



## Press Release

### Tewksbury Hospital Equestrian FARM

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 5, 2011**

**CONTACT: Jan O'Neill**  
**978.337.4600**

### **T.H.E.FARM's BEN NAMED "EQUINE OF THE YEAR"**

#### *Tabano Ben wins PATH International (formerly NAHRA) Region 1 "Equine of the Year" Award*

T.H.E.FARM is proud to announce that Tabano Ben (fondly known as Ben) has been named PATH International's 2011 Region 1 "Equine of the Year". For twenty two years, prior to his tenure at T.H.E.FARM, Ben served able body riders as a pleasure and show horse. It was at that advanced stage of his life, that he took on a new role - as a mount for the Therapeutic Riding Program at T.H.E.FARM in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. After eight years of service at T.H.E.FARM, he deservedly won this award.

Following are excerpts from the Nomination Recommendation submitted to PATH International by volunteer, Susan Brockmiller Johnson.

"This kind, willing horse embodies everything that we look for in a Therapy Mount. It starts with his eyes, which shine kindness and intelligence and reach to his endearing patience and sense of humor. He greets everyone who comes past his stall with a sweet-natured welcome, so he is the perfect horse to introduce timid or new riders to our program. He will stand for hours to be groomed, shampooed, braided, have his hooves painted with glitter pink "Twinkle Toes" or be part of our Halloween parade dressed as a Cheerleader, Basketball Player or last year wearing a snorkel, mask, swim floatie and beach towel as a bathing beauty.

"I have worked with this incredible horse as a leader and side walker, and I have seen him gently move his body to help rebalance a young special needs rider or move off at a quiet voice command for an adult rider with MS, who has limited movement in her legs. He knows the difference between an able rider and one with special needs, and he has ...a way of accommodating ... a wide variety of riders. He ... understands English and recognizes the Dressage letters in the ring ... he is always ready and willing to take on that command at the exact location. We joke that he could probably teach a lesson on his own.

"...(Ben) has spent the last eight years taking care of our able and special needs riders in every capacity. In addition to mounted lessons, he has been invaluable for un-mounted lessons for able and special children and adults ... He is an honest, dependable, athletic, and courageous horse who will safely carry his riders in the ring, on urban and wooded trail rides, and even to local shows. ... I have seen him behave as a perfect gentleman when confronted with barking dogs, buses, huge front end loaders, kids on bikes and other horses misbehaving. He is one in a million and he absolutely deserves this honor. "

T.H.E.FARM welcomes community participation. Those interested in "meeting" Ben might consider attending an upcoming event at T.H.E.FARM. Additional information regarding the following events and/or volunteer opportunities can be found on T.H.E.FARM's website [www.t-h-e-farm.org](http://www.t-h-e-farm.org) or via email [events@t-h-e-farm.org](mailto:events@t-h-e-farm.org) or by calling 978-851-5540.

Student Show - September 24<sup>th</sup>  
Special Olympics – October 15 & 16  
Halloween Party - October 21st.  
Auction - November 4th