

ACROSS *the* BOARD



**Blue Grass
Farms Charities**

Supporting the Thoroughbred Racing Community

BLUE GRASS FARMS CHARITIES

WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER



**Supporting those working in the
Thoroughbred Industry.**

20 YEARS

**OF SERVICE AS 'THE HEART AND
HANDS' FOR THE HORSEMEN**

Now, that's something to celebrate!

Established in 2004, Blue Grass Farms Charities (originally named Blue Grass Farms Chaplaincy) provides health and human services to those who work in the Central Kentucky Thoroughbred Industry. Serving the racing community, the charity supports all Thoroughbred farm workers and back-stretch, who need a 'leg up' some time in their lives.

During the past 20 years the charity has seen a great deal of change, but one common denominator has been two men who are still at the forefront of its inception and success. Back in the early 2000's, Tom Thornbury was Keeneland's Sales Manager, and Dr. Tom Riddle was advancing Rood and Riddle Equine. Both men saw firsthand how much the workers needed certain services and care. A group of horsemen/women formed Blue Grass Farms Charities (BGFC) for the area farm workers and training facilities.

Creating a faith-based charity for the horsemen was their goal. However, a major challenge was finding and maintaining a chaplain for the charity. This had an impact on the outreach and services -- or lack of -- to reach the workers over the years. So, the charity changed direction to improve its benevolent services along with increasing its family-oriented programs. The two most popular programs are the Festival of Christmas event and the Back-to-School Backpack giveaway. These events have grown exponentially.

Twenty years later, Dr. Riddle and Mr. Thornbury along with the current Board of Directors still set ambitious goals to assist, inform and disseminate financial support to all those racing and raising Thoroughbreds in Central Kentucky. The Board's involvement in the charity creates trust with its donor base and constituents. Referrals and networking by the BGFC staff with area organizations has raised the charity's awareness, especially during the Covid pandemic. Julie Kwasniewski, Executive Director, states, "If you have any benevolent need, a health/financial question, or an issue you need help with, we are here for you. If BGFC cannot solve the problem, we are confident we can find someone that can."

This year, the charity will proudly advertise and celebrate its dedication to the horsemen with its programs and services.



Dr. Tom Riddle, Tom Thornbury and Julie Kwasniewski receiving the 2020 William T. Young Humanitarian Award from Pope McLean at the KTOB/KTA Awards Ceremony.

Donate Today!
www.bgfcky.org

Your 'Giving' is Genuinely Appreciated

For the Tall & Small, Festival of Christmas was Fantastic!



On the evening of December 6, all was aglow for the Annual Festival of Christmas event held at the Thoroughbred Training Center. With more than 1,000 people ranging in age from newborn to 99, farm and track families enjoyed merriment, Santa Claus and presents. The charity increased its 'good boys and girls list' by creating a Toy Store for children along with drawings for TVs, Muck Boots & Coats Gift Cards (sponsored by The Jockey Club Safety Net), Southern Lights passes, and Bikes!

A sit-down dinner was the start of the festivities with a wonderful meal prepared by Selma's Catering, Lexington. Once fed, guest visited Santa, who was on stage this year. The Heider Family Foundation sponsored 'Toy Room' was abuzz with many gifts and giveaways. Entertainment by Tiny Tall Man and his juggling partner were a hit making balloon figures and entertaining the crowd.

Christmas carols were heard throughout the facility. When families departed, the elves gave out Christmas turkeys, chickens, and various side items to take home for the perfect holiday meal. No one left empty-handed! Foods were provided by God's Pantry Foodbank and Black Soil Foodbank. Thank you to all our volunteers, staff and Board members who participated during the evening festivities. A big 'thank you' to Great Expectations staff for decorating the venue.

NUMBER OF ITEMS/PEOPLE SERVED:

- Signed Up: 337 Families or 1,210 people
- Volunteers: 65 board members and friends of the charity
- Healthcare: 40 vaccines administered – 48 patients accessed
- Food: Meal prepared for 1,200 guests consisting of fried chicken, mac & cheese, green beans, cookies, and rolls. Guests were able to take dinner home to others!

FESTIVAL of CHRISTMAS

FIESTA DE NAVIDAD

Thank you to our Sponsors!

Bluegrass Community Health Center
Calumet Farm
Central Bank & Trust
Columbia Gas/NiSource Charitable Foundation
Coolmore Ashford Stud
Dean Dorton
Dixiana Farm
Don Alberto, Inc.
Equine Medical Associates
Fasig-Tipton, Inc.
Godolphin, Inc.
Golden Age Farm

Heider Family Foundation
Jockey Club Safety Net
Juddmonte Farm
Keeneland, Inc.
Middlebrook Farm
Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital
Shadwell Racing
Shepherd Bloodstock
Stonestreet Farm
Taylor Made Sales
WinStar Farm



Thank you, Volunteers!

KEMI * RaceRise * UK Equine Mgmt Program
Friends of BGFC * BGFC Board of Directors

GIFTS DISTRIBUTED:

- 10 Bike Gift Cards
- 4 Smart TVs – 65" Vizio
- 50 Southern Lights Passes
- 50 Muck Boots/Coats Gift Cards – Tractor supply (Jockey Club Safety Net)
- 370 Walmart Family Gift Cards
- 665 Blankets, Scarves, Beanie Hats & Gloves
- 55 Starbuck's and Fandango Gift Cards for 13- to 17-year-olds
- 26 Electronic Games for 9- to 13-year-olds
- 106 Toys for the 9 years and younger
- 500 Coloring books in English & Spanish (NiSource Charitable Fdn/Columbia Gas)
- 1,200 (total) of Christmas bracelets, lighted necklaces, and candy bags

And...

