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RETIRED RACE HORSE FINDS NEW PURPOSE IN LIFE

Gooch's Bad Boy brings hope & healing to people dealing with mental health issues through equine assisted psychotherapy

COLUMBUS, Minn. (April 19, 2018) --- For the last eight years, racehorse Gooch's Bad Boy spent his time crushing the competition in harness horse racing at Running Aces Casino & Racetrack. Despite his name, Gooch was anything but a "bad boy." He was famous for his kind and easy personality which led to numerous side gigs including TV, opening ceremonies at sporting events and parades. It wasn't until the end of last year's season that Gooch's Bad Boy experienced a life-changing race.

"Gooch's Bad Boy had to retire after he sustained a bowed tendon leg injury that prevented him from racing any further," said Aaron Bedessem, Running Aces. "We were thrilled to see him take on a different career that gave his life a new purpose."

These days you can find Gooch's Bad Boy living out his retirement on 60 acres of land at **Acres for Life** Therapy and Wellness Center in Forest Lake, Minn. The team at Acres for Life brings hope, healing and transformation to people through an experiential model called **EAGALA Equine Assisted Psychotherapy**.

This form of therapy uses a team that includes a licensed mental health professional, an equine specialist and a herd of horses. According to Acres for Life, clients learn about themselves and others by participating in activities with horses, not by riding them but interacting with them on the ground. Through this process, participants have the opportunity to talk about feelings, behaviors, and patterns that show up. Acres for Life focuses on helping individuals and families dealing with addiction, anxiety, autism spectrum disorders, chemical dependency, communication issues, depression, eating disorders, emotional and behavioral issues, grief and loss, mental health issues, PTSD, transitioning, and trauma.

"At first, Gooch was so quiet...almost unsure of what this place was all about. Session after session it was as if a new passion started entering back into him," said Sally Mixon, Acres for Life Equine Trainer. "In a way, he's now teaching those who come to Acres how to run their race; how to win their fight against the issues that hold them back."

Gooch won't get to be part of opening race day this year on Saturday, May 19. Instead, he'll be helping others in a different kind of race – a race to recovery.

About Running Aces® Casino & Racetrack

Running Aces is the Twin Cities' premier card room and entertainment destination, with a summer live harness horse racing season. The *Trout Air Fishing Experience* is a "You Catch'em, We Cook'em" facility, an unbeatably-fresh dining experience offered only at Running Aces. More than 650 dedicated employees have been serving up the best in food, cards, simulcast and entertainment since 2008. Open 24/7, Running Aces is located one exit past the 35E and 35W merge, just 20 minutes north of 694. For more information, please visit www.runaces.com.

About Acres for Life

Acres for Life is a non-profit that believes in the power of connection through experiential therapy and learning to bring hope, healing, and capability to our community. Acres for Life uses an experiential model called EAGALA. It addresses a variety of mental health needs including chemical dependency, depression, grief and loss, eating disorders, anxiety, communication issues, attention deficit disorders, autism spectrum disorder, emotional and behavioral issues, and relationship challenges. Acres for Life has two locations; Chisago and Forest Lake, Minn. For more information, please visit www.acresforlife.org