



## ONTARIO EQUESTRIAN LAUNCHES CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT HORSES AT RISK DUE TO ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19

*For the Herd Targeting Half a Million to Support School Horses*

TORONTO, ON., May 12, 2020 - [Ontario Equestrian](#) (OE) today announced the launch of [For the Herd](#), an emergency crowdfunding campaign created to support Ontario riding school horses that have been affected by the economic repercussions of the pandemic.

As a result of COVID-19 closures, riding schools are unable to provide riding lessons and camps that would otherwise financially support their operations, leaving thousands of horses without funding to provide even basic feeding and care.

For the Herd seeks to raise \$500,000, with 100% of proceeds directly going to support school horses across the province by providing financial support to provide daily essentials. The initial response has been overwhelming - and indicative - of the urgent need in the community. The campaign has raised over \$100,000 so far, with hundreds of facilities applying for assistance including funds and materials/services donated by the equine community.

“For the Herd essentially conveys that we’re going all in for all of us - for our equestrian community,” says OE Executive Director Tracey McCague-McElrea. “Riding schools are where kids and adults alike can safely learn and immerse themselves in the horse world. This makes riding school horses (often dubbed “schoolies”) the backbone of equestrian sport. We are looking to the community to help support these special animals and give-back during these incredibly challenging times.”

In addition to collecting funds via GoFundMe, the campaign is accepting and coordinating donations of:

- Supplies and materials (hay, feed, bedding)
- Services (veterinary, farrier)
- Fostering of horses via donated paddocks and stalls

### Available Media Assets

Available for media interviews:

- Tracey McCague-McElrea, Executive Director of Ontario Equestrian
- Representatives of riding schools who can speak to the impacts of COVID-19 closures on their facilities and potentially provide limited access to their farms

Available materials:

- Campaign website: [www.fortheherd.ca](http://www.fortheherd.ca)
- Media kit: <https://www.fortheherd.ca/press-kit/>
- Photos and forthcoming video content, including a compilation from OE’s young, high-performance riders ([GRIT Riders](#))

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## Campaign Information

### How Can You Help Ontario's Riding School Horses?

- Donate online to the GoFundMe today - the need is urgent
- Donate materials and supplies (hay, feed, shavings) or services (veterinary, farrier) - fill in the intake form at [www.fortheherd.ca](http://www.fortheherd.ca)
- Share this campaign on social media and add a frame to your Facebook profile image (search: For the Herd Emergency Fundraiser)
- To help expand awareness and media coverage to grow donations, use our hashtag #FortheHerd

Barns with at-risk school horses are asked to fill in an intake form at [www.fortheherd.ca](http://www.fortheherd.ca)

For the Herd is all-in to help as many riding school horses as possible during this pandemic.

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#### About the For the Herd Distribution Committee:

The campaign is being supported by a funds distribution committee made up of volunteer representatives from the equine community. This committee reviews anonymized submissions to distribute funds and resources. For more details on the criteria for funds distribution, please visit <https://www.fortheherd.ca/funding-criteria/>

#### About Ontario Equestrian:

We believe horses and horse sport are important to who we are as Ontarians. From first time riders to seasoned competitors, more and more people are experiencing the special bond between horse and rider.

At Ontario Equestrian, we are focused on enhancing the experience for our members. Since its inception in 1977, Ontario Equestrian has been dedicated to promoting the sport and providing programs, while establishing supports and guidelines for a safe and level field of play for both equine and human athletes.

#### Media Contacts:

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