Unwanted Horses and Equine Therapy

The benefits of using unwanted horses in equine therapy programs.

Tag Words: Equine therapy, therapeutic riding, Unwanted Horse Coalition, unwanted horses, abandoned horses, hippotherapy

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Summary

The problem of the increasing amount of unwanted horses in the United States is discussed in this classipedia. We plan to inform the public about the unwanted horse issue and propose a way to find alternate purposes for the horses. Statistics are given to show how large the problem actually is and how it has come to be. In order to solve the problem these horses need to be given loving, purposeful and permanent homes. A solution that is expanded on involves relocating unwanted horses into equine therapy programs to assist the disabled with their physical, mental and emotional disabilities.

Video Link

Unwanted Horses and Equine Therapy: http://youtu.be/axI23XuX1oY
The Issue: Unwanted Horses

The Problem of Unwanted Horses (SR)

An unwanted horse is defined as a horse that is no longer needed or deemed useful, and its owner either cannot or no longer wishes to care for the horse, financially or physically (AAEP). These horses include those that are healthy and those that are terminally ill, horses with injuries or chronic health problems, horses that cannot perform to their owner’s wants or expectations, as well as horses with behavioral problems, severe or not. There have always been unwanted horses, but the growing number has caused serious concern within the equine community. In 2007, the Unwanted Horse Coalition estimated that there are about 170,000 unwanted horses in the United States each year. This figure is composed of: 58,433 horses processed in the United States (USDA Veterinary Services), 36,858 exported to Canada, 45,609 exported to Mexico, 21,000 unadopted feral horses in BLM sanctuaries (Bureau of Land Management), 9,000 feral horses in the BLM’s adoption pipeline, and an unknown number of horses that are abused or neglected (UHC).

The Unwanted Horse Coalition conducted a nationwide survey in 2009 which came back with depressing results. Over ninety percent (ranging from ninety-three to ninety-six percent) of those who responded to the survey stated that they believed the number of unwanted horses is increasing (UHC). Sixty-three percent of the rescues or shelters that responded admitted that they were at full capacity. The top contributor believed to be causing the unwanted horse problem is the economy. People can no longer afford to keep their horses. Seventy-three percent of horse owners and stakeholders (veterinarians, horse trainers, breeders, etc.), seventy-one percent of non-horse owners, and eighty percent of rescue facilities believed that this is the main cause for the increasing numbers of unwanted horses. Sixty-one percent of horse owners, fifty-six percent of stakeholders, forty-one percent of non-horse owners, and thirty-five percent of rescue facilities agreed that the closing of the horse processing plants is another major contributor to this issue. The change in breed demand and backyard breeding was believed to be a cause of the unwanted horse problem by fifty-three percent of rescues and shelters. The fourth contributor from the survey’s responses was the high cost of euthanasia and carcass disposal (UHC).

Across the board, the economy is seen as the number one cause of the increasing number of unwanted horses. Those that have bought horses may no longer be able to care for them in the recession. Many of these owners do not know what to do with their horses if they cannot find someone to buy them. A lot of these horses are sent to Canada or Mexico to end up in slaughterhouses, since the United States closed all of the nation’s horse slaughter plants. For those that cannot send their horses to slaughter, some of these horses end up in facilities waiting to be adopted, or are left in a field.

Another issue that comes with unwanted horses is the problem of abuse and/or neglect. The Unwanted Horse Coalition survey discovered that horse owners, rescue facilities, and stakeholders alike have all observed an increase in horse neglect or abuse. Ninety-four percent of horse owners said that the numbers of abused or neglected horses has increased, while ninety-two percent of stakeholders and eighty-five percent of rescue facilities agreed. The survey asked for any additional comments on this specific area of the unwanted horse issue. Respondents told
the UHC that they have witnessed horses being abandoned in fields to starve, turned out into the wild, and dropped off near other farms or horse trailers (UHC).

The Unwanted Horse Coalition tried to determine what types of horses makes up the majority of unwanted horses. Ninety-four percent of rescue facilities and shelters observed that these horses were too old or injured to be of use to their owners any longer. It was found that horses used for recreational riding had the highest statistics of being sold, donated, or euthanized. It was also discovered that the Quarter Horse is the most likely breed to become sold or euthanized. This coincides with the fact that the Quarter Horse makes up fifty percent of the United States Registered horses. Thoroughbreds have the highest number being donated to rescues or shelters at forty-six percent. The Paint is the second highest breed being sold in the United States. The ages of horses also determines whether they are sold, donated, or euthanized. Horses between the ages of three and ten are most likely to be sold. Horses between the ages of three and fifteen are most likely to be donated, and horses that are either from eleven to fifteen years old, or over the age of twenty-one are most likely to be euthanized. This survey also showed that geldings make up fifty percent of those horses sold, donated, or euthanized, while mares make up forty-eight percent, and stallions make up two percent of this population.

