

Maryland Program Benefits Retired Horses, Inmates

posted 05/14/09 7:16 pm

Link to video: <http://www.news8.net/news/stories/0509/622935.html>

NewsChannel 8 - Md. Program Benefits Retired Horses, Inmates

Maryland officials are placing a bet on some race horses, but it's not for Saturday's Preakness Stakes. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services are teaming up to give retired horses a second chance.

The program is the first of its kind for the state of Maryland. Often race horses are neglected, hurt or even put to death after their glory days are over. Now, they'll have a 27-acre farm in Sykesville to spend the rest of their days. But it's not just horses that are benefiting from the partnership.

Donnie Goodman finally has something to laugh about. A few weeks ago, he began a 16th-month sentence at Maryland Division of Corrections Pre-release System, and with the help of some thoroughbreds, Goodman's finding a way to pass the time.

"When you're around them you just want to love them. They've been abused," Goodman said.

And Goodman is around them a lot. A group of selected inmates spend at least eight hours a day on the Second Chances Farm that will house the retired and neglected race horses.

"Some of the horses come in and they've been injured; they've been run into the ground. They consider them throw away horses - some of them - so the guys can relate to that," Goodman said.

But when the program was first proposed, not everyone was happy about it.

The concept, though, is already showing signs of success. Inmates have helped renovate the barn, which was officially unveiled Thursday morning. The facility is expected to save the state and taxpayers money.

And while the horses' racing days may be over, some of the inmates are anxious to get back on a new track. Goodman says he would like to "get a job, maybe with the Pimlico Race Course."

The inmates will receive grooming licenses once they complete six months of training. Only three horses arrived at the farm Thursday, but there are about 30 horses that will soon call Second Chances home.