

MARYLAND EQUINE
TRANSITION SERVICE

Annual Report

2019



Maryland Equine Transition Service



From Program Director, Brittney Vallot:

Pride. Awe. Gratitude. These are just a few of the emotions I have as I look back at the second year of METS and the first full year of direct assistance for Maryland's horses.

I feel pride in how far METS has come; from a mere idea to a well-run, functional program serving a huge need throughout the state. METS has now gained a great reputation among many within the Maryland equine community. I often see people recommending METS on Facebook posts to either owners needing to rehome their horses or to individuals looking for their next equine friend. I'm stopped at the grocery store by people who saw my METS shirt and wanted to talk about the program. We have given hope to so many owners who are

desperate to keep their horses safe. We have helped so many horses since the program's inception.

The number of horses we've assisted this past year leaves me in awe. The only requirement we have of the horses who come into our program is that they reside in Maryland. As long as they meet that requirement, we will do whatever we can to assist in keeping them safe. Whether it be placement, marketing, end-of-life, or simply providing resources, we want to assist in whatever way we can. The numbers reflected in this report are mostly those assessed and placed. However, METS staff field 2-3 times as many emails and phone calls from owners seeking help. The amount of horses and owners that we've had the opportunity to work with over this past year is astounding to me.

Finally, I am forever grateful to the many wonderful people who have enabled our program to be a success. I'm thankful for the owners who call us wanting to do right by their horses. I'm thankful for the individuals who step up to give a METS horse a home. I'm grateful for the volunteers who have taken time out of their lives to travel across the state with us for assessments and events. I'm thankful for the business owners and organization leaders who have invited us to speak at various venues or offered to host benefit fundraisers. And I'm grateful for the donors who have contributed to our program and shown their support.

METS would not be where it is today if it weren't for Maryland's great equine community working together to make it happen. The only way METS can continue to help as many horses as possible is if we all continue to collaborate and support each other along the way. As long as that happens, who knows what 2020 has in store!

On behalf of Maryland's horses, thank you!

Brittney Vallot
Program Director, METS



About METS

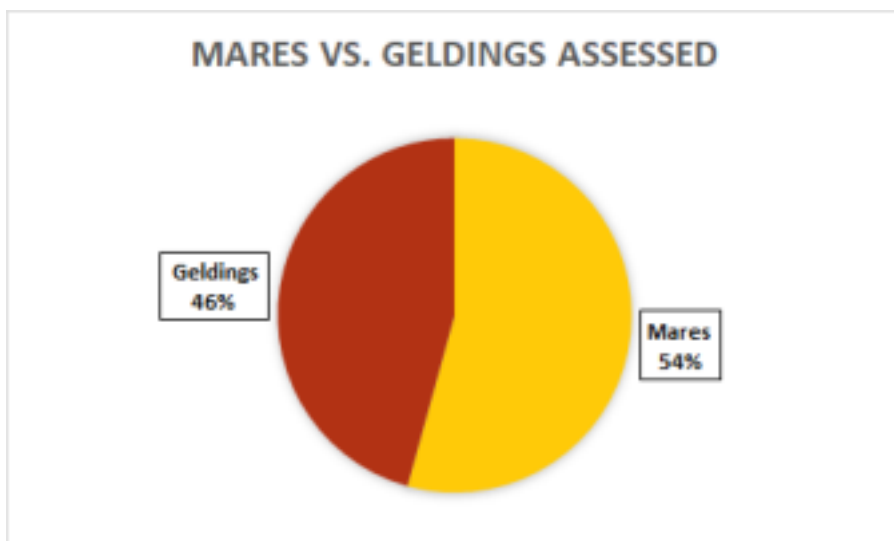
The Maryland Equine Transition Service (METS) is a statewide equine safety net initiative of the Maryland Horse Council that provides safe alternatives for horses needing homes by helping owners identify and select the best transition options for their horses.

METS is a mobile service that provides individualized services for horses in need of transition, including equine assessment, marketing assistance, end of life support, and facilitation of horses to new homes.

Assessment Specialist Katy Whipple travels on-site to visit horses in need of transition and gives a comprehensive behavioral, health, and soundness assessment. From there, the horse can be placed on the METS website and all inquiries are evaluated by METS staff before the Inquirer's information is passed along to the owner.