Rescue facilities are constantly getting in unwanted horses, and many are at their full capacity (thirty-nine percent). Another thirty percent of rescues and shelters are almost at their full capacity. The rescues that participated in the UHC 2009 survey stated that on average, they are turning away thirty-eight percent of the horses that are taken to their facility.

The staggering statistics prove that this is indeed an enormous problem in the United States. There are many suggestions on how to solve this escalating issue. Across the board, all of the people in the horse industry believe that horse owners and potential horse owners need to be educated on the expensive details of owning a horse, as well as what their options are if their horse becomes sick or injured. Rescue facilities and shelters need funding to continue to run their organizations- the increase of this funding would make a huge impact. Other suggestions are to restrict breeding, increase the options for euthanization, and increase the public’s awareness of where to take an unwanted horse. The entire horse community is aware of this growing problem. For many other issues, the separate groups within this community have been reluctant to come together in agreement. The Unwanted Horse issue is the one issue that the horse community and industry need to work together on. A solution is desperately needed to stop the countless horrific ends of America’s beloved horses. One way to do this is to take the percentage of horses turned away from rescues and put them into programs were their talent is needed. One such program is called Equine therapy.

Animal Assisted Therapy (ML)

Animals can form a bond with humans that other humans cannot achieve. They are the perfect compliment to helping a person feel successful and loved. They can serve as the mediator an exceptional child may need in order to interact with the world around them. Individuals experiencing hardships or trying to improve a certain handicap can expect nothing but support from an animal. Currently dogs and cats, companion animals, are the most commonly recognized animals used for Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT). The human-companion animal bond demonstrates the interspecies relationships, i.e. the symbiotic relationship between an animal and
human (Ormerod, Edney, Foster, & Whyham, 2005). Both species can benefit just by being in each others presence. It is common to see dogs and cats brought into hospitals to visit patients, or to see a guide dog helping the blind or a person confined to a wheelchair. Animals educate and can encourage individuals, help calm people and lower their blood pressure just by a simple touch. They teach responsibility, fend off loneliness and depression, and do not judge or criticize. Companion animals are positive influences on special needs children also. For example according to John L. Pitts, DVM autistic children can establish primary bonds with animals; these bonds can be then transferred to humans, the children are more likely to stay “on-task” when in the presence of a dog… overall it seems as though autistic children with a dog display a higher level of activity focused on a keen interest in their environments” (2005).

Animal Assisted Therapy is goal oriented intervention that is directed by a professional. Children who are a part of such a program can experience improvements in four key areas of functions: physical, mental, educational and motivational. Examples of such improvements include improving balance and motor skills, developing verbal interactions, reducing anxiety, increasing self esteem, increasing attention skills, aiding in short and long term memory, improving interactions with others and teachers, and improving their willingness to increase exercise and group activity. (Campbell, Corbin & Campbell, 2005).

Equine Therapy
The human animal bond is a force that is said to have healing powers that are immensely beneficial. Animal assisted therapy makes use of this bond by recognizing the potential for physical and emotional healing that can occur when a human and an animal become involved in some sort of relationship. One form of animal insisted therapy involves horses and is generally called equine therapy. Equine therapy can concentrate on the emotional similarities between human and horse behavior, as is done during equine psychotherapy or it can concentrate on the physical benefits of riding, as is done during therapeutic riding or hippotherapy. Any individual at any age can benefit from equine therapy. During therapeutic riding, the horse becomes a tool that can be utilized to effect physical, emotional, cognitive or social issues an individual is living with. A variety of disabilities can benefit from therapeutic riding. For example, issues such as phobias or elevated levels of anxiety, visual and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, downs syndrome, sclerosis, post traumatic stress disorder, stroke patients, and Parkinson’s disease are a few among many. What makes the horse so special for therapy is its gait. The natural walking motion of a horse is closer to a human’s natural walking gait than any machine built. The constant repetition and rhythm provides non stop stimulation to the rider.

Since the 1980s horses and therapeutic riding has been becoming increasingly popular in the world of physical therapy. There are two popular forms of equine therapy, therapeutic riding and hippotherapy. The difference between the two lies in how the lesson is conducted and what each rider expects or needs to gain from the therapy. The main difference between therapeutic riding and hippotherapy is that specific riding skills are taught during therapeutic riding whereas hippotherapy is aimed at solidifying foundation so neurological and sensory processes can be improved upon. Hippotherapy can be seen as the medical side of therapeutic riding. The American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) is an organization that promotes and perfects the use of horses as a form of therapy for people living with disabilities. According to the AHA, hippotherapy is a physical, occupational, or speech and language treatment strategy that utilizes
equine movement. Occupational and physical therapists work with the riders to determine what positions on the horse elicit the best response for the rider’s specific disability. Contrary to popular belief the horse actually influences the rider much more than the rider to the horse during hippotherapy.

