

Christopher Reeve And Family To Receive Human Spirit Award

MALVERN (Chester Co.) — Thorncroft Equestrian Center, one of the country's oldest and largest therapeutic riding centers, has se-

lected Christopher Reeve, his wife Dana, and son Will as the group winners of The 1997 Thorncroft Human Spirit Award.

Enviroscape Loan Program Available

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Educators, Educators, Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and 4-H Leaders — do you have soils, water quality, or pollution in your curriculum? Are these topics required for a badge or study unit?

If so, the Lancaster County Conservation District has a deal for you. As a free loan and service, educators, scout and 4-H leaders can borrow the enviroScape model for use in the classroom.

The enviroScape is a miniature plastic watershed with a housing development, farm, industry, sewage treatment plant, golf course, roads, and waterways which drain into a river or bay. It can be used to demonstrate point and non-point source pollution in a fun and visual way.

Cocoa powder sprinkled on the brown terrain around the housing development and farm represents soil. Colored powdered drink sprinkled on the green terrain of

the lawns, and golf course represents pesticides and fertilizers. Vegetable oil on the roads represents gas and oils. You simply supply a rainstorm with a spray bottle and it's easy to see the runoff and resulting pollution. Conclude the activity with a discussion and demonstration on ways to manage, minimize, or eliminate the run-off and pollution.

The Lancaster County Conservation District enviroScape Loan Program is made possible with a minigrant from the Chesapeake Bay Education Office Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Program. The lightweight model, complete with supplies, lesson plan, and sturdy plastic carrying case, will be delivered in person to your school or site, and is available for a two-week loan basis.

If you would like to reserve the enviroScape, call Chotty Sprengle, environmental education coordinator, (717) 299-5361.

Nominated by Thorncroft's riders and chosen by a blue ribbon selection board, The Human Spirit Award is Thorncroft's highest honor. It is presented to individuals or support families who, by their outstanding achievements and great strides, have inspired people with a diversity of abilities to rise above human conditions to learn and grow together.

"The Reeve family's heroic battle to rebuild their lives in the face of diversity has provided an inspiring lesson about the healing power of love," said Saunders Dixon, Thorncroft's founder and director. "We see similar results played out in the daily lives of our own riders and their families."

As group winners, Reeve and his family will receive specially-commissioned medallions as the guests of honor at Thorncroft's Annual Victory Gallop, April 5, at the Park Hyatt Philadelphia at the Bellevue. The medals will be presented personally by members of Thorncroft's Family of the Year.

This year, Thorncroft has recognized the family of Bruce and Karen Smith as the 1997 "Family Of The Year." With three children of their own, the Smiths have served as foster parents for up to 10 children, many who ride at Thorncroft. The Smiths were chosen for their dedication to children with special needs — sharing their own strength and family values with those around them. The Smith family includes Colin Smith, 21, Adam Smith, 18, and Corinne Smith, 16. The Smiths are currently caring for three foster children — Taiana, 7, Brittany, 5, and a newborn baby girl who came to them at Christmas.

Set in the pasture land of Chester County, Thorncroft brings adults and children with a variety of abilities together to ride, talk and share in an accepting environment where they can learn and grow together. Of the program's 350 riders, approximately half come to Thorncroft with special needs. More than 150 are disabled

from disease, a traumatic accident, Down's Syndrome or mental disability. Many are confined to wheelchairs, walkers, or emotional types of isolation. Riding unlocks those confines.

More than 200 men, women, and teen-agers volunteer to assist Thorncroft's staff of skilled equestrians. Thorncroft offers riding lessons as a unique form of therapy. Atop horses, students are distracted from typical therapy sessions, as they walk in the woods or across an open field on four powerful legs.

Riders come to Thorncroft from family homes, regional schools, support programs and health care facilities. Roughly 20 percent of the disabled riders are on full or partial scholarship. The difference is made up through donations. There is a two-year waiting list for Thorncroft's therapeutic program. Though the full price for a lesson is \$30 or \$120 per month, no one is ever turned away for lack of funds.

1997 Dairy Of Distinction Applications Sought

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Do you take pride in maintaining your dairy farm? Does your dairy farm project an attractive, wholesome image to consumers? If so, the Dairy of Distinction Program of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania will consider your farm for the program's annual recognition awards.

The Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program was first started in 1983 to recognize the hard work and dedication of the farmers who maintained attractive farms. The purpose of the program is to instill a greater sense of confidence in the wholesomeness of

dairy products, and increase their sales.

Farms that apply are judged on the roadside appearance of buildings, grounds, and surroundings, since this is what our dairy product consumers observe as they drive by. The cleanliness of the barnyard, feed areas, and manure management are other aspects of the farm operation taken into consideration. Roadside judging is conducted during the month of May. Former winners of past years are also rejudged to ensure they continue to meet standards of excellence.

To qualify for consideration, you must be actively dairy farming and shipping milk. Applications are available for New York and Pennsylvania from Stephanie Meyers, American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., 219 South West Street, Suite 100, Syracuse, NY 13202-1205, (315) 472-9143; or New Jersey from August Knispel, 641 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867, (908) 735-4989. All applications must be completed and returned by April 15, 1997. You may also contact your county agent for more information.

Department Issues

Fraud Alert

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — As the spring planting season approaches, consumers should be aware of misleading and exaggerated advertising claims about lawn seed, according to Agriculture Secretary Charles C. Brosius.

"Certain advertisements for mail order lawn seed promise sensational results and charge expensive prices," Brosius said. "The truth is, many of these products are common, cool season grasses which can be purchased at local stores for a fraction of the cost. Remember, if it appears too good to be true, it probably is."

Brosius urged consumers to

stay alert for products which may not live up to the advertisement's claims. He suggests consumers should check with a reputable local dealer before purchasing grass seed to be sure you are getting the most appropriate seed for your lawn. There are many improved varieties on the market, and some less expensive seeds may provide the same results as those being sold at higher prices.

The Agriculture Department is required to uphold the provisions of the Pennsylvania Seed Act regarding advertising claims of companies which do business within the Commonwealth.

NOFA-N.J. Hires

Certification Administrator

PENNINGTON, N.J. — The Northeastern Organic Farming Association - New Jersey chapter (NOFA-NJ) announced the newest addition to their program. Michele Bassler has joined the staff as certification administrator. Bassler has a master's degree in entomology from the University of Delaware, experience in integrated pest management through the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Fruit IPM program, and extensive experience in quality control for a large agribusiness firm.

She is available full time to answer calls and help growers with the certification process.

"This is a big step forward in the professionalization of our service to growers," said Emily Brown Rosen, technical director, who will continue to be available for grower questions and support. "The number of NOFA-NJ certi-

fied farms has tripled since 1994, and having Michele on board will enable us to do more for our growers."

NOFA-NJ certified 33 farms in New Jersey and 21 farms in Pennsylvania in 1996.

NOFA-NJ is now accepting applications for the 1997 Organic Certification program. Application packages are available at a cost of \$10 for new applicants (deductible from the certification fee) and includes the 1997 NOFA-NJ Organic Certification Standards. Growers should send \$10 to NOFA-NJ, 33 Titus Mill Road, Pennington, NJ 08534. The deadline for completed applications is Friday, March 7. The approval process takes six to nine months to complete and the certification term runs for one year from the date of approval.

Application

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

Attractive dairy farms give the consumer greater confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales which encourages public support for the dairy industry. The award gives recognition to the dairy farmer for maintaining a well-kept farmstead.

ELIGIBILITY

All Northeast dairy farms producing milk for sale are invited to make application for the award. Dairies receiving the 10 highest scores in each of the 21 districts will receive an 18" x 24" Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed in front of their farm.

APPLICATION

Your Name _____ Farm Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number _____

Cooperative or Handler (where you ship your milk) _____

(Your Handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality)

Location (driving directions for judging team) _____

County (where your farm is located) _____

I hereby apply to the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee to have my dairy scored in accordance with the rules of the program for the purpose of obtaining a Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed on my premise. (No producer will be charged for scoring or sign expense.)

_____ Date _____

Signature of Owner/Operator

Return application by April 15. New York dairies send to Carol Weddle, 957 Mitchell Street, P.O. Box 190, Ithaca, NY 14851; Pennsylvania dairies send to Stephanie Meyers, American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc., 219 South West Street, Suite 100, Syracuse, NY 13202-1205; New Jersey dairies send to August Knispel, 641 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867.