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The Exceller Fund rescues horses from Puerto Rico.

Tears of joy were shed as Sweetlandofliberty (11) and Rodriguito (12) stepped off of the horse van and onto one of The Exceller Fund's satellite farms in Oklahoma for the first time, making the destruction of Hurricanes Irma and Maria a thing of their past.



Rodriguito patiently awaits a ride out of Puerto Rico.

"We are honored to offer these equine athletes that have given so much over the years the retirement that they have earned," Nicole Smith, Executive Director of The Exceller Fund, commented.

With a combined 289 starts, these two geldings join The Exceller Fund as a part of their Racing Warrior program.

Sweetlandofliberty and Rodriguito are warriors in every sense of the word, having endured and survived two hurricanes that ripped off roofs and flooded the aisles of the barns, where they helplessly awaited their fates. For weeks following the storms, food had to be rationed and water was scarce.

Due to the severity of the conditions in Puerto Rico caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, both horses will require special care to ensure their nutritional needs are properly accessed and monitored. This is in addition to other common factors that many Racing Warriors face when being transitioned from the racetrack to life on the farm, including learning how to socialize with pasture mates. The entire process can take up to a year, or longer.

The Exceller Fund works with many other organizations to ensure the quality aftercare of Racing Warriors, including Caribbean Thoroughbred Aftercare, the group that secured both horses while in Puerto Rico and transported them to the Oklahoma facility.

This facility has worked with The Exceller Fund for over a decade, providing optimal individualized care for retirees belonging to the organization. Lush pastures, large shade trees and people who love caring for animals more than anything else, is what makes this farm the perfect sanctuary.



Sweetlandofliberty and Rodriguito enjoying their first day being turned out at The Exceller Fund facility in Oklahoma.

Sweetlandofliberty and Rodriguito did not meet prior to retirement, but became fast friends when introduced on their ride to safety. Together they shall remain as they learn to be horses again.

"We have all been eagerly awaiting their safe arrival for a while now," Smith said. "It was not easy getting them off of the island, but we are grateful for the team of people who came together to make it happen."

The journey has been a long one that has left Sweetlandofliberty and Rodriguito weary, but through the efforts of The Exceller Fund and Caribbean Thoroughbred

Aftercare, they have reached a safe haven where they will begin a new chapter in their lives.

The Exceller Fund is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that offers a lifetime commitment to every equine that enters the program. For more information: www.excellerfund.org;