

Our Furry *Friends*

We've long known that having a pet makes us feel happier. Science now validates our internal wisdom: being around our animals increases the levels of the feel-good chemicals in our brains known as dopamine and serotonin. From dog parks to pet-friendly restaurants, the Fulshear-Katy community has long embraced its companion animals. Horses are a part of life here, too, with abundant opportunities to ride them for pleasure and in competition at fairs and rodeos.



Belle's Bud Rescue founders Julie Stanzer and Tammy Livingston
photo by Jamie Johnson Photography

by Mara Soloway

Are you planning to bring a new pet into your new family home in Fulshear or Katy? Consider adopting a homeless cat or dog from any of the reputable animal shelters and rescue organizations in the area. When you do, get ready for all the physical, health and social benefits that owning a rescue pet can bring!

The staff members of the Fulshear-Katy Area Chamber of Commerce wholly support these local organizations and the life-saving work they do. Chamber President Don McCoy adopted his tripod Husky named Wyatt from Special Pals; VP of Operations Amy Norvell adopted her German Shepherd Dog (GSD) named Brogan from Sauver Des Chiens; and VP of Membership Rachel Durham got her Catahoula-GSD-Shar Pei mix Bubba from the Humane Society in St. Tammany, Louisiana.

Besides lowering our blood pressure, adopting a rescue animal provides tremendous value to the community in several ways, McCoy feels.

"They provide us with loving lifelong friends who are available at a very reasonable price," he said. "On the larger scale, these organizations unite animal lovers with a cause, reduce the number of neglected animals running loose in the community and provide a chance for the adoption of animals surrendered by owners."

Having pets also contributes to the economy, especially to the growth of pet stores, private pet sitters, animal

daycare/boarding facilities, trainers and veterinarians. "Our veterinary community is active in improving the health of adoptable animals by providing evaluations, treatment of preventable diseases and vaccines," McCoy said.

Three local examples of nonprofit rescue organizations that are on a mission to save as many lives as possible are two noted above - Special Pals, which is unique in that it has a brick-and-mortar facility, and Sauver Des Chiens, which works to save lives of German Shepherd Dogs and other large dogs in Texas and Louisiana. Additionally, Chamber members appreciate the work of Belle's Buds Rescues, which works with all breeds of

any size and age.

Each group has invested an extensive amount of time and money into the care, comfort and training of their rescue dogs and/or cats; each animal is fully vetted for a range of health concerns; animals have generally been spayed or neutered; and animal temperaments have been assessed in situations such as groups of people of different ages, other dogs, cats and horses. Numerous rescue groups and shelters offer a relationship after an animal is adopted, such as advice on trainers and other services.

"You're not going to get such an investment in an animal from a pet shop. We work to make our pets ready to become part of the family," said Katy

Z. Heerssen, director of development and marketing for Special Pals. With its Rescue Resource Center, Special Pals offers regular low-cost clinics, promotes animal adoptions, and provides affordable temporary boarding services to partner rescues.

For German Shepherd Dogs, Sauver Des Chiens pays for six months at a foster-to-adopt home before the animal is spayed or neutered. "This allows for greater hormone and bone strength development," said Karen Blanchard, the rescue group's president.

Based in Brookshire, Belle's Buds Rescue was established in 2018 by friends Tammy Livingston and Julia Stanzer. "Many of our dogs come from around Simonton, Waller, Katy and Fulshear. A lot are literally dumped out in the country. There are days that we get anywhere from five to 20 contacts asking for help with stray dogs or rehomes," Livingston said.

Like the other rescues, Belle's Buds has close relationships with local shelters and Fort Bend, Harris and Waller county agencies that alert them to dogs or cats in need of special help.

Blanchard noted, "Each shelter has its own way of reaching out when they have stray German Shepherds. My name is well known - they will get a message to me."

Each rescue generally has animals in boarding or training facilities, but the majority are in foster homes. Fosters are on the front lines of learning the animal's temperament and helping it learn to act in a home. According to Livingston, "Fosters help the dog work out its baggage that comes from being in abusive situations or on the run."

Starting with the pandemic in 2020, Heerssen saw a large number people step up to foster.

"We have been able to get many pets out of a shelter environment into a home, which is much better for them



Cats in the care of Special Pals

and more enriching. Pets are safe with us, but a shelter isn't a home," she said.

"Fosters drive the rescue movement. Sauver Des Chiens especially needs them to move dogs out of boarding facilities as soon as possible," Blanchard said.