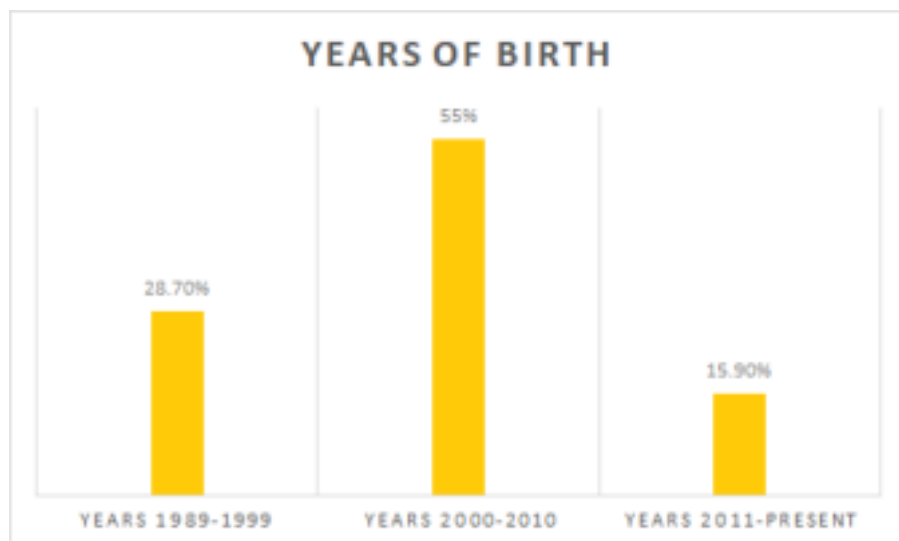
In certain situations, humane euthanasia may be the best and most reasonable option. METS staff are prepared to assist owners with making and carrying out the decision to euthanize their horse. This is often an extremely difficult and emotional decision for owners and METS is always prepared to offer emotional support to help the owner find peace of mind.

Our Statistics:



2019 was a fantastic year for METS! We completed **62 assessment visits** with a total of **94 horses assessed**. That's 34 MORE assessments and 41 MORE horses than last year!

Of those 94 horses, a little over half were mares vs. geldings, and a majority were born between 2000 and 2010, with 2002 being the most common year of birth. The age difference between our oldest and youngest horse was 28 years!



Owners contacted us with a wide range of situations for why they needed assistance, but we found a staggering **29%** needed to transition their horse because of financial struggles.



Oldest: Scarlett (1989)

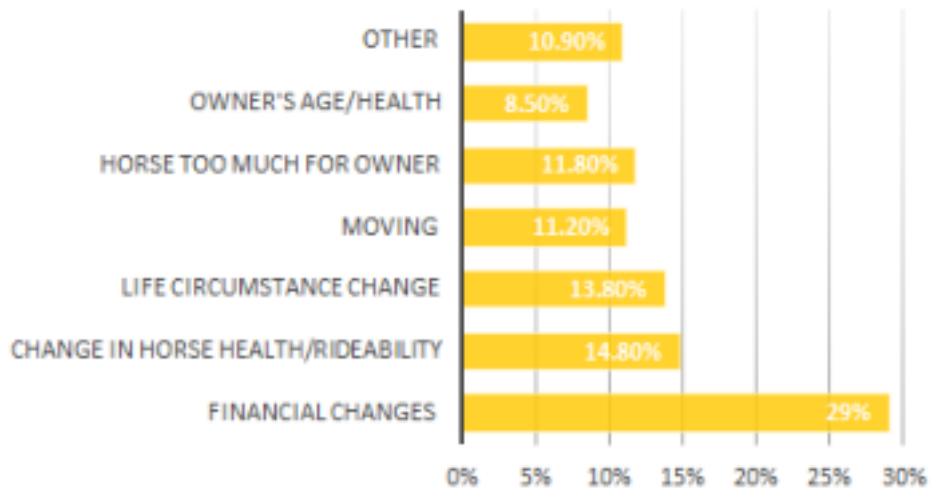


Youngest: Cloud (2017)

Our Statistics:

