

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Saddle Up! announces ceremony to honor horse heroes**

FRANKLIN, Tenn. – Saddle Up! will pause to honor its fallen and living horse heroes on Saturday, Oct. 16, with a 4 p.m. ceremony at the farm, 1549 Old Hillsboro Road, Franklin.

“The power of the horse is what makes this program work,” said Executive Director Cheryl Scutt. “It is with deep respect, gratitude and love that we pause to acknowledge their contributions.”

The recent loss of the program’s longest-serving horse, Avalon, prompted the creation of the October 16 ceremony, Scutt said. Avalon served Saddle Up! riders for 13 of his 26 years. The woman who donated him to the program made a special gift to pay for all expenses relating to his passing, plus funds to plant a tree in his honor with a memorial marker beside the tree.

“Because so many riders, volunteers and staff had shared Avalon’s life at Saddle Up!, we knew that we needed to do something special in his honor,” Scutt shared. “As we were working on that plan, we decided that we wanted to expand the service to acknowledge and celebrate the lives of all Saddle Up! horses who have touched the lives, hearts and spirits of so many, many people over the years. That’s when we came up with the idea of the ceremony.

“We invite all those who want to help us in honoring these horse heroes to join us at the farm,” she added.

The tree-side ceremony will also include remembrances of Avalon and other Saddle Up! horses, a prayer for and blessing of the animals, and a salute to recent horse retirees and horses soon to be retired from the program. In addition, the training room at Saddle Up! will have remembrance books for Avalon and Saffron, who also passed away during the past year, that guests can view and sign.

“We plan for this to be an annual event,” Scutt said. “We have set this year’s ceremony to take place at the conclusion of our annual S.U.P.E.R show, where our riders as well as riders from other therapeutic riding programs will be competing all day to show their skills and win ribbons.”

Saddle Up! is Middle Tennessee’s oldest and largest recreational therapeutic horseback riding program and the only one exclusively serving children and youth who have disabilities. Saddle Up! is a nonprofit organization that depends on donations and fundraising events for the majority of its revenues, and it counts on a dedicated volunteer core of nearly 300 to help make the program possible. For more information, please call 615-794-1150 visit the website, [www.saddleupnashville.org](http://www.saddleupnashville.org).

**PHOTO CAPTION: Avalon**