Numerous rescue groups are part of different networks such as Rescue Road that move dogs out of Texas to homes across the U.S. Belle's Buds Rescue now also sends its dogs to New York and California courtesy of former adopters who volunteered their time and efforts.

The adoption counseling process helps people look beyond what breed they might want to instead consider what type of personality will fit the family's lifestyle. "Our adoption coordinator, Jennifer Matson, is in contact even after adoption with trainers and programs we recommend," Blanchard said. "This sets up the dog physically and mentally for success in a home and helps the person to be a responsible pet owner." With German Shepherd Dogs, Blanchard works to dispel the bad press about the breed: "They are great family dogs. We assess and test them with children and cats. We do not adopt them to people who do not know how to handle them or to those who want them for guard dogs - we don't encourage that behavior."

Top 6 reasons why new residents and those who already live here adopt an animal from a rescue group:

From Katy Z. Heerssen of Special Pals

1. It gets you love and companionship, pays it forward to groups that are out there making it better for animals, and moves the next animal in line one step forward.

2. Lets them have a second chance. We don't euthanize, they are with us until next step happens. We keep the animals in a safe situation until the family finds us.

From Karen Blanchard of Sauver Des Chiens

3. Because of what the dog has been through. By finding someone loving and caring, it can learn to trust and be part of a family.

4. They will bond to you like glue - you will never be alone again anywhere in the house.

From Tammy Livingston of Belle's Buds Rescue

5. Because there are so many great animals in need of a family, you can be the one who makes a difference.

6. One of my favorite reasons is that you might end up with a breed or type you never would have considered.

Some of the nonprofit and other organizations and government offices where you might find your next family member are listed here. All dogs and cats in local counties are required to have a current rabies vaccine and wear a license tag with identifying information. You may register your pet in person at government entities listed below, online or by mail.

PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Bailey Animal Rescue

Katy, TX 77493
Facebook

Belle's Buds Rescue

Brookshire, TX 77423
bellesbudsrescue.org, Facebook and Instagram

Citizens for Animal Protection

17555 Katy Fwy.
Houston, TX 77094
281-497-0591
cap4pets.org, Facebook and Instagram

Golden Beginnings Golden Retriever Rescue

Houston, TX
281-480-4942
gbgrr.org, Facebook and Instagram

Houston Humane Society

14700 Alameda Rd.
Houston, TX 77053

713-433-6421
houstonhumane.org, Facebook and Instagram

Houston SPCA

7007 Old Katy Road
Houston, TX 77024
713-880-HELP (4357)
houstonspca.org, Facebook and Instagram

Sauver Des Chiens German Shepherd Rescue

P.O. Box 1091
Sealy, TX 77474
281-898-1289
sauverdeschiens.org, Facebook and Instagram

Save Our Companion Animals (SOCA)

Rosenberg, TX 77471
281-849-7622
soca-fbc.org, Facebook and Instagram

South Texas Animal Adoption Resource

Katy, TX
281-392-0927
staarnet.org, Facebook

Special Pals

3830 Greenhouse Rd.
Houston, TX
281-579-7387
specialpalsshelter.org, Facebook and Instagram

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A happy ending for Sauver Des Chiens

Search online for other specific dog breed rescue groups. Bird rescue organizations include Citizens for Avian Protection (www.caphouston.org) in Houston.

GOVERNMENT ENTITIES

BARC Animal Shelter

3200 Carr St.
Houston, TX 77026
713-229-7300
houstontx.gov/barc, Facebook and Instagram

City of Waller Animal Shelter and Rescue

728 Elm St.
Waller, TX 77484
346-254-7824
cityofwalleranimal.wixsite.com/waller

Fort Bend County Animal Services

1210 Blume Rd.
Rosenberg, TX 77471
281-342-1512
fortbendcountypets.com, Facebook and Instagram

Harris County Animal Control

612 Canino Rd.
Houston, TX 77076
281-999-3191
hcpes.org, search on animal control; Facebook and Instagram as [harriscountypets](#)

Katy Animal Control

5456 Franz Rd.
Katy, TX 77493
281-391-4740
cityofkaty.com

Rosenberg Animal Control & Shelter

1207 Blume Rd.
Rosenberg, TX 77471
832-595-3490
rosenbergtx.gov/public-services/animal-control/, Facebook and Instagram ([bergshelterpets](#))

DOG PARKS

Dog parks allow both people and dogs to enjoy spending time together with their human and canine friends. Play with and socialize your dog and watch it run, swim and even navigate an agility course. Several Fulshear-Katy communities have private dog parks for their residents. Check online for dog parks in other area cities.