Therapeutic riding utilizes how similar the horse’s natural walk is to the human gait and how that imitation is better than any man made machine. During therapeutic riding lessons a rider is taught to properly control a horse and other riding skills by a NARHA certified instructor. NARHA stands for the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association and is the main organization that oversees therapeutic riding programs in the United States. The instructor is responsible for using the movement of the horse to help the rider’s body understand how it is suppose to function normally. Riders form a partnership with the horse and gain confidence in themselves and in the tasks they have accomplished. Hippotherapy also concentrates on the horses’ movements, but specific riding skills are not taught like in therapeutic riding, the movement is just used as a tool to address impairments a rider might have. In addition a structured goal oriented therapy program is designed depending on what disability the rider is facing and what their specific needs may encompass. The idea behind hippotherapy is to attempt to correct handicaps in a certain amount of time and to see continual improvement. Hippotherapy must be conducted by a trained and accredited physical, occupational or speech therapist. Some additional physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities that can be encountered in therapeutic riding programs include but are not limited to cerebral palsy, autism, amputee, down syndrome, stroke victims, chemical abuse, hearing, visual and learning impairments, mental retardation, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida and muscular dystrophy.

Benefits and Costs (KB)
Working with horses can be a fun rewarding experience and it can also be very beneficial to those who are challenged physically, mentally or even emotionally. The benefits can be reaped from not only riding the horse, but from caring and just generally being around horses as well. Therapy with horses is great for children and adults. It allows them to be outside in the natural world instead of a stuffy room with a therapist and it is also a lot of fun. For a child who has issues with everyday motor skills will be thrilled to be able to control an 1100 pound animal without any problems. Horse therapy focuses on a child’s abilities rather than on their disabilities. There are many testimonies from parents who have had a child in horse therapy and they tell of a how their child can do more and are happier. Studies about the positive effects of this kind of therapy are limited to a few; they are always positive and show how different children have similar benefits that carry over into their everyday life.

Children and adults who have a physical disorder or disability can use horse therapy like physical therapy. For hippotherapy there are occupational, speech and physical therapists to help the disabled person in each of those areas while working with the horse. On the horse the rider gains the physical benefits which include improvement in motor skills, better able to sit and stand straight as well as increased comprehension and better behavior. The way the horses walk provides a rhythm that the rider can feel and also works the muscles and joints that a person normally uses while walking. The rider is able to stay on the horse helps with balance because the horse is constantly moving and the rider has to adjust with the horse in order to stay on and comfortable. These benefits can last for weeks after therapy is over. Horse therapy is not only
good for people with cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and other physical disorders, but it is also good for those who have had an injury and need physical therapy to regain the control and strength over the part that was damaged.

Being able to pay attention in class is difficult for a child with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyper D disorder (ADHD), but put a horse in the picture and it cannot be ignored by anyone. Children with ADD/ADHD or any other mental disorder can benefit from therapy with horses or equine facilitated learning (EFL). Horses bring in a multi-sensory experience to a child that they probably have not experienced before. While riding the horse they must follow the directions given to them or else they horse will not do what it is suppose to do. For example if the child is suppose to tug on the right reign to turn the horse and doesn’t, the horse won’t turn and will keep going straight. Horse therapy also helps with cognition function, communication and an increase in motivation. All of the skills are used with the horse or while riding the horse. A rider needs to be able to communicate to the horse which direction to go or how fast to go. Motivation could be increased by the rider’s abilities with the horse that they do not get to experience everyday including the bonding that occurs.

For the children with behavior problems and/or other emotional issues such as grief/loss. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) involves a therapist and an equine specialist who utilize the horse to connect with the rider. Horses are very honest animals and they mirror the child’s attitudes. The child’s first reaction is generally the one they use to deal with a stressful situation because they do not know how else to react. If the child is trying to coerce and yell at the horse to do what they want the horse will not do it. However if the child uses kind words and gentle actions the horse will follow. When the child sees how negatively the horse reacts they will be able to start to understand that it was because of them and that they also feel negatively. They can relate their experiences with the horse to other experiences in their lives and see the effects of their negative behavior were not nearly as good as the effects of the positive behavior they had with the horse. It is easy for the child to relate to the horse because it is a social animal just like people and also have their own special personality that the child could relate to as well. For example if a rebellious teen is paired with a rebellious horse, the teen starts to understand the frustrated feelings that people they have dealt with felt when dealing with them. Another good pairing would be a person who is having trouble dealing with a loss to have them take care of a sick animal or an animal that needs special attention. This will help the person to get in touch with their feelings and learn to feel again as they take care of an animal. Since horses require a lot of care and attention a child can take their mind off their troubles for a while and just concentrate on the horse. A benefit of working with horses is that the child will be outside in fresh air and a wide space with their therapist rather than being inside in a small space. This atmosphere can help relax the student so they will not feel like they are being watched closely by the therapist.

