

MEDIA RELEASE

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Chris and Kathryn Irwin Selected to Design Secretariat Center Programs at the Kentucky Horse Park

Lexington, Kentucky. The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation (TRF) is forging new ground at the Maker's Mark Secretariat Center (MMSC) at the Kentucky Horse Park, home of the 2010 World Equestrian Games, in Lexington, Kentucky. Chris Irwin, renowned Canadian horseman and best-selling author, is highly regarded throughout North America and Europe for his evolutionary approach to horses and horsemanship. Chris and his wife and business partner, Kathryn Kincannon-Irwin, also a recognized equestrian columnist and coach, will oversee the MMSC, a TRF facility. The Irwins will be enhancing the MMSC as a center for teaching and promoting advanced horsemanship skills for retraining retired racehorses.

Never has this collaborative effort been more needed and more important. With the numbers of retired thoroughbred racehorses continuing to rise, the TRF has committed to finding better ways to retrain them and expanding partnerships to enhance the chances of placement for these veteran racehorses. Kathryn Irwin will be based at the center in a full-time capacity to oversee development and marketing of the MMSC mission. Chris will host an ongoing series of educational events in Lexington and at various TRF adoption sites throughout the country when not coaching or presenting at clinics and special events such as major equine expositions, conferences and horse shows throughout Canada, the U.S. and Europe, where he will also be a roving ambassador for the TRF cause. One of the many ongoing activities at the MMSC facility at the Kentucky Horse Park will include daily retraining of the thoroughbreds by MMSC staff and volunteers being coached by Kathryn Irwin. Daily retraining sessions will be open to the public at no charge and will be focused not only on the well being of the horses but also towards creating public awareness and educational opportunities regarding the very special needs of veteran race horses.

"For years, Chris has worked with TRF horses in clinics and during demonstrations at Keeneland Race Course and various other venues around the country. We are thrilled to expand this relationship so that Chris and Kathryn can make the MMSC a national headquarters for training adoptable horses and educating owners and handlers on the most effective methods of handling retired thoroughbreds" said TRF President Johnathan Miller.

With his ability to diagnose and effectively correct behavioral and performance issues in horses, Chris Irwin has earned an outstanding reputation within the international equestrian community as a trainer of trainers. Both Chris and Kathryn are proven communicators when coaching students in the methods of their innovative training techniques and bringing this exceptional scope of cause and effect to retired racehorses will maximize the adoption process and enable more of these horses to go on to enjoy successful second careers.

"For many years we have found ourselves becoming more and more involved in the re-training of retired thoroughbred racehorses at clinics and in our work within the cutting edge field of equine assisted learning programs," said Chris Irwin. *"These horses are often misunderstood, under-valued and under-utilized after they come off the track. At the MMSC not only can we make a positive difference in the rate of success for adoptions, but what is also very exciting is that we can now develop many new and innovative community outreach programs where retired race horses can provide a wonderful service within a myriad of Equine Assisted Personal Development programs. When you combine the need for so many race horses to find a good home with the emerging need for horses within the phenomenal groundswell currently happening in the human potential movement where horses are being worked with in mental health and self-help programs, then we truly have a win-win relationship where veteran race horses can be given a second career where they can lead healthy and*

productive lives. The timing is perfect for these initiatives and we couldn't be happier or more committed to making this work."

Fran Taylor, Executive Director of the Keeneland Foundation said "With the emphasis on programming and education that the Irwins bring to the Maker's Mark Secretariat Center, there is no doubt that they are a wonderful addition to the team. As with any start up program, achievement comes in phases and the MMSC is ready to move to the next level by offering more programs and by bringing other retired thoroughbred racehorse nonprofit agencies into the fold."

Keeneland was instrumental in the creation of the MMSC as they introduced longtime race sponsor Maker's Mark to the concept of an adoption site for retired thoroughbreds at the KHP. Maker's Mark, in turn, gave the lead gift of \$500,000 to make the project possible through the sale of a series of limited edition bottles featuring Triple Crown winners Secretariat, Seattle Slew and Affirmed.