport: the caretakers.

The "Caretakers Appreciation Day" celebrates hardworking grooms, hot walkers, and other essential backstretch team members whose dedication ensures the safety and well-being of our thoroughbreds year-round. This passionate community lives and works alongside the horses, often arriving before dawn and staying well into the evening. Their busy routines and tireless efforts often go unnoticed, making this celebration especially meaningful. On this day, the Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (PTHA) hosts a delicious lunch in the track's Rec-Hall for all caretakers, and everyone receives a hoodie and hat. The day also features the "Best Turned Out Horse" competition, sponsored by the PTHA and Parx Racing, with prizes awarded to grooms whose horses look impeccable before each race. These activities highlight the PTHA's commitment to supporting everyone behind the scenes and emphasize the vital human-horse bond that makes Pennsylvania racing truly unique.



[www.LetsGoRacingParx.com](http://www.LetsGoRacingParx.com)

## WATCH LET'S GO RACING

Every Saturday at 10 a.m. on:



Let's Go Racing  
**parx**



[www.LetsGoRacingParx.com](http://www.LetsGoRacingParx.com)  
Facebook & YouTube channels

Check out Parx Racing race day entries on  
[www.LetsGoRacingParx.com](http://www.LetsGoRacingParx.com)

or scan here:

Let's Go Racing  
**parx**



# AROUND THE OVAL

by Dani Gibson

## November 15th

\$200,000 Claiming Crown Jewel - the marquee race from the prestigious Claiming Crown races ran at Churchill Downs was won by Double Your Money & jockey Melvis Gonzalez going 1 mile & 1/8th in a 12 horse field for owner/trainer Ben Dunn and owner Chris Mancusi.

## November 22nd

Take the money honey & jockey Eliseo Ruiz finished a game second in the \$100,000 Willa on the Move Stakes at Laurel Park for trainer Michael Moore, owner/breeders Kasey K Racing Stable, Michael Day, and Final Turn Racing Stable going 6 1/2 furlongs.

Parx Racing delivered a thrilling afternoon of stakes action on Wednesday, November 26, as fans and horsemen enjoyed a holiday-week card packed with competitive fields, sharp performances, and plenty of Philadelphia racing pride.

### **Pennsylvania Nursery Stakes – PA Bred 2-year-olds, 7 furlongs, \$100,000**

- Winner: Mailata, ridden by Mychel Sanchez. Mailata broke sharply from post 6 and seized the lead early over a sloppy, sealed dirt track, setting fractions of :22.58 and :45.32. He maintained his advantage turning for home and drew off strongly to win by 3½ lengths for trainer Butch Reid, Jr., owners/breeders Cash is King LLC & LC Racing LLC

### **Shamrock Rose Stakes – PA Bred 2-year-old fillies, 6 furlongs, \$100,000**

- Winner: Divine Intentions. The Tyler Servis-trained filly led throughout under Frankie Pennington and won by three lengths, turning in an impressive, gate-to-wire performance for owner Carguys Racing LLC.

### **Cornucopia Stakes – 3-year-old & up fillies & mares, 6½ furlongs, \$75,000**

- Winner: Alani. Trained by Michael Moore, the Competitive Edge filly outlasted a strong bid from Mega Mil to win by two lengths under jockey Andy Hernandez for owners Hardesty Stables & Michael Day.

### **Let's Give Thanks Stakes- 3 year olds & up, 6 ½ furlongs, \$75,000**

A duel to the wire with PA Bred Maximus Meridius & jockey Mychel Sanchez getting the win over Howgreatisnate for trainer Butch Reid, Jr., owners LC Racing LLC, Cash is King LLC & Wellesley Stable.

# Breakfast on the Apron: A Morning of Horses, Coffee & Community at Parx Racing



On November 1st, the PTHA welcomed a full bus of guests for our Breakfast on the Apron event — a behind-the-scenes morning that gave attendees an up-close look at the racing world.

The morning began on the backside, where trainers Daniel Velazquez and Mike Catalano graciously opened their barns to our visitors. Guests had the chance to meet the horses, ask questions, and even share a few carrots with some of our four-legged stars. The group included a mix of racing fans, former owners, equestrians, and friends and family of racetrack employees, all eager to experience the excitement of a racetrack morning.