All forms of therapy with horses share similar if not the same benefits and positively affect the person in therapy. Physically their muscles are stimulated and their balance and flexibility are increased and their posture is improved. For those who have difficulty walking, the motion of the horse stimulates the same joints and muscle used for walking so their mobility increases. Psychologically, self-esteem increases, they feel like they have the ability to do something, they are calmer and more relaxed and are also in a social setting to make friends and talk to people.
Mentally, they have more cognitive function, better able to focus and communicate as well as have better behavior in general.

The cost of a program can be as little as $50 per half hour session to thousands of dollars for a boarding school with horse therapy. Even though the costs may seem off putting it is really no more than the cost of seeing a therapist or psychiatrist for the same amount of time. And as with any form of therapy the benefits of the physical and emotional improvements outweigh the cost by many times. Having a person go from anxious and depressed to happy and optimistic or a person who couldn’t stand on their own to being able to stand on their own are life changing events and are worth the cost.

Resources

http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/resources/unwantedhorseFAQ_AAEP.pdf
http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/resources/PlightofUnwanted%20Horse_AAEP.pdf
http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org/resources/UHC_Survey_07Jul09b.pdf


http://www.specialequestrians.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1
http://www.americanhippotherapyassociation.org/index.html
http://www.equine-therapy-programs.com/
http://www.narha.org/
http://physicaltherapyonline.net/content/68/10/1505.full.pdf%2bhtml

The Service Project: Business Plan

Title Page By Mia Lombardo

Preset the name and location of your business.

Loving Pastures
555 Street Road
Ringoes, New Jersey 08551

* This business plan has been adapted from the one provided by U.S. Small Business Administration website at:
http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/plan/writeabusinessplan/SERV_WRITINGBUSPLA/N.html

*One example of a website to check business name availability is taken from a link from New Jersey’s State Page:
https://accessnet.state.nj.us/GatewayWatchNameSearch.asp
Tables of Contents By Mia Lombardo

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Depressing statistics from the Unwanted Horse Coalition have made the scope of the unwanted horse problem impossible to ignore. Due to the instability of the economy horses have become an expense that people can no longer afford to keep. Sadly many of the horses are sound, healthy and ready for homes. Rescues and clinics are overwhelmed with the number of needy horses and therefore sent to slaughter. The truth is that not every single horse can be given a new home but there are other solutions than slaughter. One solution our business has decided to highlight involves relocating these unwanted horses into equine therapy programs. Safe, permanent and quality homes can be given to these horses while fulfilling a critical component of the physical therapy world. Therapeutic riding and hippotherapy are two aspects of equine therapy that our riding facility is offering. Both therapeutic riding and hippotherapy are proven to improve the functioning of disabled riders and offer a lifelong option for rehabilitation. Using unwanted horses in the programs offers a purposeful home to the horses while not adding to the problem itself. Horses will be purchased from local rescues and auctions and then evaluated by our trainer and veterinarian before they are permitted to being training for our program. Our facility will include the purchasing of a pre-existing farm with a pre-existing barn and indoor arena. The barn has the capacity to house twelve horses. We will attempt to start our program will six horses and three instructors/therapists until our popularity increases. Every rider will be evaluated before their first lesson and then reevaluated at intervals during their time with our program to obtain the most optimum results possible. The evaluation is necessary to determine the eligibility of a rider and what can be offered to them through our facilities. We will be asking for the assistance of volunteers to aid the riders during lessons, to groom, feed and care for the horses and maintain the barn and property.

Business Description and Vision by Mia Lombardo
The mission statement and goals for the business should be pointed out in this section. The objective of your business and any preexisting background information should also be introduced here. The point of this section is to have your reader understand who your business is, what it stands for and what you hope to convey to the cliental.

Our accredited facility will provide a variety of therapeutic riding lessons to accommodate the various disabilities of our clients while giving loving, purposeful homes to unwanted horses. Trained and qualified physical, occupational and speech therapists will design unique goal oriented hippotherapy programs to fit the specific needs of each rider. We always ensure each rider is enjoying themselves while upholding a safe, comfortable, handicap accessible environment. In order to be consistent and efficient, each rider will be reevaluated throughout the
course of their program to determine if they are progressing in a positive exponential fashion. By using unwanted rescued horses in our organization we hope to raise awareness about the ever increasing issue of unwanted horses while showing the benefits equine therapy can offer to clients. We plan to begin small and grow gradually over time. We will attempt to find six horses that fit our needs and personality and expand as our popularity and cliental grow.

**Definition of the Market by Sam Rodgers**

To make a business successful you need to target customers who are in need of the services you provide. In this section of the business plan one should describe the industry which they are involved in and the customers they are hoping to attract.

The therapeutic riding industry is gaining rapid acknowledgement as a valid option for children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional issues. Clients can interact with the horses from the ground as well as in the saddle. When the patients (clients) work with the horses on the ground, they learn how to care for the horses and how to interact with them. Caring for the horses gives the patients responsibility, and interacting with the horses, who have various personalities, helps them with their social skills. Most horses are large, especially to small children, which challenges patients to confront and overcome their fears. For those clients with physical disabilities, riding horses allows them the freedom to move. The movement of a horse sways a person’s body in a way that impersonates a normal human being’s walk. This moves the client’s body so that they can build muscle; staying on the horse also improves balance and flexibility.

