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Maryland Horse Industry Board Awards 22 Grants to Promote Horse Industry *\$25,000 in Small Grants Distributed to Maryland Projects*

ANNAPOLIS, MD (December 21, 2012) -- An equine outreach group that provides horsemanship opportunities to inner city school children, therapeutic and youth riding activities, and programs to help rehabilitate rescue horses are among the 22 organizations to receive more than \$25,000 in grants from the Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB), a program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture. The grants help to strengthen the industry by building awareness and involvement in the horse industry through research, education and promotional activities.

"The equine industry is an integral part of Maryland's cultural and economic heritage," said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. "The scope and value of projects that the board evaluated illustrates the demand for these grants, and the feed fund continues to make it possible to support more of these requests."

Grant funding is made available through the Maryland Feed Fund, which was established during the 2002 legislative session and places a refundable \$6 per ton fee on equine feed costs. That amount comes out to about \$3 per horse per year. The Feed Fund supports this grant program as well as other promotional, research and outreach activities undertaken by the MHIB.

Grant applications were evaluated for value to the industry, degree of industry promotion, size and scope of the activity, financial need and quality of the written presentation. Since 2001, the board has awarded 211 grants totaling more than \$233,000. Visit http://www.mda.maryland.gov/horseboard/pdf/MHIB_2013_grants_Chart.pdf for a summary of the most recent grants awarded.

The MHIB was established in 1998 to promote and develop the equine industry in Maryland. The year 2013 marks the board's 15th anniversary. For more information about MHIB or the Feed Fund, visit www.mda.maryland.gov/horseboard or call MHIB Executive Director Ross Peddicord at 410-841-5798 or email ross.peddicord@maryland.gov.

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