



Lexington, KY – The Exceller Fund (TEF) recently announced that the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) has awarded a grant of \$8,000 to the non-profit on behalf of its Racing Warriors.

This grant is made possible by the ASPCA’s Million Dollar Rescuing Racers Initiative, which has a clear and simple goal: to help responsible equine rescue and welfare organizations save more racehorses.

“The Exceller Fund is honored to be a part of this initiative,” stated Volunteer Executive Director, Nicole Smith for TEF, “and we take our roll in this effort very seriously. These funds will allow us to focus more of our energy on expanding our Racing Warrior Campaign as we continue to look for permanent sponsors or foster families for these special equine athletes.”

TEF officially launched its Racing Warrior Campaign in 2011. The organization defines a Racing Warrior as any Thoroughbred that has had a minimum of fifty lifetime starts. The average racehorse will end a racing career with approximately twelve lifetime starts. Currently, there are twenty Racing Warriors in the TEF program, many that have raced well over a hundred times.

“The criteria to be considered a Racing Warrior is based on the number of races and not the earnings the horse comes away with,” says Smith. “When you look at the past performance records on many of these horses you will find that the earnings are not all that impressive, but the number of races they have run sure is. We are focused on horses that have raced year after year.... horses that have filled the card week after week. Our dedication lies with these unsung heroes of the racing industry.”

Racing Warriors often retire between the ages of 8 and 14 and some are able to be placed into second careers. However, many have “wear and tear” from these long athletic careers and their adoption potential is limited. TEF re-evaluates all horses after several months of a readjustment period, which includes a total change of routine, diet, and socialization into a herd setting. This phase can be a lengthy and involved process and can sometimes take longer than a year, especially for horses that have spent so many years living at the racetrack. If a Racing Warrior is sound and able to move into a second career, a new home is found, but if not, they are permanently retired and will remain with the organization for the rest of their life.

The ASPCA grant funding will cover the cost of care for four Racing Warriors for one year. TEF does not have a facility of its own; but rather the horses are boarded at private facilities suited to the needs of the horse. The horses this grant will have an impact on are being kept in Kentucky, Missouri and Oklahoma. In addition, the ASPCA funding will be used to expand awareness about the plight of Racing Warriors and assist more Racing Warriors within other organizations.

In 2011, funding from this same initiative provided care for five Racing Warriors for a year. This assistance enabled TEF to move one Racing Warrior into re-training and accept two new horses into the program. Of the two new intakes, one horse is an adoption prospect and the second will be re- evaluated in the near future.