The horse industry is suffering from what has been recognized as the Unwanted Horse Issue. It has been estimated that there are about 170,000 unwanted horses in the United States every year (UHC). Horses that have been used for recreational riding are among the highest percentage of unwanted horses. These horses have been abandoned or given to equine shelters and rescue facilities by their owners who cannot afford them, or the horses have become too old to suit their owners’ needs or riding goals. Many of these unwanted horses are perfect candidates for therapeutic riding horses—they have been through countless lessons, and are calmer for walking therapeutic lessons. The number of unwanted horses is continuously increasing, which is why using these horses is so critical at this point in time.

These horses are unwanted and abandoned; clients with emotional issues can connect to these horses through this. Children or adults who have been abused can relate to these horses. Many unwanted horses are also put through abuse and neglect. Patients with trust issues can also find comfort in working with these horses, which may also have trust issues with human beings. Horses reflect emotions, and patients will be able to see themselves in these horses. They can work with these horses to build relationships and trust, as well as forgiveness. Relationships and trust can also be built through riding. Being on top of a horse would normally make the horse feel vulnerable (domestication of horses tries to diminish this feeling), and a rider may feel vulnerable being that high off the ground. This relationship between horse and rider, who have both been abused, neglected, or troubled, will be beneficial to both the horse and the rider.

Currently, this facility is a fully functional farm, which houses many rescued horses that are well looked-after and cared for. All of these horses are older, between eleven and fifteen years of age,
Description of the Products and Services by Mia Lombardo
The products and services offered by a business are its selling factors and in this section one should describe what the business has to offer, how it is competitive and should include some general costs about what is offered. The reader should understand why you are in business.

Our business stands to incorporate equine therapy and the benefits of saving and protecting unwanted horses. Not only do we provide a sanctuary for rescued horses but we will also provide the public with hippotherapy and therapeutic riding lessons. Using horses incorporates the natural movement of a horses gait as a tool that cannot be replicated by any machine. When clients come to our facility they will be welcomed and offered a tour. An evaluation of the rider will be conducted and the clients will be contacted within one week about a program that can be offered to the rider.

To properly manage our facility a barn manager will be appointed. We will also hire at least one horse trainer to assist in the choosing of the therapy horses. A strict list of criteria that the horses must meet before being purchased will be followed to make sure the riders are safe at all times. The number of physical, occupational and speech therapists hired will correlate with our cliental. Accredited instructors will be trained to conduct therapeutic lessons. Initial evaluations will be conducted when clients join and then they will be reevaluated throughout their program. We will also rely on the amount of volunteers we acquire. Volunteers will be essential to the riders during lessons and to the horses and their care.

An example technique that could be used for a rider is to have them ride backwards while volunteers hold the rider in place in the saddle. Riding backwards can allow the instructor or therapist to address problems with the upper body and lower body while the rider still benefits from the walking gait of the horse. Addressing these impairments in this fashion help the student gain more control of their legs or arms (Special Equestrians, 2008). Therapeutic riding and hippotherapy improves gross motor function in children with cerebral palsy because, in both cases, the rider responds to the motion of the horse and the displacement of their center of gravity (Sterba, 72).

Organization and Management By Katelyn Brown
After reading this section one should understand how the legal side of your business will be handled. Proper permits and licenses will be discussed and a description of the how the business will be insured should be covered. The general operations of the organization are revealed.

There are many different kinds of insurances that vary depending on which company you get it from. All equine business farms must have liability insurance to cover in case there is an accident with a paying rider. It is also beneficially to have at least some kind of medical
insurance as well, especially if the horse is frequently used. Listed below are some useful descriptions of insurances. Companies usually offer other different kinds of liability insurance and other insurances not covered below.

**Horse Insurances**
Animal Mortality: covers death as a result of injury, illness and usually theft. May require a vet certificate or may have an age limit. Most include surgery up to a specific value.

Medical: can be used as reimbursement for veterinary treatments that can be between $250-$300 per incident and a specific amount per horse per policy length.

Surgical: Reimbursement for a surgical treatment as resulted from injury, illness or accident. Specific amount per incident with a max amount per horse.

Specific Perils: Instead of full morality insurance this covers specific perils listed in the policy. May include theft, fire, drowning, wild animal attack.

Trip Transit: Short term for animal shipment

Equisport Agency has a specific Therapeutic Riding Club Liability insurance that covers up to $1 million including base premium covers programs, 7 event days open to public, directors, volunteers, instructors and partners.

**Farm Insurances**
Property and Liability: Covers dwellings, person property, other buildings, and horses
Horse Owners General Liability: legal liability protection up to $1 million per incident.