After the barn tour, everyone returned frontside to enjoy a delicious breakfast and hot coffee. Jockeys Ramon Moya and Adam Bowman joined the group to chat, take photos, and share stories from the saddle! Smiles, laughter, and the sound of hooves made for a perfect Parx morning. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make this event such a success!

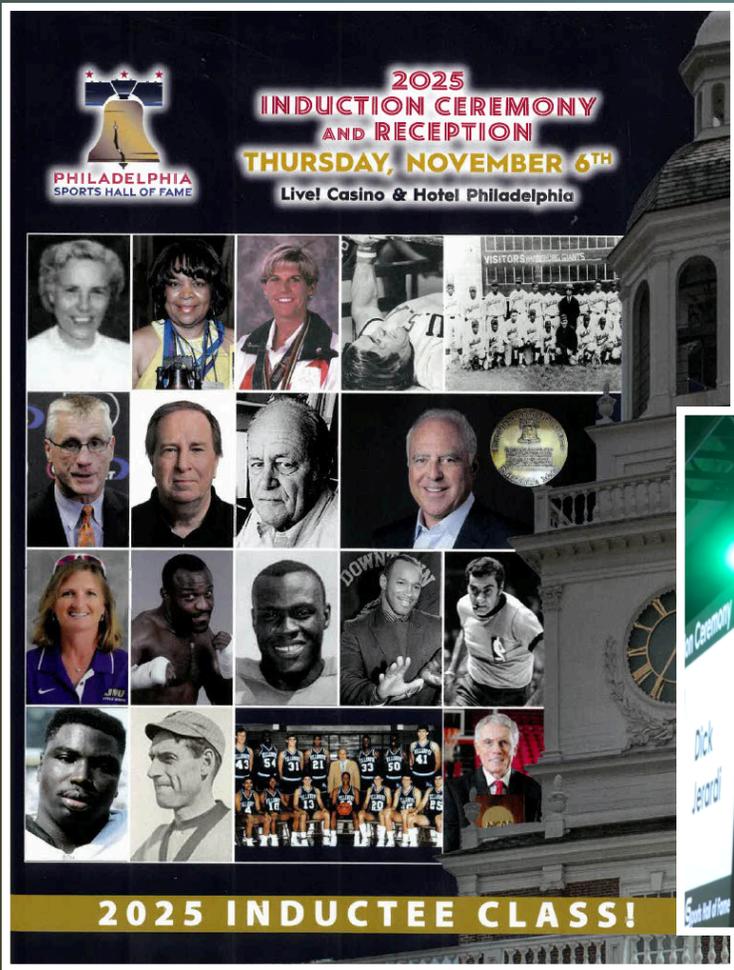




*Congratulations DJ!*

Renowned sportswriter and commentator Dick Jerardi proudly joined the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame on November 6, 2025, as a cherished part of its 22nd class. This special honor highlights Jerardi's impressive four-decade journey and his profound influence on Philadelphia sports, especially through his expert coverage of horse racing and college basketball. Throughout the years, Jerardi became a beloved figure at the Philadelphia Daily News, covering every Triple Crown race since 1987 and every NCAA Tournament since 1988, earning a well-deserved reputation as a respected and versatile voice across the nation. Outside of his writing, Jerardi is actively involved in the local horse racing scene. He co-hosts the weekly TV show Let's Go Racing, produced by the Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association (PTHA), and provides insightful analysis during the live broadcasts of the prestigious Pennsylvania Derby. His remarkable career has garnered many accolades, including five Red Smith Awards for his Kentucky Derby coverage, three Joe Hirsch Awards for Breeders' Cup features, and

the esteemed 2006 Eclipse Award for his influential series on the legendary horse Barbaro. Jerardi is truly admired for the integrity and excellence he consistently brought to celebrating the region's rich sports history. Congratulations to DJ on this well-deserved honor!





From the desk of.....

## Danielle Montgomery

Program Administrator



Dear Horsemen,

As we close out another year at Parx, I'm proud of what **Turning For Home** has become—and how many people are part of that story. Since 2008, PTHA's Turning For Home has assisted more than **4,692** Thoroughbreds retiring from Parx Racing. As of Thanksgiving this year, **328** horses have already come into the program directly through Parx, putting us on pace for another record intake year. That is not a program winding down. It's a program owners actively trust and rely on.

