

## Inmates Take Care Of Retired Race Horses Program Gives Both A Second Chance

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CARROLL COUNTY, Md. -- Retired race horses are going to be taken care of by minimum-security inmates in a new program aimed at helping both groups.

The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation took an old abandoned facility in Carroll County and turned it into Second Chances Farm, where several rescued race horses and the inmates who work with them will get just that -- a second chance.

"The horses are thriving and giving back to society by helping the inmates, and the inmates are, of course, finding their inner sensitive self before they're released out into society," said Diana Pikulski of the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation.

The foundation took over the farm a year ago. Inmates put on a new roof and painted an old barn before the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday.

Second Chances Farm

Inmates get to work with retired horses at Second Chances Farm in Carroll County.

When the facility is in full operation, program officials said they hope to have 30-40 horses.

"If their owners hadn't set up something for them or they were going to the breeding shed like some horses do, but not many, they might end up at the livestock auction, and it's often times that the highest bidder is the slaughterhouse," Pikulski said.

The farm was the idea of Department of Public Safety and Corrections Secretary Gary Maynard.

"It starts out by taking care of the horses -- keeping them from being slaughtered -- and the inmates that work with them, it turns into an opportunity for them to change their lives, so everybody wins," he said.

"It made me get my life together and leave the nonsense alone out there ... I love this."  
- Inmate Michael Gray

The inmates said they're thankful for the opportunity.

"It made me get my life together and leave the nonsense alone out there," said inmate Michael Gray. "I love this. I love animals, period."

"We're trying to build a program where guys can come out and learn stuff, and have some sort of job or training when they get out," said inmate Jeff Briselli.

Second Chances Farm is the first inmate-run retired racehorse farm in Maryland.