This website has several horse insurance companies:
http://www.naturalhorsetraining.com/EquineInsurance.html

**Permits:**
You need to register your business with the state and federal governments for tax purposes. The land that you want to use for your business must be in the proper zoning area. Zoning laws differ from state to state, but you need to be in an area that allows large animals to pasture and build a barn and stables.

Marketing and Sales Strategy By Mia Lombardo
The four P’s are covered in this section. The specifics of pricing, promotion, products and place are discussed. The reader should know who your market is, what your sales strategy is and how you plan to reach that market.

**Pricing:**
-Evaluation fee to determine the needs of each rider. An example of a cost is given by the facility Special Equestrians in Pennsylvania. They charge an evaluation fee of $60.
Lesson fees for each rider, these prices vary on what degree of therapy is needed, if the riding is participating in therapeutic riding or hippotherapy and how frequent the lessons are offered.

As of May 2008, the annual starting salary of an occupational therapist is $48,320 according to http://www.ehow.com/facts_7486404_starting-occupational-therapist-assistant-pennsylvania.html

As of May 2009, the annual salary for a speech therapist is $68,350 according to http://www.ehow.com/about_7386277_average-speech-therapist_s-salary.html

As of May 2006 the annual salary for a physical therapist is $66,200 according to http://www.ehow.com/about_5382834_annual-salary-physical-therapist.html

The average annual salary of a riding instructor is approximately $29,717 according to the website below, however accreditation NARHA can increase the salary http://www.ehow.com/list_6652902_jobs-equine-industry.html

Promotion:
Advertisement in the community is important, we plan to have informational brochures distributed to every doctor’s office, every therapist’s offices, schools and churches in the area.

After our grand opening we plan to have a free open house with tours and presentations on exactly what is offered at our facility.

Coupons will be printed in the local newspapers that offer discounts such as a free first lesson when a client has an evaluation done.

Our contact information will always be present in the phone directories and a website will be created to honor our facility.

Products:
Our product is unlike a normal product that will be consumed. Our product consists of the positive experiences that individuals gain from the services we offer. In a way our product is not attainable without properly functioning equipment, which in our case are our horses. To ensure their protection and health we will hire a veterinarian that is responsible for our barn. Instead of dealing with multiple veterinarians we will have one for all of our horses.

Place:
We choose to purchase a pre existing, fully functionally farm with a barn and arena and alter it to fit our needs. Other options that one could consider include purchasing land and starting from scratch. This option is the most expensive but has the advantage of being able to design all the details so they are tailored to the exact needs of your facility. Another option that is extremely appealing is to partner with a rescue farm and hold lessons at their facilities. This option has the
benefits of perhaps being the least expensive option, but it does have the difficulty of being able to separate your business from the business of the rescue facility.

**Financial Management By Mia Lombardo and Katelyn Brown**

One important distinction that needs to be made when deciding to create a therapeutic facility is whether or not the facility will be considered a non profit organization or not. Loans and grants are two primary methods to getting the funds required to begin a riding center. Finding grants to fund an operation can be difficult if the organization is a for profit organization. Some grants that are available however range from those dealing with any operation involved with horses to specific grants for therapeutic riding facilities. The following list of organizations could be useful when trying to finance a riding facility.

Horses and Humans is a facility that gives grants to programs that encourage the interaction between horses and humans.

**Horses and Humans Research Foundation**

P.O. Box 480  
Chagrin Falls OH 44022  
440-543-8306  
horsesandhumans.org

The American Quarter Horse Foundation has a program called the America’s Horse care program. The program is "dedicated to creating an ongoing funding base to support special-needs individuals and organizations that benefit from equine experiences," according to the American Quarter Horse Association website.

**American Quarter Horse Foundation**

P.O. Box 200  
Amarillo, TX 79168  
(806) 376-4811  
aqha.com

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Program has a program called the Quality of Life Grants program that helps fund operations that concentrate on the benefit of therapeutic riding for individuals with spinal cord injuries and all types of disabilities. They emphasize the beauty of giving paralyzed individuals the chance to be active and involved.

**Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation**

636 Morris Turnpike  
Suite 3A  
Short Hills, NJ 07078  
800-225-0292  
christopherreeve.org

The EQUUS foundation focuses their support on equine charities including therapeutic riding and programs that use horses in all physical therapy.
The cost of a horse can vary from a little expensive to very expensive. The cost of a horse itself can be varying from $1000 to $8000. If you don’t have a barn and a field you’ll have to pay for boarding elsewhere, which can range from $200 to $600 which usually includes feed. There is also the cost of veterinary expenses including shots and dental care, shoes, tack (bridle, saddle and blankets), and grooming supplies. This all will add up to $170-$935 per month or about $2,040 –$ 11,220 per year.