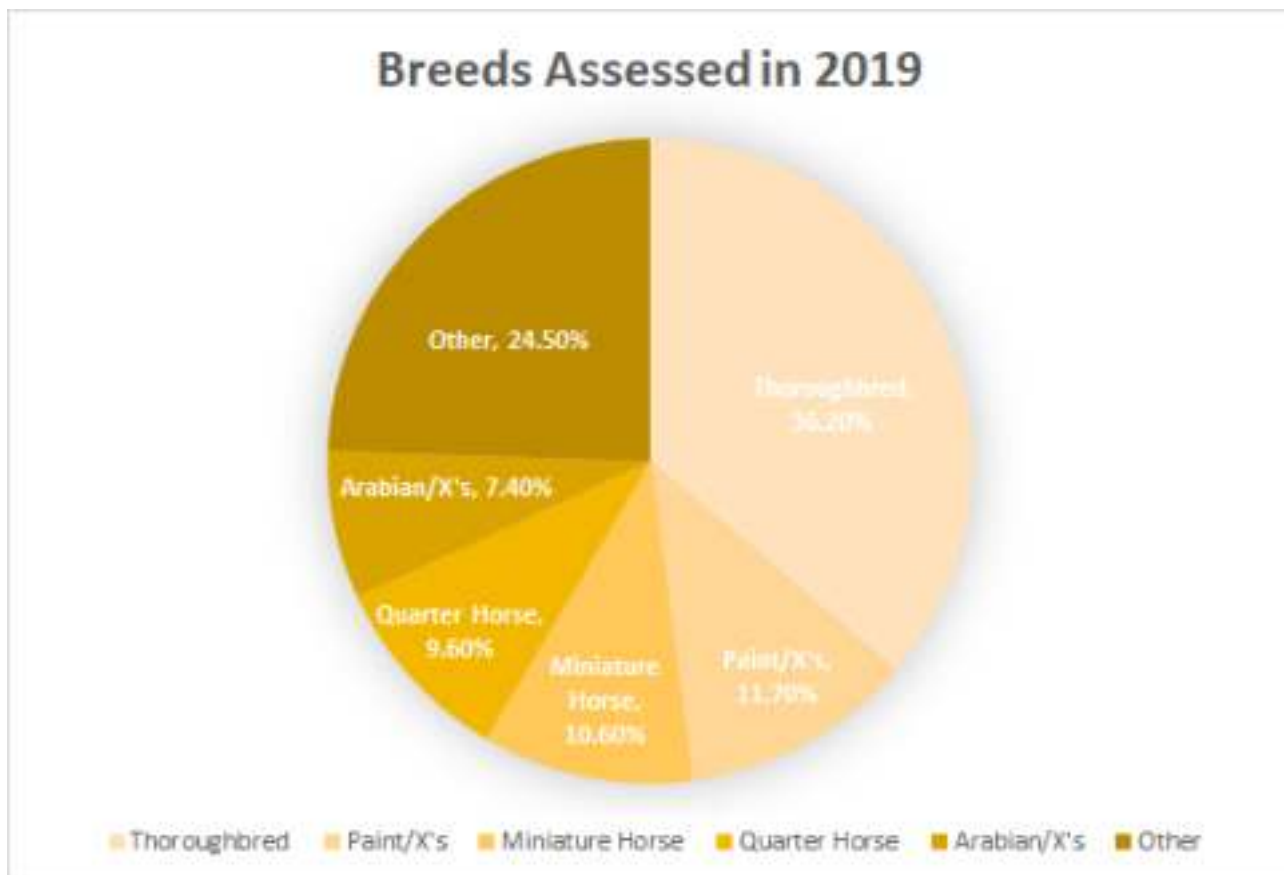


Reasons for Assistance Requests



The most common breed assessed in 2019 was overwhelmingly the Thoroughbred. In fact, **33%** of the documented assistance requests in 2019 and **36%** of the horses assessed were Thoroughbreds. A few breeds assessed that are displayed in the "Other" category include a Chincoteague pony, a Pony Of The Americas, a Percheron cross, three Mustangs, and a Welsh type. What breeds will we see in 2020?

Breeds Assessed in 2019



Our Statistics: At a Glance



62

**Assessment
Visits**

16

Veterinarians



41

**METS Assisted
Transitions**

72

Partners



94

**Horses
Assessed**

47

Volunteers



153

**Assistance
Requests**

1,247

**Facebook
Likes**



Pet Expo - Jan. 2019



**Benefit Show at High Ridge
- April 2019**



**Horseland - August
2019**



**Fundraiser at Tony
Locos - April 2019**

Where We've Been:

- Montgomery County Fair
- Presentation to Carroll County Equestrian Council
- Horse Talk Happy Hour
- Horse Industry Day
- Interview with WTRR FM Radio
- MHC Annual BBQ
- Dogfest
- Second Chances Farm
- TROT Annual Dinner

**The Right Horse
Summit - May 2019**



**Article in The
Delmarva Farmer -
Jan. 2019**



**Raffle Fundraiser at
Stonebrook Farm -
Nov. 2019**



Photo courtesy of MHIB

**Maryland Horse
Forum - Aug. 2019**

What We've Been Up To:

High Ridge Farm Hosts First METS Benefit Show

The show was a huge success and brought in just over \$2,000 through entry fees, silent auction bids, food booth, and generous donations made by the families in attendance. Riders came decked out in their Maryland pride and it was rare to see someone without a smile on their face. The many helping hands of volunteers were part of what made the day go on without a hitch, but it wouldn't have happened without the extreme generosity of Candy Cole.

Cole hosts four benefit shows per year. The benefit shows were originally created 11 years ago to honor Ryan MacKenzie, a friend of Cole's family who died in a car accident when he was only 21. High Ridge created a scholarship in MacKenzie's name and when the money ran out, they decided to start hosting benefit shows as a way to keep funding the scholarship. The first benefit event was a Halloween show where they raised \$1,500. Since then, Cole has raised \$30,000 to put into the Ryan MacKenzie Memorial 4-H Scholarship with The Carroll County Community Foundation. The most Cole has ever raised at one benefit show was \$46,000. For Cole, the benefit shows are not about her business – it's about helping the community around her and encouraging her young riders to keep following their passions.