2 trips to the Dollar General Store by Jesse Ullery!

Thank you to our sponsors for the Festival of Christmas AND the 4th Annual Relics and Rarities online auction. Combining these events' sponsorships, \$95,000 was raised by the charity.

Dr. Herb Riddle Dental Fund Established

Blue Grass Farms Charities (BGFC) is proud to announce the Dr. Herb Riddle Dental Fund, beginning in 2024. This fund will ensure that horsemen and women who do not have dental insurance, or additional income for such need, can request assistance for examinations, and routine/ emergency procedures.



Dr. Tom Riddle and wife, Margaret, at Hats Off Day

In 2019, Dr. Riddle's brother, Dr. Herb Riddle, DMD, passed away. Dr. Riddle and his wife, Margaret, wanted to honor Herb by establishing a dental fund.

"Margaret and I both want to do something to honor my older brother who passed away too young. We thought of honoring him by establishing a fund through the Blue Grass Farms Charities in which we would pay for dental care for horse farm workers in Kentucky. Blue Grass Farms Charities does a wonderful job providing for the horse community in our area and thus, we can support a charity which we strongly believe in and honor my brother with a dental fund," stated Dr. Riddle.

Funding to support the workers will begin in 2024. If you would like to contribute to the Dr. Herb Riddle Dental Fund/Blue Grass Farms Charities Endowment, you may do so directly to Bluegrass Community Foundation, 499 E High St STE 112, Lexington, KY 40507.



DOUGH DADDY'S DONUTS AT THE SALES

The second annual donut dash during the September Sales was again a hit. 624 donuts were given to the sales staff and consignors. Thanks to our staff and Board members Emily Alberti, Bob Baney, Julie Kwasniewski, Amy McLean, Patrick Masson, and Walter Hillenmeyer.



AUCTION CONTINUES TO BE A HIT!

The 4th Annual Relics and Rarities from the Bluegrass Region virtual auction ended on October 29th by auctioning off 64 items. Although there were less items this year, the auction raised funds because of a better selection and more attractive items. Immensely popular bourbons, halters/equine memorabilia and trips were again the desired items. The auction's revenue plus sponsorships raised \$124,006.



We teamed up with God's Pantry Foodbank to work the booth at Hat's Off Day, July 29th at the Kentucky Horse Park. WE are always grateful for the donated booth to highlight both the charity and God's Pantry's programs. As Anna Russell, GP's Employee and Community Engagement Director states, "Hat's Off Day was fantastic – a really great opportunity to let the community know who we are and how we can help."

BLUE GRASS HOSPITALITY THANKSGIVING 2023

Bluegrass Hospitality provided 254 meals to 15 farms, Keeneland and TTC this Thanksgiving to enjoy.

Thanks to KEMI, Kristin Wilson, and Stacia Sharff for volunteering with distributing these meals.



UK Equine Management's Week of Service

During the second week of October, UK Equine Management students joined the charity by helping Bob and Julie with food distribution and pantry restocking. We are so grateful to have them participate and bring strong backs to help unload food for the farm workers. We love our future farm managers!



Volunteer Spotlight

Amanda Ramey, Advertising manager for BloodHorse, is our volunteer for this giving season and friend to the charity. Amanda organized the BloodHorse/Jockey Club food drive for the charity, and personally came to the charity's pantry to organize and stock its shelves. Amanda is definitely a full-service volunteer. BGFC appreciates you, Amanda.

Thank you!



BY THE NUMBERS

Total for Assistance & Programs — \$123,914.00

97,130 pounds of food delivered and 5,685 people served through Meal Connect Program and the pantry since January 1st, 2023

Bob Baney distributed nearly 50 TONS of food in 2023!

11 farm and track workers scheduled for dental procedures through the DDKY grant

9 farm workers received vision assistance through the Snowy Owl Foundation, two of which had Cataract Surgery

1,156 backpacks were given to children – kindergarten to 8th grade



Executive Director's Notes

Happy New Year! Are you as excited about 2024 as I am? I feel that 2023 was a 'hurry up and wait' kind of year, personally. I do have to say that making Georgetown my new Kentucky home has been the best Christmas present for me and my family. Being a full-time resident in the Bluegrass again has reduced much stress and road miles. I am now 8 miles away from our office on Sandersville Road compared to 315 miles away when living in West Virginia. New pantry hours and seeing our clients have already begun for the charity's new year resolution.

Join me in making 2024 a wonderful year. The charity has so much to look forward to, for example: Celebrating our 20th anniversary; increasing our benevolence; expanding pantry/food distribution; networking/providing referrals; and continuing our dedication to the horsemen. BGFC is ready!

HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE — Julie

Donate Today! www.bgfck.org

Dental & Vision Assistance Continues

The charity is blessed once more to provide vision exams and eyewear thanks to the Snowy Owl Foundation. VisionWorks at the Lexington Hamburg location will once again be our eye exam/eyewear provider for this service.

The Delta Dental of Kentucky (DDKY) grant has been awarded for workers who qualify for emergency dental assistance. This year's funding will be used for root canals, extractions, and dentures.

Call BGFC to schedule your workers appointments.

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