One reason is simple: we move quickly and we do what we say. On average, a horse is out of the backstretch and onto a partner farm within about **seven days**. That protects the horse and protects owners from paying extra day rates while wondering what comes next. Behind every fast placement is a phone answered, a stall made ready, and a farm willing to say "yes" to a fresh retiree or a tougher case.

From the beginning, this didn't happen by accident. Early on, owners like Don Brooks of Stony Brook Stables pushed for better end-of-career decisions, sending x-rays to Dr. Patty Hogan and asking honestly, "**Should this horse still be running?**" At the same time, Michael Ballezzi, Esq. helped turn that philosophy into a lasting structure. By insisting on a real funding mechanism—per-start owner contributions, jockey support, and a formal commitment from the PTHA and Parx—we built a model that could stand where other efforts had failed.

**Seventeen years later**, that structure still holds, and it has allowed us to say, without exception, that no eligible Parx horse has ever been turned away.

Our barn records tell you who these horses are. PA stallion **Uptowncharlybrown** leads our list with **52** of his progeny coming through Turning For Home, followed by Jump Start with 44, and Uncle Lino already represented with 12 horses retiring from Parx through our program. These are proven PA-Bred racehorses with plenty to offer in second and even third careers. We also see the strength of the Pennsylvania program reflected in our numbers: approximately **1,400 PA-breds** have come through Turning For Home, compared with about **1,300 Kentucky-breds**. The same horses filling the entry box are the horses we stand behind when their racing days are done.

None of this would work without our Partner farms, and a few deserve special mention as the true "**workhorses**" of Turning For Home: **Universal, Daisy Mae, and MNM** with nearly **50 horses per year**. These farms quietly take the good and the bad—steady, easy horses and the tougher rehab or behavior cases—and they are always there when we need extra care or an extra stall. Along with our other approved Partner Farms, they are the hands that catch our horses, manage surgeries and rehab, leg them back up, and help us place them safely into new homes. Without our farms, we are nothing.

This winter, we're also launching a very practical effort: a **Turning For Home Blanket Drive**. We've secured a wholesale price of \$50 per turnout blanket and will distribute new blankets alphabetically across our partner farms, stretching the funding as far as we can. Northern farms will receive heavyweight turnouts for the harshest weather; farms in milder climates will receive medium-weight turnouts. Every \$50 gift puts a new blanket on a Turning For Home horse's back this winter, keeping a horse warm and dry while they transition to turn-out and wait for their next chapter.

As we mark our **Day of Giving on Tuesday, December 2**, we'll be celebrating all of this—the founders and early supporters who had the vision to do it right the first time, the Owners and Trainers who keep choosing us, the Partner farms who make room for one more, and the adopters and donors who complete the circle. If Turning For Home has touched your life—through a horse you owned, trained, rode, adopted, or simply followed online—**thank you**. Together, we have proven that when aftercare is built correctly into the racing model, it works. On behalf of PTHA's Turning For Home, Inc., thank you for standing with us, for believing in the worthiness of Thoroughbreds beyond the finish line, and for helping us keep the promise that Parx horses are truly backed for life.