City of Katy Dog Park

5414 Franz Rd.
Katy, TX 77493

Millie Bush Dog Park

16756 Westheimer Parkway
Houston, TX 77082

Tips For Moving with Your Companion Animals



Manage your pet's health and happiness during a move by planning ahead and understanding their needs. Dogs cue in to disrupted routines and to tense and preoccupied humans who might give them less attention. Cats can also feel stressed and may show their disapproval in various ways. These tips will help you with moving all the animals in your family - feathered and scaled ones, too.

1 Update tags and microchips. Updated information on the tags and the microchip reader is vital if your pet gets lost on your trip or once you arrive at your new Fulshear or Katy residence. Before you move, at a minimum make sure the phone numbers on the tag and the chip's online account are correct. Update with your new address if you know it before you move.

2 Driving versus flying. If you're planning to fly to your new home here, check with the airline to

see if it allows small pets to travel in the cabin with you. If you do have to fly your pets, it's almost always best to book a nonstop flight. Sedation is not recommended for air travel; ask your vet if they have specific recommendations for long-distance drives. Leave cats and dogs in their carriers while driving for their safety and yours.

3 Introduce the crate. Make traveling time - whether by plane or vehicle - more comfortable for your animals by introducing them to a crate a few weeks before you leave for Fulshear-Katy. If they don't immediately take to being inside it, gradually acclimate them to it with positive associations such as having them eat meals or treats inside the crate.

4 Prep for Wellness. Visit your veterinarian for a check-up, to refill any prescriptions to carry over until you find a vet here, get any required rabies vaccinations, and get

copies of records for the new vet. Keep the records in your moving portfolio and provide them to your new vet.

5 Before you hit the road. Take extra precautions in your daily life to keep cats from getting outside and possibly running away. Keep your dog on its normal walking schedule as much as possible. As you begin packing, leave cat and dog beds unpacked so they have their special place to retreat to.

6 Pack for your pet. Toys and treats can help keep your pet calm while traveling. Bring items with you such as food, beds, litter and litter boxes so they all will be handy once you arrive.

7 Quiet time during loading and unloading. To reduce an animal's stress level and to keep them from getting underfoot, board your pets on the day the movers load your belongings and when they are unloaded at your new residence. A boarding

facility is a safer, less chaotic place for pets during a move-in. At a minimum, keep your pets in a room away from the action or in their carriers until the movers have gone.

8 Find a new vet. Ask your current vet before you move or ask your new local neighbors for recommendations; follow up with looking online for other vets near your new home. Schedule a new pet visit as soon as you decide, and bring your pet's medical records with you.

9 Allow time to acclimate. Once you've moved in, try to quickly get back to your pet's normal routine. Start acclimating your dog to your new home and neighborhood by going on walks as soon as possible. The exercise will relieve stress and provide your pet with a sense of the new neighborhood.

A Letter from *Fluffy* the Cat



To my Sweet Human Wait Staff,

The previous issue of this community guide contained a letter from Rover the Dog. I appreciate this opportunity for equal time to make my case for the superiority of cats. So many people think dogs make better pets. But really—who can deal with their constant good attitude and all of that slobbering? A cat will never bore you with a good attitude—we have emotional and intellectual depth. We do not slobber, which alone makes us worth the investment. We even cost less over time since we can groom ourselves.

I'm so happy you chose me from the cat rescue group. Thank you! You've named me Fluffy, a soft and sweet name for a feline. It's just PURRFECT. I'll reward you by sitting in your lap and purring away, at least until I decide I need some me-time or want to use the scratching post (you call it the couch).

Now that I'm part of the family, I'd like to suggest these general house rules:

- Please obey my demands to be petted.
- Dry food is not going to cut it for every meal. Please also offer me a can of chicken or tuna, (crystal bowl optional). Cats enjoy fine cuisine just as you humans do.
- I enjoy having all your attention. But, if you do want another cat – and I can understand why you would want another wonderful feline around – please have two litter boxes. It is such an indignity to share one. (And I do admit, I wouldn't mind having someone else to play with at 3 a.m.)
- Go ahead and get a dog if you want a pet with a good attitude. It's a big house – we can peacefully coexist.

