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## **Certified Horsemanship Association Awards CHA Stone School Horse of the Year Award to Camp Hebron's Matthew**

*(October 2017)* – Every year, the Certified Horsemanship Association awards the CHA Stone School Horse of the Year Award to an extra-special horse whose job is to be a riding instructor. The horses that students ride, drive, or vault with are probably the most patient of all riding instructors. This October at the Awards Banquet at the CHA International Conference in Lexington, Kentucky, Matthew from Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pennsylvania, won the CHA Stone School Horse of the Year Award out of three exemplary finalists. The award, which included a Stone Horse model of Matthew created by the Peter Stone Company, was presented to Susan Berger, who is a CHA Master Instructor and Clinician who has been at Camp Hebron's Meadowview Stables for the past 20 years.

Matthew is a 34-year-old 14.1-hand chestnut gelding. He is used in Camp Hebron's year-round program, which provides quality horsemanship through summer camps, multi-discipline riding lessons for competitive and recreational riders and guided trail rides. He has logged hundreds of hours under saddle and in ground lessons. He has helped riders in educational programs, special needs programs, riding lessons, at-risk youth programs, programs for underprivileged children and in pony parties.

“He has had saddles put on, taken off, and put on again to teach how to saddle a horse,” describes one student. “He has had ‘parts of the horse’ taped all over his body. He has stood patiently while kids talk with him, cry with him, hug him, and even read to him. He has never complained about the heat, the cold, the long hours, or the unbalanced riders. He is always willing to give us more.”

Matthew was purchased at an auction. He was thin and malnourished and “looked like he was ready to give up on life.” Camp Hebron discovered he was originally from Mexico. He exhibited various fears in his new home, such as walking through the gate to his corral, being tied to the rail, and staying in a stall. It took time, but with patience and understanding, the staff was able to teach Matthew to trust people again.

“He is as close to a perfect lesson horse as you can find,” said one Camp Hebron instructor. “His soft eyes, quiet demeanor, and steady gait are a perfect match for even the most timid of

riders. He truly is a fine elderly gentleman. I believe every horse has something to share, something to teach the people they encounter. But every once in a while, you find a uniquely special one who connects powerfully to people—even people with whom connection is very difficult. He is one of these rare special ones.”

The CHA Stone School Horse of the Year Program honors all of the wonderful equines that spend their days being patient with riders of all experience levels. The sponsor of the program, Stone Horses, creates “model horses for real horse people” and has been a longtime partner of CHA for this award. Each equine finalist received a plaque from CHA and were honored at the Awards Banquet. The three finalists included:

- Loreda, from Birch Bay Ranch in Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada
- Matthew, from Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pennsylvania
- Molly, from Hideaway Farm in Berkley, Massachusetts

For more information about the 2017 CHA International Conference, visit [http://cha-ahse.org/store/pages/47/International\\_Conference.html](http://cha-ahse.org/store/pages/47/International_Conference.html).

*CHA Instructors Change Lives Through Safe Experiences with Horses. The purpose of CHA is to promote excellence in safety and education for the benefit of the horse industry. CHA certifies instructors and trail guides, accredits equestrian facilities, publishes educational manuals, produces educational horsemanship DVDs and YouTube Safety shorts, and hosts regional and international conferences. For more information on the largest certifying body of riding instructors and barn managers in North America, Certified Horsemanship Association, please visit [www.CHA-ahse.org](http://www.CHA-ahse.org) or call 859-259-3399. To find a certified horseback riding instructor or accredited equine facility near you, visit [www.CHAINstructors.com](http://www.CHAINstructors.com).*

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