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Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation Launches “Horses Helping Heroes” Mental Wellness Initiative in Partnership with McKenna Farms

Paulding County, GA. May 28, 2025 — The Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation, Inc. proudly announces the official launch of its newest wellness initiative: Horses Helping Heroes. This equine-assisted therapy (EAT) program is designed specifically for law enforcement and first responders and is being offered in partnership with McKenna Farms Therapy Services.

The first sessions recently took place with participants from the Cobb County Police Department and the Paulding County Sheriff's Office. To celebrate the program's launch and foster community, the Foundation and the Farm hosted a First Responder Family Day, which welcomed over 100 attendees for a day of connection, care and camaraderie.

The Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, was established in 2021 to provide advocacy, support, and appreciation opportunities that honor local heroes who protect and serve our communities through their dedication to public safety. Their team consists of all volunteers whose mission is to serve and support first responders while facilitating the strengthening of relationships between the community and public safety.

“Our foundation is striving to broaden its support initiatives to more comprehensively address the critical concerns of mental wellness and stress management among first responders and law enforcement. We are grateful to have this partnership with McKenna Farms and the opportunity to expand our resources,” stated Samantha Rousey Glass, President & Founder of the Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation. “A key part of our mission is to identify and address the needs of our public safety heroes. These men and women have sacrificed so much for our communities, this is more than a wellness program—it’s a heartfelt thank-you and a pathway to healing.”

The Horses Helping Heroes program offers a supportive, nonjudgmental space where participants can decompress, reduce stress, and engage in emotional healing. Guided by trained equine therapy

professionals, the sessions include hands-on horse therapy experiences, with the participant costs covered by the Foundation.

“Horses Helping Heroes program is about more than just saying ‘thank you’—it’s about creating a space where our first responders feel seen, supported, and recognized,” says Katherine Huff, Equine Programs Director at McKenna Farms Therapy Services. “We believe in the power of community, and this is one way we show our deep respect for the brave individuals who keep ours safe.”

Equine-assisted therapy is increasingly recognized for its effectiveness in helping reduce symptoms related to PTSD, anxiety, depression, and emotional fatigue, issues that are prevalent among first responders. Additional benefits include enhanced communication, mood improvement, and stronger peer-to-peer support.

“Horses Helping Heroes is a fantastic new initiative in the sometimes-complicated landscape of public safety mental health. Decompression and stress reduction for law enforcement is essential for officers, and the Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation is offering a new and innovative program to address this ever-growing need,” according to Lieutenant Justin Bullis, Cobb County Police Department.

Major Karen Ritch, Paulding County Sheriff’s Office added, “This program is invaluable to first responders. It allows them time to decompress while making a connection, spending time working with the horse and not thinking about the causes of anxiety. It also allows the opportunity to learn to build trust again. I know my time there literally turned my day around. My co-worker said it was the first time he had seen me genuinely smile in a long time.”

There has been an overwhelming interest to participate in the program and first responders are encouraged to connect with their agency’s peer support unit or supervisor for more information. All scheduling and coordination will be managed through the Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation.

If you or your business would like to support this life-changing initiative, all donations are tax deductible, and your partnership can make a direct impact on those who serve our communities. Please contact the Jess Rousey Honoring Heroes Foundation at contact@honoring-heroes.org or by visiting the website at www.honoring-heroes.org.

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