**Horse Cost (all amounts are per month)**

- **Stabling- $200+:** Depends on where your location. If you have your own stables then it is free
- **Bedding- $30:** Straw. Cost increase if you special bedding material (included in stabling fees)
- **Food- $30:** Depends on if there is lots of grassland or if the horse needs special food (included in stabling fees)
- **Salt/Minerals- $15** (included in stabling fees)
- **Insurance- up to $40:** Optional, but helps for medical bills
- **Ferrier- $15:** Basic, iron shoes cost more
- **Vaccination-$10**
- **Worming-$5**
- **Dental-$10**
- **Illness- $25:** Horse may not get sick for several years, but one bout of sickness can be very expensive
- **Saddle/Tack- $20:** New saddles can cost about $2,000, used can go for $500. $500 for blankets, bridle and so on. These items will need to be replaced when they wear out or do not fit your horse properly anymore
- **Training/Shows- $200:** if you choose not to participate in shows and train your horse yourself, discount this cost

**Total Monthly:** $170-$935

**Total Yearly:** $2040-$11,220

**Cost of Horse:** $1,000-$8,000- varies on breed and where you buy it
A Few Useful Links to Determine Costs:

http://www.aspenranch.com/outcome_study.html

Appendices

This section includes any additional information you may find useful to the reader. It can include topics such as links, resumes of employees, lists of business equipment, pictures of the location and company brochures.

Useful Links:

- How to Start a Therapeutic Riding Program

- How to Become Certified to Teach Therapeutic Riding

- How to Choose a Horse for a Therapy Program

- The Small Business Association’s Website
  http://www.sba.gov/financialassistance/borrowers/

- Example of A Business Plan Outline
  http://www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/plan/writeabusinessplan/SERV_WRITINGBUSPLA
  N.html

- What One Should Know About Owning a Horse
  http://www.avma.org/animal_health/brochures/buying_horse/buying_horse_brochure.asp

  http://www.unwantedhorses.org/before.html

- The Homepage for Unwanted Horses
  http://www.unwantedhorses.org/index.html

- Horse Rescues

Editorials

Letter to EQUUS
Dear Editor,

I was introduced to the Unwanted Horse issue last year, when I started my first semester as a research student in Rutgers University’s Young Horse Program. Dr. Sarah Ralston had brought up the subject, and told us about the closing of all of the horse slaughter plants in the United States and the cascade affect that this has created. She had gotten so fired up about the issue that I decided it was well worth checking out. How could a horse possibly be unwanted?

The United Horse Council conducted a survey in 2009, questioning horse owners and those involved in the horse industry about this growing problem. The results of this survey showed that more than ninety percent of the horsewomen and men that participated agreed that the number of unwanted horses is growing across the nation. The survey also found that sixty-three percent of horse rescue facilities or shelters are almost, or already are, at their full capacity. This study shows that many of those involved in the horse industry around the country are fully aware of this problem, but for how many of us does this problem actually hit home?

Previously, I had not been aware of the issue, as I have only been working with and riding horses for about six years. I have my own horse, a gorgeous Belgian cross mare, but she is more than wanted and loved. And I would do anything to keep it that way. Not until this past month had I been faced with the dilemma of an unwanted horse.

The Young Horse Program at Rutgers took in eight mustangs bought from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) this September. One of these mustangs was a small two year-old chestnut, a filly that I chose to be my research horse for the year. My partner and I decided to name her Amber, and set to working on socializing her. Unfortunately, she never really settled down and was terrified of everything. She would explode backwards, or forwards (whichever way she deemed safer), whenever something spooked her. It seemed every little thing spooked her. Dr. Ralston was sincerely worried she would hurt someone, or herself, and deemed her unsuitable for our program.

Dr. Ralston contacted several BLM trainers to see if we could place Amber there for quieter, safer training. They were unwilling to take her. Dr. Ralston didn’t seem to have many options, until the President of the US Wild Horse and Burro Association, Robin Rivello, proposed an idea. She offered to take Amber to her barn for two months of training, and after that time period, Amber’s progress would be evaluated. In two days, Amber was at Robin’s barn. Robin has been working with the Young Horse Program since last year, when we took in four two year-old mustangs. She has been training mustangs for twenty-one years.

When I first began working with Amber, in her stall at Rutgers, I could not get near her. When I finally could, the times when I was able to touch her, she would flinch and stand there quivering. In five weeks, she made no progress. I had no idea how to get through to a horse who wanted nothing to do with me being near her. The first time I went over to Robin’s barn to see Amber, I was amazed at what progress Robin had made with her in just five days. I walked into Amber’s pen and sat on the side of her water tub with Robin and waited. I didn’t have to wait long before
Amber walked straight up to us…and came to me. I must have been beaming; it definitely felt like it.

