



For Immediate Release
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Heritage Ministries Announces Grand Opening of Homestead Stables

David Smeltzer, President and CEO of Heritage Ministries, announced on December 8 that Homestead Stables, the new \$3 million dollar Equestrian Center on the campus of The Homestead in Gerry, NY is officially open.

Smeltzer said the equestrian center will be “a lot of things to a lot of people”, providing community outreach for Heritage while rebranding their identity. He credited Chief Financial Officer Randall Gerig with the idea to embrace the rural nature of Heritage’s location by creating a location that would offer Heritage residents stable unique opportunities to maintain an active lifestyle through the stable offerings of training, boarding and lessons. “We offer what no other retirement community can- the opportunity to experience life in a vibrant and growing community with the opportunity to watch horse shows and events from a heated viewing area, board horses and train them, and learn how to ride horses through professional lessons from a full-time staff.

“We’re certainly unique in our area,” Smeltzer said, “What started as the idea to create an experience for our residents has grown into a much larger vision since its inception. We realize we are truly only beginning to scratch the surface of all that our facility will be able to provide. What was intended to be a facility that would help us grow the Homestead Campus is now so much more. It is providing us with a whole new way to serve our community and the surrounding counties while continue to further our mission of Serving others through Christ-centered ministries which promote Hope, Dignity, and Purposeful Living.”

Homestead Stables will serve not only a world class equestrian center which provides excellence in care and boarding of horses, but a place where ministry can be expanded to include lessons and programs for children and teens and intergenerational activities. In addition to Equine educational events and programs, Homestead Stables will also offer opportunities to provide therapeutic riding programs for individuals suffering from PTSD or other emotional or physical disabilities.

The center itself will feature 41 stalls. A 112-foot wide by 219-foot long riding arena will give horses room to trot and interact with trainers and guests. Movable fences can also make the riding area smaller or bigger to accommodate different events.

Those who only want to watch the horses in action have a large viewing area with windows extending from the floor to look through. The space will feature bathrooms and a kitchenette. Bleachers on the first floor and balcony seating will be available for those who want to view horses outside of the viewing area. Stalls themselves are 10 feet wide and 12 feet deep and outfitted with automatic waterers and clean air. A 60-by-80-foot pen will also be available for additional training, especially for younger horses.



Groups will be able to set up appointments to visit the Homestead Stables. Those who board horses will have 24/7 access to their animals and the stable amenities.

Heather Payne will oversee operations at Homestead Stables as the Stable Manager and Head Trainer. Payne graduated from the University of Findlay in Ohio with a degree in equine science. She has also owned Payne Show Horses for the past 15 years and will continue to operate her business while working at the stable full-time.

Smeltzer thanked the local officials and community for their support of the project. "With our location here in Gerry, NY, "The Rodeo Capital of the East" we are excited to be able to support the Gerry community by providing a venue for horse shows and clinics. We are proud to be a part of the community."

State Representative Andrew Goodell and State Senator Cathy Young both expressed their satisfaction and congratulations for Heritage as they celebrated the opening with over 1,100 residents and members of the public in attendance.

"I am so proud to congratulate Heritage on the completion of such a significant project. The services they will offer both their residents and the public are unique and truly indicate that level of care and dedication that Heritage is committed to in Chautauqua County" said Senator Young.

State Representative Andrew Goodell added "Homestead Stables will be a much welcomed addition to Chautauqua County. Heritage is a valuable asset to our community and the services they will offer to all ages though the outreach of Homestead Stables is to be celebrated."

Heritage Ministries was founded as the Orphanage and Homes of the Free Methodist Church in 1886 and has grown from its original campus in Gerry, NY to six locations in New York with additional affiliations in the states of Washington, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

Heritage and its affiliates provide rehabilitation and skilled nursing services, independent retirement housing, and assisted living. The Homestead Stables provide intergenerational equestrian opportunities as well as boarding, training and lessons. In addition, childcare is provided at two campuses allowing for intergenerational programs. Current locations are The Park (Jamestown, NY); The Green (Greenhurst, NY); The Village and The Homestead (Gerry, NY); The Woodlands and Orchard Grove Residences (West Ellicott, NY); Homestead Stables (Gerry, NY); Vinecroft Retirement Community (Clarence Center, NY); The Kenney (Seattle, WA); Hearthstone Communities (Woodstock, IL); and Rolling Fields Eldercare Community (Conneautville, PA). Additionally, Heritage Living at the Chautauqua Mall in Lakewood, NY serves the community by providing an easy-access location for area seniors and their families to get answers to questions about the evolving needs of seniors and employment opportunities. The expansion and growth at Heritage brings financial stability through shared overhead and revenue diversity. It has also increased the number of staff employed by Heritage locally in Chautauqua County. For more information on Homestead Stables and Heritage, please visit www.homesteadstables.org or www.heritage1886.org.

Photos Attached