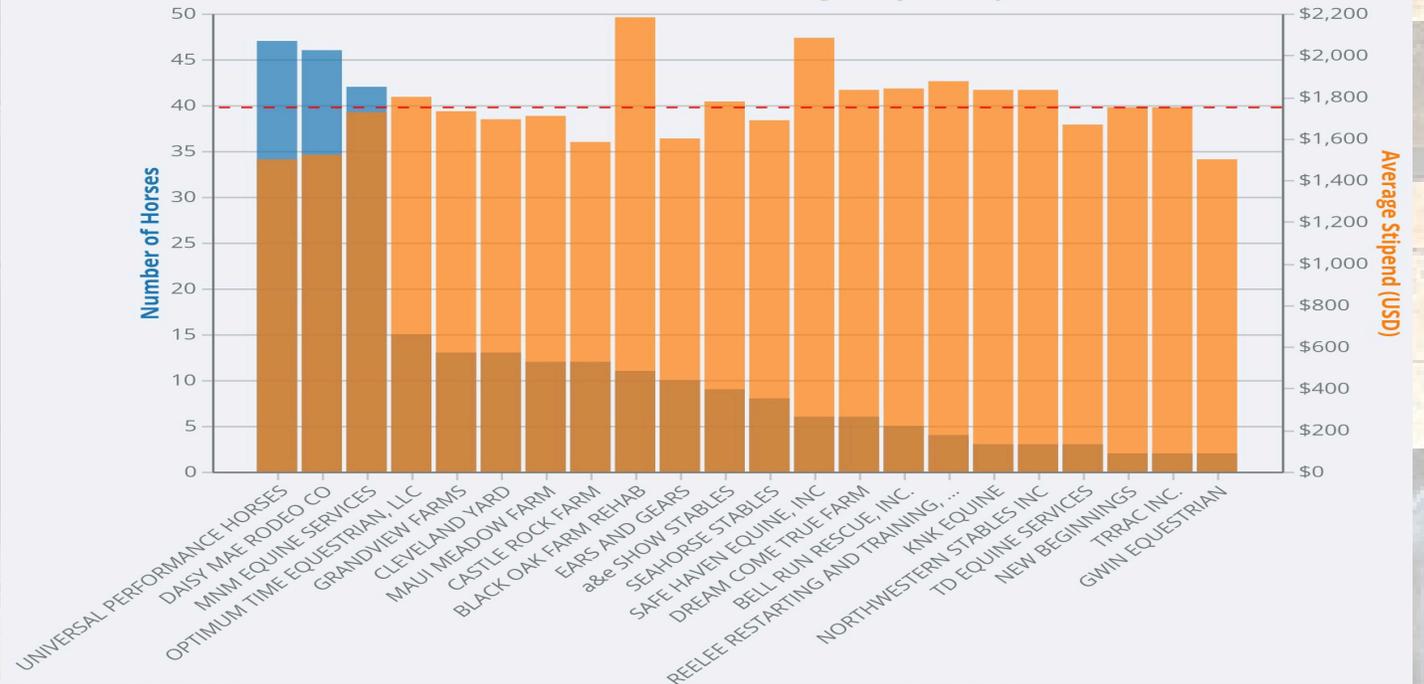
With sincere gratitude,  
Danielle

Link: <https://www.pledge.to/tfh-2025-blanket-drive>  
Text WARMBLANKET to 707070 to donate





Number of Horses and Average Stipend by Farm



*Seventeen years of placements: steady fees, strong partners, and growing trust from Parx owners.*

## By the Numbers: A Program That's Growing, Not Shrinking

The numbers tell the story:

- 4,700+ total Thoroughbreds assisted since 2008
- 326 horses accepted directly through Parx as of Thanksgiving this year
- Average of 7 days from track to partner farm placement
- Zero eligible Parx horses turned away in 17 years - zero added fees to owners

Above is a chart of our placements and stipends, showing that:

- Our placement stipends have remained fair and steady between farms (\$1,750 average per horse)
- And in many cases, average support per horse is still lower than it was when we began in 2008,
- Even though the costs of hay, feed, bedding, farrier work, and veterinary care have risen significantly.

You will also see in our data that Pennsylvania-breds are well represented in our program:

- Approximately 1,400 PA-breds have come through Turning For Home,
- Compared with about 1,300 Kentucky-breds,

showing that the investment in PA-bred racing is matched by an investment in responsible PA-bred aftercare.

# Turning For Home

## HORSE UPDATES



### **Basilica (NJ)**

Chestnut Mare foaled March 24, 2018  
( Palace - Scatter, by Scat Daddy )  
Trainer: Eli Betancourt  
Owner: Prima Ventures  
Breeder: Spring Run Farm, LLC  
Partner Farm: Optimum Time Equestrian



Basilica was retired in early 2022 without making it to the races. She was a high-spirited chestnut mare who needed clear direction and time to settle. With patience and consistency at Optimum Time Equestrian, Megan helped her learn to relax, focus, and trust her riders. When Amber came along, the match clicked. A thoughtful, tactful rider, she has channeled Basilica's fiery energy into real talent in the show-jumping arena. This once-challenging mare has found her person and her purpose!



### **Yellow Dress (KY)**

Dark Bay Mare foaled February 11, 2018  
( Shanghai Bobby - Bromelia, by Unbridled's Song )  
Trainer: Louis C. Linder, Jr.  
Owner: Over The Moon Racing  
Breeder: Machmer Hall & D + J Stables  
Partner Farm: Optimum Time Equestrian



Retiring in 2023 to Megan Maeder's farm, Yellow Dress, affectionately renamed Bella, quickly became a barn favorite, charming everyone she met. In February 2024, she was adopted by Alexandra and headed north to Vermont, where she's now thriving as a competitive polo mare. Bella's transformation is a wonderful reminder of just how versatile Off-the-Track Thoroughbreds can be!



