

# Equine Industry Unites for Inaugural HORSETOBER™, Celebrating the Horse-Human Connection

*Sponsors and more than two dozen industry partners join Horses for Mental Health to launch #PassTheBraid Challenge this October*

SALT LAKE CITY, UT, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Horses for Mental Health (HMH) today announced the launch of [HORSETOBER™](#), a new international awareness movement bringing together organizations, brands and horse lovers to share stories of the meaningful relationships between humans and horses.



HORSETOBER The Annual Celebration of the Horse Human Connection

Launching October 1–31, HORSETOBER™ is produced by Horses for Mental Health in collaboration with Sponsors and Industry Partners spanning equestrian sport, horse welfare and aftercare, research, education, equine-assisted services, mental health, media, and more. The vision is to build the largest annual celebration of the horse-human connection ever organized.

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We're incredibly grateful to the organizations and brands joining us to launch HORSETOBER™. Together, we're showing the value of the horse-human connection and carrying that message further.”

*Lynn Thomas, Co-Founder  
and President of Horses for  
Mental Health*

HORSETOBER™ builds on HMH's track record of bringing organizations together around the impact of horses. Its fifth annual Mental Health Awareness Month campaign in May 2026 raised more than \$1 million for programs incorporating horses in mental health services.

With HORSETOBER™, that collaborative spirit expands across the broader equine community, creating a shared platform to raise awareness of the

many ways horses profoundly impact our lives and wellbeing.

As part of this effort, the Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) joins HORSETOBER™ as its Research Partner, helping bring greater visibility to research that deepens our understanding of the horse-human connection.

#PassTheBraid:

At the heart of HORSETOBER™ is the braid, a powerful symbol of connection, relationships, and weaving together stories to become stronger together. Anyone who loves horses can join:

1. Spend meaningful time with a horse.
2. Create a braid and share your story of connection through a photo or video.
3. #PassTheBraid by nominating others to join and keep the movement growing.

The #PassTheBraid Challenge celebrates the horse-human connection in all its forms, inviting people across the equine community to participate in ways that are meaningful to them. Riders can take part at competitions or in their barns, while equine-assisted services programs, rescues, sanctuaries, and other organizations can invite their communities to experience and celebrate their own connections with horses.

Each week throughout October will feature exciting prize giveaways, community story spotlights, and educational content to encourage participation all month long. Every braid becomes part of a larger story about the many ways horses enrich people's lives.

An Industry-Wide Movement:

HORSETOBER™ launches with support from Sponsors and Industry Partners representing a broad cross-section of the equine community.

2026 HORSETOBER™ Sponsors include:

2026 HORSETOBER™ SPONSORS



2026 HORSETOBER™ INDUSTRY PARTNERS



PRODUCED BY



RESEARCH PARTNER



HORSETOBER is Produced by Horses for Mental Health | Research Partner Horses & Humans Research Foundation

2026 HORSETOBER™ Sponsors include:

Chewy Equine, GGT Footing, Purina, Snaffles, and Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance.

2026 HORSETOBER™ Industry Partners include:

A Home for Every Horse, American Horse Council, American Psychological Association's Section on Human-Animal Interaction (APA/HAI), Arenas For Change (ARCH), ASPCA - The Right Horse, Black in the Saddle, The Equine Assisted and Facilitated Practitioners Network (EAFPN), EQUUS Film & Arts, EQUUS Foundation, EquuStyle Magazine, HorseGrooms, Institute for Human-Animal Connection, Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA), International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO), Kansas Horse Council, National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA), Natural Lifemanship, PATH International, Polyvagal Equine Institute, Pony Club, Rescued Hearts, Rural Minds, Texas A&M Institute for Equine Sciences, The HERD Institute, Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (TAA), US Equestrian Federation, Veterans K9Equine Alliance, and Virginia Partnership for Horses.

Partner with HORSETOBER™:

Individuals, organizations, and horse lovers everywhere can join #PassTheBraid beginning October 1. Learn more, explore weekly challenges, and register for chances to win weekly prizes at [www.horsesformentalhealth.org/HORSETOBER](http://www.horsesformentalhealth.org/HORSETOBER).

Organizations and brands interested in contributing prizes or exploring partnership opportunities are invited to contact Horses for Mental Health.

About Horses for Mental Health:

Horses for Mental Health (HMH) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization advancing the role of horses in mental health and wellbeing. Through national initiatives and collaborative partnerships, HMH raises awareness of the horse-human connection while elevating professional programs that incorporate horses in mental health services and personal growth. HMH works to expand access, generate funding, and amplify the impact of these programs so more people and communities can benefit.

#HORSETOBER #PassTheBraid #HorsesForMentalHealth @horsesformentalhealth

Lynn Thomas

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