



The GFAS Envelope

Perhaps you have heard the story of the "[White Envelope](#)" - a testament to the joy of charitable giving as well as a parable about how eschewing materialism and investing in others can change lives.

At GFAS it is our privilege to help sanctuaries help animals. We know the hard work and dedication it takes to earn that GFAS certificate in the mail. It symbolizes an unparalleled level of animal care and organizational stability and commitment- not just to us, but also to donors.

This year, we learned that one man in particular, was especially inspired by our groups. This gentleman had lived modestly and over his life invested well. He was described as

a lifetime bachelor who lived alone in his deteriorating house, caring for his dogs and cats, along with the occasional raccoon. I found the dates of death of his numerous pets, and his thoughts about each, written in his 19th-century family Bible. Though not adept socially, he was a skilled mechanic, machinist, and carpenter, and extremely talented with numbers. He never forgot the particulars of a stock transaction...

As he aged, a neighbour urged him to create a will for his impressive wealth. He says:

It took five years of pestering, but I had finally convinced him to make a will. Besides his natural stubbornness, the other problem was that he had absolutely no one to whom he wanted to leave anything. When he finally said to me aloud, "I just don't like people," I responded, "Yes, but you do love animals, and your money could do a lot of good if we went about it right." That was the watershed moment leading to these bequests.

So with no family, he decided that animals deserved to be his beneficiaries. With the help of his neighbour turned executor, he chose 13 equine welfare organizations to which he left his estate of over \$1.5 million. The catch? They all had to be GFAS certified.

He knew that an organization meeting our rigorous standards would be worthy of his investment. We were stunned to learn of his generosity as 13 white envelopes carrying his bequests arrived at 13 GFAS equine rescues. Below are the stories of a few of those envelopes; make sure to grab some tissues.

✉ *"I have been struggling with how to write this - there is no way to describe all the good this donation has done for us. We have been very cautious about what we put this donation into with all the turmoil in the world right now the welfare of these animals has been paramount. With overall donations down, quarantine issues etc., we have still been able to continue to take in and care for at risk horses, as well as continue to care for our long-term*

residents. Our training program has made leaps and bounds with the help of this donor. We feel very positive about the future of all the horses here that are sound and able to go to a forever home. This wonderful donor was a godsend to this rescue.”

✉️*“We were deeply moved to receive such an unexpected and generous donation from an animal lover whom we had not previously known. Little did we know that the bequest would benefit the rescue just as the world moved into challenging pandemic times. Originally, the bequest was earmarked to help make large capital additions to our facilities (barn, indoor riding arena) in the spring of 2020. When the pandemic made the world an uncertain place, those plans were postponed with an eye towards keeping all resources available to best support the horses in the rescue’s care through the uncertain times. With this donor’s support, the rescue was able to not only provide for, but provide exceptionally for the horses in our care in 2020, and also have a record breaking year of 27 (and counting) adoptions... With each of those adoptions, another horse in need came to us to begin their journey from recovery to a next chapter in life. Thanks to the bequest and all of our donors’ support for the horses, the rescue moves into year end 2020 looking forward to repeating this years’ successes again next year. Part of those plans includes beginning the capital projects of barn and indoor arena in the spring of 2021. These facilities will be a critical part of creating long term sustainability for us and our ability to help as many horses as possible, year over year, for the future. None of this success would have been possible without this donor’s bequest, made possible by our GFAS accreditation. Thank you GFAS!!!!”*

✉️*“It has been my profound honor to be the founder and director of a not for profit horse rescue and humane society for the past 20 years. Profounder still is when you get a call that an animal lover and humanitarian has dedicated his life’s savings to the good works of a handful of GFAS animal welfare organizations. That is when you realize, the long hours, personal sacrifices, victories, and defeats, did not go unnoticed. Being the recipient of a very special donation such as this, has allowed us to accelerate our five-year plan and put in place safety net programs that would have been further down the road. We were also able to take in 38 animals from a cruelty case, without hesitation, because we had this cushion to fall back on. We would like to thank this amazing gentleman and the people at GFAS who help elevate rescuing. It has allowed us to be there for animals when we were needed the most.”*

✉️*“We learned we were one of several equine rescue organizations chosen as a beneficiary to the estate of a fellow avid animal lover and protector. After a LOT of happy tears being shed by our board members, we convened a meeting to discuss how best to utilize this incredible gift to better serve equines in need, and equine welfare in general. Thus far, we have utilized a portion of this generous gift to greatly expand our fenced pasture acreage and to fully fence our farm boundaries so as to provide greater comfort and protection to the horses in our care. We also were able to expand our rescue efforts to include additional horses, with challenging and costly rehabilitation needs, that we otherwise would not have been able to help. Additionally, we have provided funding to another local rescue organization to assist with veterinary expenses for 2 Thoroughbred stallions in need of surgical castration. A portion of the gift has been set aside as a sort of "rainy day" fund to help further our mission to help horses in need. This gift was truly a game-changer for us and for the horses in our care. We will be forever grateful to this man whom we never knew in life, but whose legacy of love for horses will remain in our hearts forever.”*

✉ *"We have earmarked those funds toward construction of a larger hospital barn with greater amenities."*

✉ *"We undertook a HUGE relocation in early 2020. While the equine facilities were constructed by the landowner for our use, an extensive remodel of a large, existing building was our responsibility. We used a large portion of the funds to create the perfect headquarters building for our use. It has a large lobby where we can greet donors, potential adopters and our volunteers. There is a small volunteer space and a large workroom/clinic area where our nutritional program is executed and our wellness and treatment care can be optimized. We actually have HEATING and COOLING in the space utilized by our staff and volunteers which is a huge step up from our previous location. It makes daily horse care much more appealing when we can work in comfort during weather extremes. We will be eternally grateful to the donor and his legal representatives for their faith in our organization to utilize the donation to benefit the horses immensely. The new facilities have attracted adopters and volunteers in numbers we have never experienced in the past. We are very humbled and grateful."*

✉ *"We were elated to receive the letter - like winning the lottery! Our roof was in bad repair and needed MAJOR work done. Although we had been putting aside money for it - we were considerably short of the estimate that we received only months earlier. There was a lot of worry here since we were told that the roof was 'one major snowstorm' from collapse and our 170 year old barn houses our most fragile horses - our geriatric & physically challenged population. We booked the appointment 10 days after receiving the check and now have a brand new - 25 year no leak guarantee with ice shield - for the entire structure. We were also able to purchase a ring groomer so we could reclaim our overgrown riding ring and keep it maintained. Then we junked our 4 pieces of 'always on the fritz' farm equipment (an aged Gator, really aged Golf Cart, etc) and purchased a new RTV equipped with Boss snow plow! We had gutters installed around the entire barn to help alleviate rot & wear to the roof & siding. It truly was a God send!!"*

Although nobody would have guessed it from his humble and solitary life, this man's love for animals translated into a life-changing legacy. We are moved not only by his generosity but also by his executor's singular faith in our groups. While the white envelopes may not always contain such remarkable sums, we hope to continue inspiring charitable giving to our deserving sanctuaries and rescues - you are saving lives every day. You are our inspiration.

When your GFAS envelope arrives in the mail, expect the extraordinary.

Happy Holidays.