Cole currently owns two horses that she's adopted from METS: Lakota and Hillcroft KD. Cole also had been housing another METS horse, Jewel (now known as Bonnie) until her new owner could move her home. Cole explained that she has never gotten a horse from a rescue before, but often barns will contact her when they have a horse they don't need or isn't fitting in their program. In an industry that is often quick to retire or sell a horse when it can no longer meet the needs of it's current owner, Cole is willing to look past rough edges to see the diamond underneath. This mindset often works for her, and her fields full of happy horses are enough to prove it.



Grayson (left) and Samantha were all smiles with Hillcroft KD.



Maryellen rescued Bonnie (formerly known as Jewel) through the METS program.



Karegen rides former METS horse, Lakota, in the egg on a spoon class.

What We've Been Up To:

METS Attends First Annual Right Horse Summit:



In May 2019, METS staff landed in the picturesque Lexington, Kentucky for the 2019 Right Horse Summit. METS is proud to be a Right Horse Partner and were lucky enough to be invited to the first ever Summit. The goal of the Summit was to bring together various programs focused on equine welfare in a collaborative event that would encourage and inspire each program to keep improving and growing to enable them to continue helping horses.

METS was honored to attend this event and excited to see how we would be able to apply others' ideas to our unique program. On the Partner day, Brittney sat on a panel titled "Answering The Call: Managed Admissions". Due to the fact that METS is a mobile service and does not take ownership of the horses, Brittney was able to provide a different take on managed admissions since we are not limited on how many horses we can accept into our program.

One thing that all the panelists had in common with METS, is that they also believed in being nonjudgmental and offering as many resources as possible even if they may not have the space to take a horse into their facility. If we cannot help an owner in the way they need, we try and give them a contact for someone else who might be able to: it's all about the common goal of helping the horses.

After the Summit, the METS team flew home with their minds brimming with new ideas. Being able to collaborate and work with The Right Horse has proven to be tremendously positive for METS and meeting the many other Partners helped reinforce that fact.

METS is now officially an Equine Welfare Data Collective (EWDC) Ambassador! The EWDC is a collaborative effort to collect, analyze, and report statistics and information regarding equines who are at-risk or in transition. This is the first time a program of this magnitude has been undertaken and it is in an effort to better understand the challenges that equines across the United States face in order to better determine how to assist them. The EWDC was created by the United Horse Coalition (UHC), a program of the American Horse Council (AHC). Its funding partners include The Right Horse Initiative (TRH), the American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and the American Association of Equine Practitioners Foundation (AAEPF).

METS Becomes EWDC Partner:



Success Stories

Deitra and Spot



Spot (top) and Deitra found a second life with their new owner, Beth.

Deitra is a ~20 year old Paint/WB mare who is sweet as can be and could not be ridden due to lameness.

Spot is another lovely teen Appaloosa mare who could not be ridden due to back issues. Both of their previous owners loved them dearly but didn't have the ability to keep them and reached out to METS to help them find safe homes. It took a little while, but patience paid off when Beth came along seeking not one but TWO companion horses that just wanted to live out their days being loved, pampered, and adored. Beth recently sent an update and told us, "We are so happy with Spot and Deitra. They are the sweetest girls and the perfect addition to our family. Thank you again for all of your help." No, Beth, thank YOU for giving these girls the soft landing they deserve!

Lass and Scarlett

Scarlett is a 30 year old Polish Arabian and Lass is a 21 year old Arabian/Welsh-X who had been together for years. Their owner was moving and sadly couldn't continue to care for her mares, so she reached out to us for help. Dianne originally inquired about one mare, but ended up finding room in her heart and home for both! This meant these senior girls could continue to live out their days together, along with many new furry friends, including a miniature horse and donkey, goats, mini zebu cows, dogs, guineas, ducks, and geese! When it comes to taking in a senior horse, Dianne couldn't have said it better. "They are fitting in perfectly, and I haven't had one moment of hesitation or regret. I have had total peace about this decision and no apprehension from the day I met them. I'm completely confident that they are permanent members of this farm. And as for their ages, they sure don't seem like seniors! Age is really just a number with these girls, especially Sassy Lass! I'm so looking forward to the future with them!"



Lass (left) and Scarlett were able to stay together when they transitioned to their new owner, Dianne.



Even Keel



Peppermint Passion



Count On Hope

Count My Blessings



Bella



Spud

Success Stories

These are just a few of the **41 horses** that METS directly helped transition in 2019.

None of these transitions would have been possible without the support of every METS Partner, veterinarian, farrier, volunteer, donor, and **YOU. Thank you!**



Devil of a Deal



Mr. Cartwright



Anthony



Arliss (right)



Hillcroft KD

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