



THE FREE SPIRIT HORSE MEMORIAL PROJECT ANNOUNCED AS OFFICIAL CHARITY OF ROYAL WINDSOR HORSE SHOW

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The Free Spirit Horse Memorial Project, a charity which acknowledges the horse's unfaltering service to mankind throughout history, has been announced as the official charity of Royal Windsor Horse Show 2018, taking place from 9 – 13 May in the private grounds of Windsor Castle.

The project brings together individuals from all ages and backgrounds who share passion, love and respect for the horse, and through these shared concepts work to raise funds to create a lasting memorial. The project embraces a strong ethos of inclusiveness and breaking down of barriers, reflecting the attributes of the horse who does not judge but treats and respects each person as an individual, working as a catalyst in bringing together all members of the community without prejudice. This unique memorial will encompass these attributes by being accessible to able bodied and disabled, provided a tactile as well as a visual experience, with seating for reflection and contemplation and braille and Makaton plaques for those who are visually impaired. The horse has been, and continues to be a strong, loyal and dedicated companion through war, industry, sport and therapy and the Free Spirit Horse Memorial aims to pay tribute to this honourable and emotive creature.

As part of its charitable aims the project provides education around the role of the horse through art, music and history to ensure that the significance of the horse is recognised, embraced, and taught to future generations. In addition, the project promotes the importance of equine therapy for the most vulnerable in society and reaches out into communities by visiting schools, care homes and mental health facilities.

The Free Spirit Horse Memorial, will be a life-sized bronze statue, located at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, and will be unveiled in 2018 to coincide with the centenary anniversary marking the end of the First World War.

Show Director, Simon Brooks-Ward said: "We are delighted to be supporting The Free Spirit Horse Memorial Project in 2018 as we mark the 100-year anniversary of the end of World War I. Horses have played a vital role in the development of our country throughout history, whether in conflict, work, rehabilitation or sport and leisure. Royal Windsor Horse Show is an annual celebration of top equestrian sport and entertainment, so this partnership is a natural fit, commemorating the role of horses in society, past and present."

Tracy Francis, Chair of The Free Spirit Horse Memorial Project, added: "The horse is central to the community that is created at Free Spirit; this intelligent, compassionate and emotive animal breaks down barriers and is unprejudiced in their approach to everyone who works with them. The Free Spirit volunteers work passionately to share this and to acknowledge the role the horse has played in society in the past, present and future. The project is extremely proud and honoured to be charity of the year at the prestigious Royal Windsor Horse Show and it is a great opportunity for the ongoing work and commitment of the project to be recognised in the public spotlight."