### **Pralinepopsbottles (PA)**

Bay Gelding foaled April 30, 2021  
( Eclipticalspraline - Sarahline, by Northern Afleet )  
Trainer: William J Hogan Jr.  
Owner: CF Racing Stables  
Breeder: Maria Haire  
Partner Farm: Once Upon A Farm



Pralinepopsbottles retired after just a handful of starts and headed to our Partner Farm with JR McCaulley, who immediately raved about his movement and easygoing personality. His quiet brain and floating trot made him a natural fit for the hunter ring. Now adopted by Erin and living in New York, "Praline" made his show debut in style, bringing home two second-place ribbons in Hunter Under Saddle and the Baby Green Hunters. A classy restart and a promising future.



### **Secret Temptation (KY)**

Bay Mare foaled April 1, 2020  
( Secret Circle - Grazioso, by Dehere )  
Trainer: Philip T. Aristone  
Owner: Thomas Nash  
Breeder: Joyce Santiago  
Partner Farm: Seahorse Equestrian



A recent October 2025 retiree, Secret Temptation, now known as Lainey, settled in quickly at Seahorse Equestrian, showing off a big, balanced stride and a sharp mind. After just three rides, she even joined the barn's teenage riders for a field trip to the beach—totally unfazed and happy to take everything in stride. Lainey is still looking for an adopter who can appreciate a talented young mare with plenty of potential.

# HORSEMEN'S PURCHASING ASSOCIATION



**FOR ALL YOUR RACING NEEDS AT PARX RACING, INCLUDING BEDDING, FEED, EQUIPMENT, SUPPLEMENTS, SUPPLIES AND MORE!**

**NEW**

## **STORE HOURS**

**Race Days**

**8 am to 4:30 pm**

**Th.-Fr.**

**8 am to 1 pm**

**Sat.**

**8 am to 1 pm**

**Feed trailers open until 1 pm**

**Ice House open until 2 pm on Race Days**

**CONTACT US:**

**Diane Day**  
HPA Manager

**267-223-3140**  
[dday@patha.org](mailto:dday@patha.org)



# PTHA TROPHY RACE

NOVEMBER 2025



Photo Credit: EQUI-PHOTO

## Smoked Bourbon

NOVEMBER 4

Owner  
Stone Jug Ranch LLC

Trainer  
Kathleen DeMasi

Jockey  
Silvestre Gonzalez

NOVEMBER 11

## Get Like Mike

Owner  
Philip Rubin  
Racing Stable LLC

Trainer  
Michael Pino

Jockey  
Ruben Silvera



Photo Credit: EQUI-PHOTO



Photo Credit: EQUI-PHOTO

## Sweet Marie

NOVEMBER 18

Owner  
Tilted Shamrock  
Stables LLC

Trainer  
John C. Servis

Jockey  
Yan Rodriguez

NOVEMBER 25

## Gun It

Owner  
Madison Avenue Racing  
Stable Inc, Morris E.  
Kernan Jr. & Jagger Inc.

Trainer  
Jamie Ness

Jockey  
Yedsit  
Hazlewood



Photo Credit: Dani Gibson

# Heartbeat of the Backstretch

By : Nikki Guzman



If you walk down the PARX Racetrack backstretch on a crisp December morning, you might spot Devon Carey bundled up, caring for horses with the calm confidence of someone who has truly found her place.

A few years ago, Devon was working full-time in a child care center. One hectic day during a break in the parking lot, she realized it was time for a change. As she scrolled through job postings, she found an opening for a cashier in the PARX backstretch kitchen and decided to give it a try.

For three years, she showed up to her job before a co-worker asked if she had ever worked with horses. Soon after, she was introduced to trainer Everton "Fred" Smith, who put her in a stall with a tough horse and told her to figure it out. Devon is convinced that he hoped she would not come back. But she did, and she has been there ever since. She is known as the "Boss Lady," walking horses, bathing them, feeding them, and helping with nearly everything that needs to be done.