Thank you again for adopting me! I love having you as my new family and living in your lovely home. I apologize in advance for any priceless heirlooms I might "accidentally" knock off the high shelves.

With love and tolerance,
Fluffy



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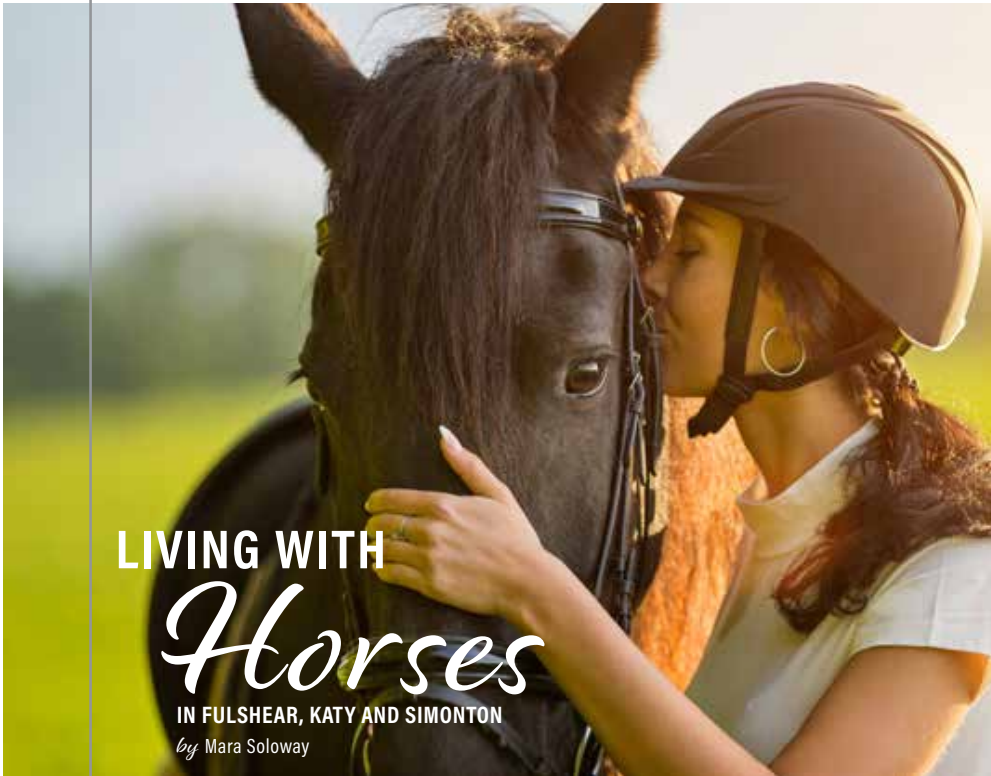
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LIVING WITH *Horses*

IN FULSHEAR, KATY AND SIMONTON

by Mara Soloway

Local Ordinances

In the rural Simonton area, many residents are able to board their horse at home, given that their homesites are multiple acres. This is not feasible for all area residents, however. Many local boarding facilities are available for owners who need or prefer that option. Contact the appropriate authority for information:

- The City of Fulshear does not have an ordinance prohibiting horses or regulating them at this time. Anyone wanting to keep horses at home should contact the appropriate homeowner association (if applicable) and inquire about the rules regarding horses.
- The City of Katy has regulations on zoning, acreage, number of horses, noise and other considerations in its code of ordinances. Contact the city at 281-391-4800 and visit cityofkaty.com to view the ordinance's Chapter 2 Animal Control, Article 2.02 Livestock and Fowl.
- Horse ownership is part of life in rural Simonton, with many residents owning horses and livestock. Contact the City of Simonton at info@simontontexas.gov or 281-533-9809 with any specific questions.

Opportunities for Children and Young People

Ah, the dream of country life filled with long hours riding one of your many horses across your acreage! Afterwards, you offer this grand animal some hay and tuck it into its stable for the night. Then a few yards away, you step into your home. This dream may be steeped in the ranching heritage of the Fulshear-Katy area and the working horses it relied upon. But it's a highly idealized vision best left to the most experienced horseperson – one who already knows the huge amounts of time, attention, effort, emotion and money involved in caring for such a large, complicated animal. Jeff Murphrey likens the cost of owning a horse to an enormous black hole that constantly sucks in \$100 bills.

"Your initial investment in a horse pales in significance to what the horse will ultimately cost you," he says. "Typically, if your child gets into the show world, you will pay for lessons, show fees, hauling, specialized veterinary care, chiropractic, massage and farrier (all things hooves), just to name a few."

