**Adopt a Horse Month: Media Tips**

These ideas can help you pitch the media and engage your local community while participating in the ASPCA’s Adopt a Horse Month to increase exposure for your organization and raise awareness about the many benefits of adopting an equine.

1. **Spread the News:**

* Distribute a press release at the end of April or early May explaining how your shelter plans to participate in Adopt a Horse Month this year. Make sure to check out the Communications Guide for the press release template we’ve provided.
* If you are organizing an event (virtual or otherwise) as part of your participation in the contest, send a media advisory around a week before your adoption event or any special promotions you plan to hold so media outlets can run the story in weekly community newspapers, online, etc. prior to the event.
* Invite the media to attend and cover your events —make sure you’ve shared everything you've got going on, from social media campaigns to special adoptions promotions to the participation of local celebrities and influential community members.
* If the media can't make the trip out to your property, a few hours before the evening news broadcast, send them a press release with event highlights—be sure to include a few high-quality photos and/or a brief video. They may be able to run a quick segment if you make it easy for them.

**Note:** *Also, press releases and media advisories are similar in that they both serve the purpose of getting media coverage of your organization. A media advisory is typically shorter and has the very explicit purpose of getting media to attend your event, kind of like an invitation, and is usually sent to outlets that you think are likely to attend. A press release can be longer and sent to a wider audience. Don’t forget to check out the Communications Guide to download our press release template!*

1. **Look for the Hook**:

* When pitching the media, tell a gripping story of one animal —a horse who beat the odds or who has a particularly compelling story of how he/she came to be at your rescue—and then broaden it to the bigger picture of equine rescue.
* Share interesting backgrounds of staff, volunteers or adopters—the human interest angle is compelling, too.
* Have you recently reached a milestone, celebrated a birthday, hit a record number of equine adoptions – think about a “Top 10 List” or even a “Top 3” format for your pitch.
* Be creative and have fun! Seizing on what’s trending in popular culture is effective at generating publicity. For example, one equine rescue played on the popular reality TV show, “The Bachelor,” and had a male horse choose his “soul mare” at a community event.
* Make note of any holidays (i.e. Mother’s Day) that fall during Adopt a Horse Month that you could potentially connect to the journey of one of your horses to make it timely for local media to cover.
* Many local news stations have a “pet of the week” segment to showcase local animals that are available for adoption. While these segments are typically reserved for dogs and cats, Adopt a Horse Month may be a great opportunity to contact your local TV station and invite them to your property to feature a special horse in your care who is looking for a new home.
* Use engaging photos and/or short videos in your media pitches. The words you use in your press release and media advisory are important, but a picture may be what gets a member of the media to read your documents in the first place.

1. **Don’t Stop There!**

Use engaging photos and/or short videos in your communications, and consider other channels besides traditional and social media to promote your group’s participation in Adopt a Horse Month and spotlight the horses you have available for adoption:

* Newsletters
* Email blasts
* Your website
* On-hold phone messages
* Email signatures
* Billboards
* T-shirts

1. **Messaging Matters:**

* Learn as much as you can about a reporter before making your pitch—and tailor your pitch accordingly.
* When pitching a story over the phone, make sure you identify yourself and your organization—and before giving your spiel, ask if it's a good time to talk.
* When pitching a story via email, keep it short, and make your first sentence the most relevant one.
* Go into an interview with a clear message of what you want the audience to take away—and find a way to share that message repeatedly. If you are asked multiple questions, answer the easiest one that allows you to get your message across.

**Note**: *The subject line of an email should be ten words or less to keep the reader’s attention and to prevent the message from being cut off. And be careful of things that trigger spam filters, like using exclamation points or all capital letters.*

**ASPCA Adopt a Horse Month Message Points**

* [ORG NAME] is participating in the ASPCA®’s (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) Adopt A Horse Month, a nationwide adoption event taking place throughout the month of May to help more equines find loving homes.
* ASPCA equine [research](https://www.aspcapro.org/encouraging-research-regarding-homes-horses) suggests there could be approximately 2.3 million adults in the U.S. with both the resources and desire to adopt a horse in need. Connecting those people with horses in need is the aim of the second annual Adopt a Horse Month.
* Equine rescues have many wonderful horses with amazing temperaments, smarts, personality and charm who are in need of loving homes. Adoption not only saves the life of the horse adopted, but also opens up a space for another animal in need.
* Those interested in adoption can check out [MyRightHorse.org](http://www.myrighthorse.org), the ASPCA’s online adoption platform specifically for equines, to view horses looking for a home from organizations across the country.
* Many horses at rescues are already trained in a discipline or undergoing training and are simply in transition waiting for their new homes.
* Adopt a Horse Month provides a perfect opportunity for communities to support their local equine rescue to ensure all horses are treated with love and kindness and have the opportunity to be adopted into a good home.
* Equine rescues, shelters and sanctuaries are doing everything they can to care for and rehabilitate abused and neglected horses, but they can’t do it alone. We hope our local supporters will come visit [INSERT ORG NAME] and help us spread the word that adoption is an awesome way to find your next horse.