

Lasting Partnerships

LongRun Thoroughbred Retirement Society

Written by: Bridget Ryan

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Imperial Dream—Running in field

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Society members also strive to educate owners, trainers, breeders and the general public about the merits of this humane alternative. Through generous donations from the racing community, private sponsors, grants and the support of Woodbine Entertainment and other sources, LongRun has been able to foster and re-home more than 1,000 horses to date.

Established as a registered charity in 2000, LongRun is one of only two facilities in Canada accredited by the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (TAA). Their administrative office is located in the Woodbine Racetrack backstretch where they are very connected to the racing community.

In 2016, LongRun purchased a 100 acre farm in Hillsburgh. The farm is operated by a dedicated staff and hardworking volunteers who provide the daily care, rehabilitation and retraining of the horses as well as assist with events, farm visits and fundraising for the organization.

On average, there are more than 50 retired thoroughbreds residing at the LongRun farm awaiting adoption. Horses with physical limitations or those not suitable for retraining are offered permanent sanctuary at LongRun where they may be used for equine-assisted therapy, social or educational programs. LongRun is also home to a number of 'stable stars', thoroughbreds who have excelled at the track and who will live out their lives at the farm, sponsored by their former owners.

LongRun is focused on creating lasting partnerships. Famous racing champions such as 2010 Queen's Plate Winner, Big Red Mike is enjoying a second career in dressage and a wonderful relationship with his new adopter. Something Extra, a \$1 million winner also known as Charlie, is a social and adaptable thoroughbred. He's one of LongRun's ambassadors, participating in on and off-farm events such as Doors Open Erin and the Erin Fair Horse Tent. He lives permanently on the farm and loves having his photo taken with visitors.



Photo credit: LongRun

“Racing star Melmich has begun his road to the 2020 RRP, the Thoroughbred Makeover Competition held in Kentucky Horse Park in October! Looks like he is going to be a superstar in his second career as well!”

– LongRun’s Operations Manager, Tracey Knoblauch

LongRun’s Stable Manager: Lauren Millet-Simpson with youth group

LongRun’s adoption process goes like this:

- Prospective adopters complete an application (found online).
- LongRun’s Adoption Manager matches the applicant’s goals with a suitable horse.
- The applicant and horse are introduced to each other, to determine if the new partnership is a good fit.
- A farm inspection is arranged and references are contacted.
- If approved, the applicant pays a \$750 adoption fee, the adoption agreement is signed and the horse is moved to its new home.
- The horse’s ownership remains with LongRun for one year during which the adopter must provide a vet report at six months and again at one year.

- A visit is made to the horse and if everything is satisfactory, the adoption is finalized and registration papers provided.
- LongRun retains first right of refusal, should any issues arise afterwards.

Melmich, a nine-year-old racing celebrity with more than \$1 million in winnings, retired to LongRun following his successful racing career. He was recently adopted and his new owner plans to take Melmich to the 2020 Retired Racehorse Project (RRP) in Kentucky. The RRP is an annual event showcasing retrained thoroughbreds in their new discipline including dressage, jumping, western pleasure or eventing. Since its inception in 2010, the RRP has inspired thousands of horse people to consider an OTTB (Off Track Thoroughbred) as a viable new horse option.



Photo credit: Matthew Scheuiderman

Melmich in winter blanket

“From the moment I met Melmich, I discovered that what makes him truly unique is his kind heart. He really finds enjoyment in pleasing the people that surround him. He nickers when I call out his name and enjoys riding without a bridle. I am truly grateful for the ability to develop a partnership with such a special horse and I know this opportunity wouldn’t have been possible without LongRun.”

– Melmich’s new owner, Caroline Godson