Jeff and his wife Adrienne are the owners of Canine Country Club in Katy. Their daughter Jorden Grace began her show career by taking lessons at age 5. Jeff is an experienced horseman himself who grew up in the area cutting, training and showing horses. Based on his lifelong relationship with all things equine, Jeff offers a path for parents whose child is chomping at the bit to get on a horse.

Start with Lessons

Western, English and Show Jumping are popular riding styles with lessons available in the Fulshear-Katy area. Riding for pleasure or playing polo are other ways to be involved with horses. "Most kids ought to start with lessons. You don't want to buy a horse trained in a certain style and find out six months later your child wants to switch styles or has lost interest," Jeff said. "Our daughter very much wanted to ride Western, but after taking lessons, she wanted to learn show jumping. We didn't buy a horse until she was well committed down the path."

Lease before buying

After taking lessons for awhile, your child will get a clearer picture of which area of competition he or she wants to enter. Is this the right time to buy a horse? Jeff advises going the leasing route first. "Very often stables that offer lessons have horses to lease. With a half lease, the horse is shared by your family and another party; it is the most economical way to go. We started that way. A full lease gives the horse to you and your family alone."

Carefully examine the lease contract to understand

your responsibilities. "Typically the stable will feed the horse and provide veterinary care," Jeff explained. "That's what I would opt for. With horses, veterinary can get very pricey. The stable has coverage for these expenses."

Deciding to Buy

Consider buying a horse when the child feels committed to a type of competition and shows competency. This time frame will differ based on the person. Another variable that can't be estimated is a horse's price. "This will vary so wildly based on things like its age, what you're buying the horse for, and whether you're concerned about the animal's bloodline. I feel performance and temperament should be the primary considerations over bloodlines when buying a first horse," Jeff said.

It's normal these days for your trainer to find a horse to purchase. In general, you'll have a trial period of perhaps a week with the horse at the stable. This will be under contract; again, you will want to carefully examine your responsibilities. If during the trial you decide you're interested in the animal, Jeff recommends you hire an experienced outside veterinarian to perform what's called a vet check, and that you pay for X-rays if it is a sport jumping horse. One cautionary note: because the trainer gets paid his fee on top of the horse's purchase price, Jeff suggests having a trusted party weigh in on the horse's fit for your child.

Jeff offers three key points to consider before purchasing the horse: Does it fit the rider today? Is it the right temperament for the child's age? Is it trained in the right style of riding?

Other considerations include:

- Time frame: how long do you expect to own this animal? It has to fit now and for that time frame. "A lot of people buy more horse than the kid is really ready for. That's the delicate balance. If you go too conservative, then you get a horse that two years later isn't really enough horse. At that point, if you're going to progress in the sport, you will then have to buy a more expensive horse."
- Exit strategy: when it's time to get a new horse, what will you do with the older horse? "Are you going to be able to sell the animal and feel good about it? Or are you the last owner?" Jeff said. "You can usually sell it to someone else or donate it if it's the right disposition to a nonprofit horse program." One new concept is paying for a horse to live out its retirement on a farm, which Jeff does for one of his daughter's two horses.

Where Should the Horse Live?

The stable where your child takes lessons will likely have the option to board your horse. Prices include feed and some amount of care (e.g., letting it out in the paddock). Because the horse is now yours, veterinary and chiropractic care are your responsibility. Stables will normally arrange vet care. Jeff advises buying insurance on your horse.

You'll want to spend time with your animal. With a sport horse, Jeff recommends visiting it 3 to 4 times a week to bond with it and ride it for exercise. In the end, despite the expense of horse ownership, Jeff is encouraging about the endeavor. "The responsibilities a kid takes on and the confidence that flows from that and the relationship with a horse are priceless and life changing," he said. "The benefits are hard to put into words. I couldn't recommend it more."

Advice from the Neigh-bors

With busy lives and careers, long-time Simonton residents Erica and Roberto Molina are passionate about including horses as part of their rural life style. On the job, Erica is Simonton's city secretary and emergency management coordinator; Roberto owns Houston's restaurant institution Molina's Cantina with his brothers, Ricardo and Raul. A Fulshear location of Molina's Cantina opened in 2020.

The Molinas have two American Quarter Horses: Cami (aka Comanche Uno) is a sorrel mare and Baby Face is a grullo gelding. Roberto is the rider; Erica takes on responsibility for grooming and, as she jokes, spectating.

