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Member Center

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Dear Friends,

It is with a heavy heart that I write to share difficult news with you all. As you know, Berryfield Farm has been the home of Friends For Tomorrow since 1996, almost a quarter of a century! However, with the passing of time come changes, and we are part of that inevitable cycle. The future of the farm itself will eventually be different from how it currently operates, and as such will not be able to continue hosting Friends For Tomorrow. As a result, the board and staff of Friends For Tomorrow have decided to end current operations and programming at the end of our second Spring term, in late June 2019.

This decision was a painful one but was ultimately determined to be the best course for the organization. We can't imagine Friends For Tomorrow continuing as we have without the remarkable animals and generous resources we have been so privileged to share. After much reflection and discussion, the board and staff chose to honor the rare gem that Friends For Tomorrow has become in so many lives, without diluting who we are and what we strive to accomplish. We are thus devoting all our efforts to closing out this chapter of our story with the clearest energy we have, giving our families, volunteers, and partners all our best in our time left here.

We realize this change will have profound impacts on many people. We are keenly aware, and deeply grateful for, the many people who have been involved in our work during the last 25 years. In the upcoming months, we will continue to bring to all our families the love and dedication we always have, cherishing the time we have together through June of 2019.

We have touched thousands of lives throughout our history. While the instructors and volunteers are the lifeblood, heart and energy of the program, we owe so much of what makes our program extraordinary to the very beautiful home our hosts have graciously and lovingly shared with us for all these years. Their home has been our home, the family's very special horses our herd, their lovely property the sanctuary we all seek, whether coming for an hour each week, a few days, or as our livelihood. For that we are eternally grateful.

On a very personal level, I extend my gratitude to everyone who has helped make the dream of Friends For Tomorrow become a reality for so many people. I believe every person who has been a part of this program helped create our excellent journey. It has been a true honor, and my life's dream, to be surrounded by the generous and soulful people who support this organization. To Berryfield Farm, our amazing instructors and staff, the board and volunteers throughout the years, our generous donors, and the many families who have graced our lives these past two decades, I share my most humble and deep appreciation. Thank you for being here alongside us, as we celebrate the precious entity that is Friends For Tomorrow.

With a full and grateful heart,

Diane Lesneski Auger,
Founder and President of the Board

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." Winnie the Pooh

You are probably wondering... Why is this happening, and what comes next?

Why are current operations ceasing?

For the last 23 years, the Berry and Drew families have generously donated their beautiful home, extraordinary herd, and considerable resources to allow Friends For Tomorrow to offer therapeutic riding lessons and programming in service of our mission. With the passage of time and changing realities, however, the families have determined that they are unable to continue hosting Friends For Tomorrow in the same capacity. Given the enormity of the support provided by Berryfield, and the indelible role that our location plays in the very nature of the program we have created, the board and the staff determined the best course of action for the organization is to close up operations at the end of the Spring II term, and to go out strong and with hearts full of memories and pride for all the good times we have had at Berryfield.

Why not move to a new location?

Because of the unique circumstances under which Friends For Tomorrow has operated at Berryfield Farm, and our commitment to keeping the care of our students our top priority, it would be an almost insurmountable challenge to try and replicate the level of intimacy and care we have been able to provide to our families elsewhere. The Board of Directors went through a full evaluation and feasibility study a few years ago, which helped us reach this conclusion. We essentially would be starting from ground up; including securing a facility with a full operational team, undertaking an extensive capital campaign, expanding operations, and acquiring a new herd. For these reasons, the founder, the farm owners and Friends For Tomorrow board and staff have decided to instead to put our energies into ending our journey on a high note.

Is it a matter of money?

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and generous group of donors, volunteers, and supporters that have helped sustain Friends For Tomorrow through the years, ensuring the high standards of excellence for the program without pricing our services out of reach for many of the families we serve. Our decision to end operations is not related to a lack of funds, and recently-given donations will be used to subsidize lessons and programming for our students through the Spring II term. We will not, however, be holding our annual Run For Our Roses fundraising event in 2019.

What comes next for our families and volunteers?

We will offer our families all the information we can to help them connect with other therapeutic horseback riding programs and other animal-assisted learning activities of which we are aware. And, we will continue to cherish the friendships and relationships we have nurtured with all our gratitude!

What happens to the horses?

All horses owned by Berryfield Farm will enjoy their retirement years at home, with the same care and love that the farm owners and staff have always provided to them. Sparky and Shyann (Annie), who are loaned to Friends For Tomorrow for 10 months of the year, will return to their home at Pompositticut Farm in Hudson, MA, where they are expected to continue bringing joy to children for years to come.

What about the staff?

The staff will be celebrating their amazing years with the program, and of course feel the sorrow that comes with this loss for all of us.

Lucy has been with Friends For Tomorrow for 16 years. She will take this opportunity to spend more time with her grandson, continue her passion for canine agility competition and hopes to find a way to stay connected with horses and her love of teaching.

After 10 wonderful years with Friends For Tomorrow, Janice is seeking an opportunity to join a medium- to large-size organization where she can contribute her years of marketing, communications, and business skills. She hopes to continue to be part of a team whose goal is to positively affect the lives of people.

Holly to finalize: After recovering from shoulder surgery, Holly plans on continuing to teach therapeutic horseback riding in the area, so keep in touch!

Diane will continue to oversee operations at Berryfield Farm, enjoying her family and home, caring for the Berry's beautiful farm and animals as she always has. Her passion for this work remains strong, and she will create ways to continue her love of bringing horses and children together.

Are there other programs in the area like Friends For Tomorrow?

While we like to think Friends For Tomorrow is unique, there are other therapeutic horseback riding programs and animal-assisted activities for children in the greater Boston area. Demand for these programs often exceeds availability, and some may have waitlists for new students. Friends For Tomorrow staff will be in contact with these programs and alert them to potential inquiries from Friends For Tomorrow families.

“Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened.” Dr. Seuss