I could slowly reach out and Amber would take her favorite apple-flavored cookies out of my hand. Since then, Amber has been progressing quickly. The last time I went to “play” with Amber, I took her halter off and put a new one on, and could rub her forehead, her eyes, her ears, her neck and her withers. I could rubber her with a cotton rope, all over her head and neck—she even puts her head through a loop in the rope. I was also able to lead her with a little pressure on her halter. Robin recently informed me that she now leads with a lead rope. Amber no longer explodes when things scare her. Sometimes she’ll run, but more often than not she will stop herself and think for a minute, and then come back to you. She is trying so hard to get over all of the things that terrify her. I think she is doing a tremendous job.

Robin attributes a few things to why Amber was so reactive at Rutgers. She was already scared, and being in a stall with no room for her to run away from what was scaring her, just intensified her fear. At Robin’s, she has plenty of room to run, but now, she decides not to. She’s beginning to trust people. When her two months of training are over, we will find Amber a good home. After being a part of her training, and seeing such a difference in Amber, I feel an even bigger urge to help with the Unwanted Horse issue. Most of the horses that are unwanted for management issues may just need a second chance and a different environment. All unwanted horses just need a second chance.

I am fully aware that financial limits and the unstable economy do not allow us to take in horses that are in need. My heart goes out to those rescue facilities, shelters, and sanctuaries that open their arms to as many horses as they can possibly take. There has to be a solution to this problem. The UHC survey suggested that the US increase the ability of private rescue/retirement facilities to care for and take in horses. Another suggestion is to educate people on responsible horse ownership. I guess this is my small part in helping. I know an unwanted horse, and she has become quite the little light of my life.

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Editorial to The Burlington County Times

When choosing a pet you must consider the cost, the commitment and the care of it. While a cat or dog can cost hundreds of dollars a year, a horse will cost thousands and they can live up to 30 years of age. The average cost of a horse ranges from as little as $2,040 to as much as $11,220 per year mainly depending on if you provide boarding yourself or you pay for the horse to be stabled elsewhere. In this current economical crisis, many owners can no longer afford to take care of their horse. The owner can sell or auction the horse, but if that takes too long, what can they do? One option is to pack up the horse and head to the border and sell it to a horse slaughter factory. Another option is to just leave it in a pasture and hope it can fend for
itself. Neither option is good for the horse, so a horse owner needs to take preventative measures to avoid a terrible ending for their horse.

Before even buying a horse, a buyer must make sure they can financially support the horse for the entirety of its natural life. And while there are uncontrollable events later on that might cause you to become financially unable to care for your horse, you can at least give the horse to someone if you can’t sell it. Another preventative measure is to control the breeding. If you just let the horses breed as they want, then the stallion will impregnate every mare he comes into contact with during the breeding season. The fewer foals that are born the less of an addition cost you will have. With fewer horses the less likely one will be abandoned.

Written by Katelyn Brown

Editorial to the Philadelphia Inquirer

The Unwanted Horse Issue

It is consistently stressed through the media that when one is looking for a new pet, one should consider adoption. We witness through television commercials that thousands of dogs and cats that were given up by previous owners need a good home and deserve one. These commercials are absolutely right. I however want to pose the question, where is the support for the unwanted horses in the world? The ones that became too expensive to care for so they were locked into pastures and left there to die or the ones who have become so emaciated it is difficult for them to stand? I feel as though it is not stressed by the media that there are also thousands of horses that need homes. Or thousands of horses that could also use donations, just like dogs and cats, to keep the facilities housing them in business. According to the AAEP, the American Association of Equine Practitioners, one of the largest problems that arise when attempting to save unwanted horses is the lack of funding, volunteers and physical facilities to hold horses. It is obvious that the fees to maintain a horse is greater than those of other pets, but what gives other pets precedence over horses?

The amount of horses slaughtered each year is truly disturbing. The AAEP delivers some shocking statistics when they state that on average 1-2% of the domestic equine population is sent to slaughter in the US, each year, for the past ten years. According to an article written in 2004, 1 to 2 % equals 75,000 to 250,000 horses. This is just an example of the statistics the articles goes on to mention when they consider the amount of horses also sent to Canada and Mexico for slaughter and for the horses released from the Pregnant Mare Urine Industry due to downsizing. Unwanted horses are sent to slaughter, euthanized, left to die of natural causes or abandoned by humans. They vary in age, breed and health status. Yes, all of the horses are not savable, but we as humans can help improve the situation that is at hand. Humans domesticated horses and are now responsible for what happens to them, what they are bred for and how many of them are bred. It does not make sense, economically or environmentally, to keep purposely increasing the amount of horses when there is no plan for them. This does not benefit anyone. It is preached by SPCA’s and veterinarians to spay or neuter your pets to prevent unwanted pregnancies and I feel as though it is time to preach that horses should not be bred unless they are guaranteed a good home. It is sad to say that even horses with impeccable bloodlines still end
up in slaughter houses because of the greediness of humans. Horses are not just objects or beings to bet money on, they are living breathing animals that ended up in this situation not because they chose to, but because they were put there. To solve this problem media attention and education are critical. In order to better the US, as so many people claim to want to do, we need to consider every aspect that can be changed and this includes horses.

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