

Horse Matchmaking 101: Evaluation and Training



Garret Leonard

Director

Dumb Friends League
Harmony Equine Center

Franktown, Colorado

harmonyequinecenter.org



Harmony Equine Center

In 2012, The Dumb Friends League opened the Harmony Equine Center as a full-service intake and sheltering facility for abused and neglected equines who have been removed from owners' care by law enforcement authorities.

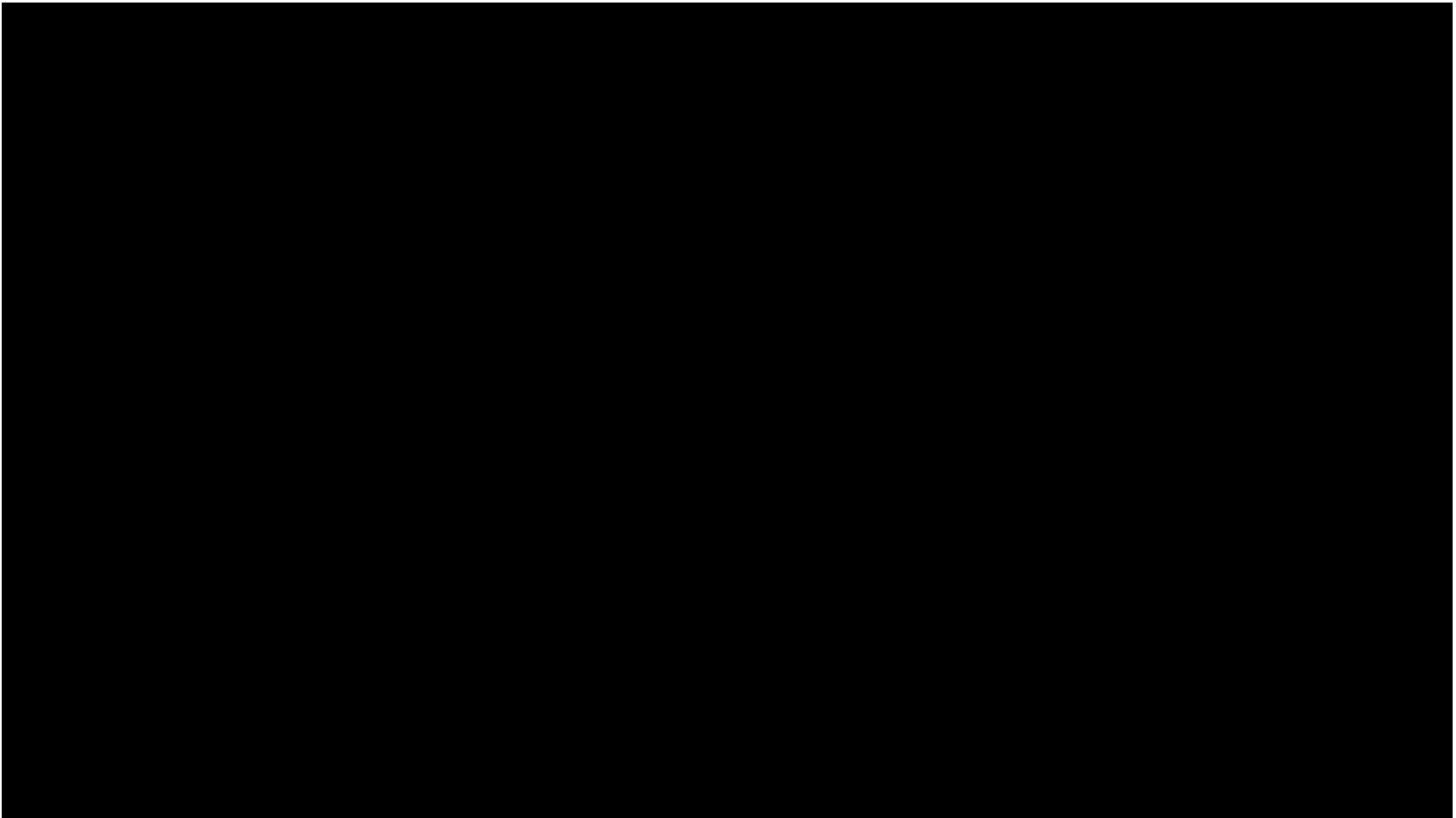


Accommodates impounds from a single animal up to large-scale impounds.