They are active in many volunteer organizations. Erica and Roberto are both lifetime members of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Erica volunteers when she can. Roberto serves on the Grand Entry Committee as an Outrider and on the Quarter Horse Committee.

The Molinas have also been involved for several years with the Navy Seal Danny Dietz Memorial Classic with rodeo and other events held on Memorial Day weekend. The event raises funds for the Navy SEAL Danny Dietz Foundation that supports special ops forces and first responders and their surviving families.

"As a result of COVID, we have moved the Danny Dietz Memorial Classic from the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds to Decatur, Texas. I am the director and Roberto serves on the board," Erica said. "We have a fundraiser for the Foundation in November at Anthonie's Market Grill in Simonton. This year will be our second doing that event."

The Molinas also both serve on the Fort Bend County Fair's Mutton Bustin' Committee and are part of the Fort Bend Buyers Club, which supports students' projects at the fair.

To see horses in action, Erica recommends attending the county fair and rodeo events such as the Katy Rodeo and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. "The Great Southwest Equestrian Center in Katy always has shows going on as well," she says.

For adults interested in horse-related volunteering, numerous volunteer opportunities exist with the Fort Bend County Fair. Reining Strength and SIRE also are on the lookout for dedicated volunteers.

Just as with children who want to be in the show ring, lessons are the best place for adults to start learning to ride for pleasure or for competition. "Specific activities will grow from there. There's team sorting, endurance riding, dressage, English, Western, rodeo events, and just good old trail riding!" Erica said. "There is a great place called the 7 IL in Cat Spring for trail riding. Also families or individuals can look into joining the Valley Lodge Trail Ride Association. It is one of the oldest trail rides in Texas. Of course, you need to own a horse to do that."

Horses could be considered companion animals with longer legs - they bring people together just like dogs and cats do. The Molinas and their friends get together on grounds near their homes to rope whenever they can. "Our family has made some of our best friends through horse-related activities," Erica said. "We have watched each other's kids grow up and get married, and now their kids are learning to ride!"

Other Opportunities for Children and Teens

Both Lamar CISD and Katy ISD have agricultural education and Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters; Katy ISD has a livestock show generally in February. See course options on school district websites.

Where to See Horses in Action

In addition to shows and programs held at local horse farms and stables, these area events offer opportunities for participants, spectators and volunteers. Check online to see if in-person events are taking place.

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is a must-attend annual competitive, educational and philanthropic event. Before the rodeo begins, more than 2,000 participants on a dozen trail rides make the trek to Houston on horseback and in covered wagons in a nod to the Old West. During the rodeo, the horse barn hosts cutting competitions, Ranch Rodeo events, breed shows, mounted shooting competitions and more. The Top Hands Horse Show is a competition for riders from therapeutic riding facilities in the area.

Held at NRG Park in March.

rodeohouston.com, Facebook and Instagram

The Pin Oak Charity Horse Show is one of the oldest and most prestigious horse shows in America with an equally impressive legacy of charitable outreach. Held over three weeks in March and April, the multi-breed equestrian events feature American Saddlebreds, Hunters, Olympic-level Show Jumpers and Working Equitation.

Held at the The Great Southwest Equestrian Center in Katy.

pinoak.org, Facebook and Instagram

The Fort Bend County Fair benefits youth, promotes agriculture and supports education by awarding \$4,000 scholarships to 50 qualifying Fort Bend students. Competitive rodeo events take place along with The Old 300 Horse Show for equestrians with different abilities.

Starts in September at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds.

fortbendcountyfair.com, Facebook and Instagram

Equine Therapy

Local organizations that provide equine-assisted therapy through horseback riding to improve the quality of life for people with physical, cognitive, social or emotional needs include:

Reining Strength Therapeutic Horsemanship

7126 FM 359 Rd.

Richmond, TX 77406

832-451-6874

reiningstrength.org, Facebook and Instagram

SIRE Therapeutic Horsemanship

7206 Pool Hill Road

Fulshear, TX 77441 (Fort Bend County location)

281-356-7588

sire-htec.org, Facebook and Instagram

Rescued Horses

Several Houston area nonprofit organizations, including the SPCA (houstonspca.org) often have horses available for adoption. Search online for the latest information.



FULSHEAR
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

29810 FM 1093
Suite G (Fulshear Downs Center)

281-346-0077
Marne F. Baird, DVM