

THE RIDER'S CLOSET



Georgina Bloomberg with pal Petey the goat and some of the items donated by Ariat.

THE RIDER'S CLOSET'S MISSION IS TO ENSURE that riding apparel is accessible to scholastic riding programs, pony clubs, equestrian camp programs, equine charities, and individual riders in need. Founded by Georgina Bloomberg in 2006, the program serves riders of all ages and at every level of horsemanship. In 2019, The Rider's Closet merged with the EQUUS Foundation.

The Rider's Closet accepts donations of new or gently used show shirts, breeches, show coats, boots, and half chaps in adult and children's sizes. Almost all of the program's inventory is English apparel, but attire from other disciplines is welcome. Demand is especially high for paddock boots and tall boots in adult and children's sizes, as these are the most expensive items an

equestrian needs to participate in the sport. For safety reasons, helmets cannot be accepted.

In addition to the many donations by individuals to The Rider's Closet, Ariat has donated over \$200,000 worth of clothing and boots.

One rider's mother says, "My son cried with each item he took out of the box. It means the world to us as parents who do not have

the income for all the sport requires, but we try our hardest and have never turned down anything for him. His barn requires a lot of money to show, so this box of goodies was the best thing ever for him. He said he cannot wait to show his instructor."

The Columbia University Equestrian Club says, "Thank you so much for your donation of show clothes. It means a lot to the members of our

team who are on financial aid and would not otherwise have show clothes. You help make what we do happen because equal opportunity is what college equestrian is all about!"

The Rider's Closet's generous donors and volunteers have made a real difference for thousands of deserving riders around the U.S. for more than a decade.

REED KESSLER AND JUSTWORLD

WELL KNOWN IN THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD as the youngest rider in show jumping history to ever compete at the Olympic Games, **REED KESSLER** shares her passion for philanthropy and her desire to do good.

In her first "post-sport" interview, Reed talks to EQLiving about her involvement with non-profit **JUST WORLD INTERNATIONAL**, how her philanthropy shaped who she has become, and how young riders can get involved.



Reed Kessler in Cambodia.

around the world by supporting the powerful JustWorld education and nutrition programs that are life-changing.

When you were 13, you began riding as an Ambassador for JustWorld. How did that involvement shape who you are today?

JustWorld played a pivotal role in growing my interest in human rights. Show jumping is a highly individualized sport, meaning I spent the majority of my time and resources focused on myself, my horses and my athletic career. JustWorld was

always there for me, despite a rigorous schedule, allowing me to connect with a reality outside of my own privileged career.

It was my visit to the JustWorld project in Honduras that solidified my involvement with JustWorld. I got to see and engage with circumstances that I most likely never would have within my daily life, and I am a better person because of that. As my personal interests and values crystallized with age, JustWorld allowed me to re-engage with the rights-driven organization with fresh eyes and helped me realize that a potential career touching on human rights and international relations excited and fulfilled me.

I am thankful for all of the experiences throughout my riding career and with JustWorld that brought me to where I am, which is studying human rights and international security at Columbia University.

Let's talk philanthropy; in your words, what is the driving motivation to get involved and do good?

I can't speak for anyone but myself, but I see my fortunate circumstances as a gift but also a duty; if I have the means to do good, I should do good. Moreover, greater engagement with people from different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, and perspectives is a tremendous learning experience that provides a young person with a wealth of knowledge and a multitude of lenses to understand the world around them. I believe exposing a young person from a comfortable background, which is most often the case in the sport-horse industry, to the reality in which most of the population live, will probably lead to a deeper appreciation for what they have.

This is exactly what JustWorld has allowed me to do. I'm proud to be able to look back and not just see riding achievements, but also that I could improve the lives of children

A NEW CAREER FOR AL CAPONY

"THERE IS NOTHING WE LOVE MORE than helping horses find their way to a home where they will be safe and loved," said Valerie Angeli, VP of Engagement and Special Projects for the **EQUUS FOUNDATION**.

The EQUUS Foundation is the only national animal welfare charity in the United States that is 100 percent dedicated to protecting America's horses and strengthening the horse-human bond.

At the core of the EQUUS Foundation's mission is the investment in equine charities nationwide that are committed to the highest standards of horse welfare and are fully transparent and accountable to the public. Only these charities receive the EQUUS Foundation Guardian designation and are eligible to receive financial support from the EQUUS Foundation.

The EQUUS Foundation takes advantage of multiple mediums, including its Next Chapters platform, the recent Virtual Equine Adoption Day hosted by the Hampton Classic Horse Show, and social media to raise awareness of the tens of thousands of abused and neglected horses at risk for slaughter each year.

So many of these horses are young, healthy, and have untapped potential. In early September, Angeli reposted a listing of EQUUS Foundation Guardian charity, Omega Horse Rescue, based in Pennsylvania, to bring attention to an adorable, 9-hand high, 8-year-old, black and white spotted pony named Al Capony who was rescued from an auction.



Among the first to respond and submit an application for Al was Access Equestrian, another EQUUS Foundation Guardian charity, based in Westchester County, N.Y., that provides the therapeutic benefits of adaptive riding, horsemanship programs, and other equine-assisted therapies and activities in order to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and other life challenges.

"Helping Al Capony find not just a happy home but a purposeful life is a wonderful example of the mission of the EQUUS Foundation and our work," continued Angeli. "He is one of several success stories that we helped facilitate just this summer and representative of the dedication of our EQUUS Foundation Guardian charities to find loving homes for horses in need. From racehorses coming off the track to show horses that are ready for their next chapter to carriage horses in need of bucolic and well-earned retirement, the EQUUS Foundation connects horses and people to keep horses safe and happy, and elevate the lives of humans through the joy and empowerment that horses offer us."