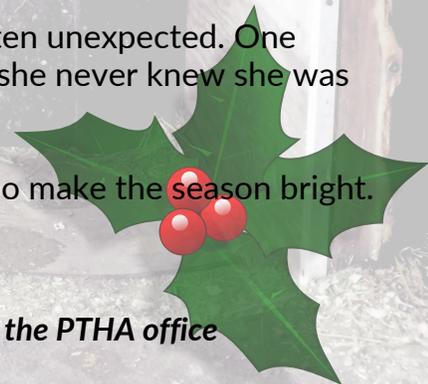
During this time, Devon had already earned her undergraduate degree from Penn State and completed her Master's in Educational Leadership from Bloomsburg University. She worked at an HBCU and now serves as the Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership at Drexel University, where she is also working toward her doctorate.

Her favorite horse was a ten-year-old mare named Juliet's Music. Devon could walk her without a shank and spent many quiet moments by her side. When Juliet was suddenly claimed in a race, Devon was heartbroken. She asked Fred to claim her back, something he had never done before.

In a small holiday-style miracle, he agreed. Juliet returned to the barn and soon won a race for them. She eventually retired through Turning For Home and is now happily settled in a wonderful home.

This holiday season, Devon's journey reminds us that the best gifts are often unexpected. One simple job posting led her to the horses, the barn family, and the purpose she never knew she was seeking.

Happy Holidays from the backstretch, and from Devon and the horses who make the season bright.



*If you would like to nominate someone for our feature, please stop by the PTHA office or email [nguzman@patha.org](mailto:nguzman@patha.org).*

Attention Parx's backside community

# Christmas Lunch

on December 25<sup>th</sup>  
at Ron's Backstrech Cafe  
from 11 am to 1 pm

Sponsored by



Smiles, delicious food, and overflowing bellies filled the air during PARX's Thanksgiving luncheon, giving thanks to our hardworking community, the heart and soul of our industry. Thanks to Ron's Cafe for the excellent service and to the PTHA and Parx Racing for making this celebration possible.



# From the Race Track Chaplaincy of America at Parx



Chaplain's Annual  
Christmas Party Date:  
December 20th - 1PM-  
3:30PM in the  
Grandstand.

For Sign-ups, Call: 267-  
223-3513  
Email: [secretary@rtca-  
pa.org](mailto:secretary@rtca-pa.org)  
or Visit the  
Chaplain's office  
Deadline - December 5th

Backpacks with Gift Items for Parx's Dorm  
residents will be distributed on  
December 22nd & 23rd.



## EQUI-PHOTO



Official Track Photographer  
Monmouth Park, Parx & Penn National

EQUI-PHOTO, INC.

P.O. Box 107

Oceanport, New Jersey

732-222-9333

[equiphoto@hotmail.com](mailto:equiphoto@hotmail.com)



**PENNSYLVANIA**  
IS THE PLACE TO  
*Breed & Race*  
IN **2026**

### PA PAYS!

Seven breeders on  
pace for **\$200,000**  
in awards

Top two on pace to finish between  
**\$500,000** and  
**\$1 MILLION**

To learn more, contact  
Exec Sec Brian Sanfratello at  
**610.444.1050**  
or [info@pabred.com](mailto:info@pabred.com)

Over the last 10 years, the PHBA  
Breeding Fund distributed an average of  
**\$27 MILLION**  
annually in Awards, Owner Bonuses & Restricted Race Purses

**UP TO 40%** in Owner Bonuses  
**UP TO 40%** in Breeders Awards

**APPROXIMATELY**  
**\$7 MILLION**  
in PA-Bred stakes and restricted races

[f](https://www.facebook.com/pabred.com) [i](https://www.instagram.com/pabred.com) [t](https://www.tiktok.com/pabred.com) [y](https://www.youtube.com/pabred.com) [pabred.com](https://www.pabred.com) | #PABred on social media

Want to see your ad in our next newsletter?  
Call or email us today to find out how easy it is to  
advertise with us and get extra coverage online!

215-638-2012 or email: [vmangini@patha.org](mailto:vmangini@patha.org)



Pennsylvania Thoroughbred Horsemen's  
Association

P.O. Box 300, Bensalem, PA 19020

Office: 215-638-2012 Fax: 215-638-2919

Hours: Mon - Wed, 8 am - 5 pm

Thur, 8 am - 4 pm

Fri, 8 am - 1 pm

[www.patha.org](http://www.patha.org)

**SEE YOU IN THE  
WINNER'S CIRCLE!**