168-acre facility: includes 4 sizable, well-equipped barns for intake & impound, isolation, treatment & training and adoptions



Harmony Equine Center



Standards to Follow

- Establish guidelines that you follow and stick to them
- Take in horses who fulfill the mission and goals of your organization
- Definition and standards equine evaluation
- Compromised quality of life
- Taking in horses you can't place based on emotion
- Unadoptable horses due to behavior or medical conditions
- It's hard to say no!
- Looks can be deceiving

Unadoptable horses can hinder the number of horses you help

- Chronic health problems: lameness, contagious diseases
- Dangerous: aggression toward humans by intentionally or maliciously biting, kicking or striking
- Older, unhandled stallions or cryptorchid of any age
- No respect for human space
- Horses are dangerous enough
- Horses that do not respond to re-training
- Rescues are not sanctuaries

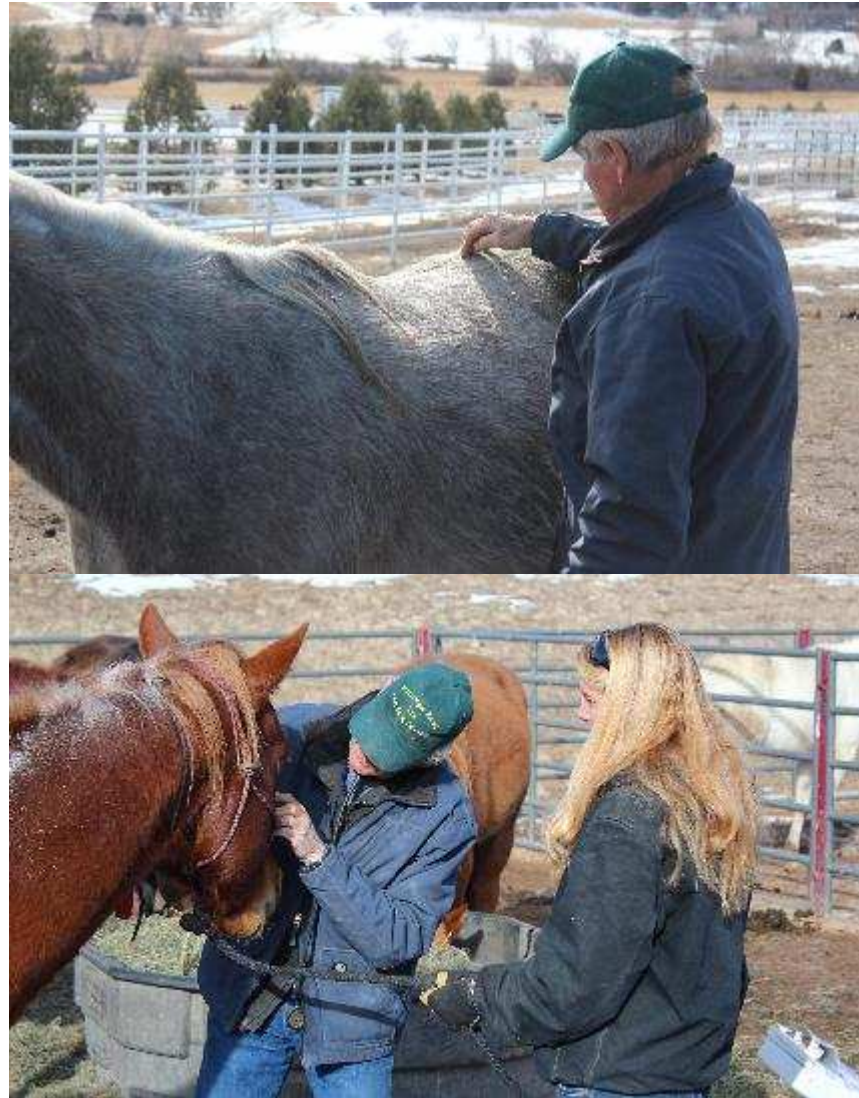
3 Phase Program Evaluation Process

- Medical plan
- Behavior assessment
- Placement opportunities



Record Animal Information

- Body Condition Score
- Age
- Weight
- Height
- Markings
- Color
- Equine type
- Lameness
- Farrier



Health Examination

- Temperature
- Heart rate
- Respiratory rate
- Lungs
- Sand
- Eyes
- Lymph nodes
- Teeth
- Lameness issues
- Establish feeding protocol and medical treatment



Medical Treatment Plan

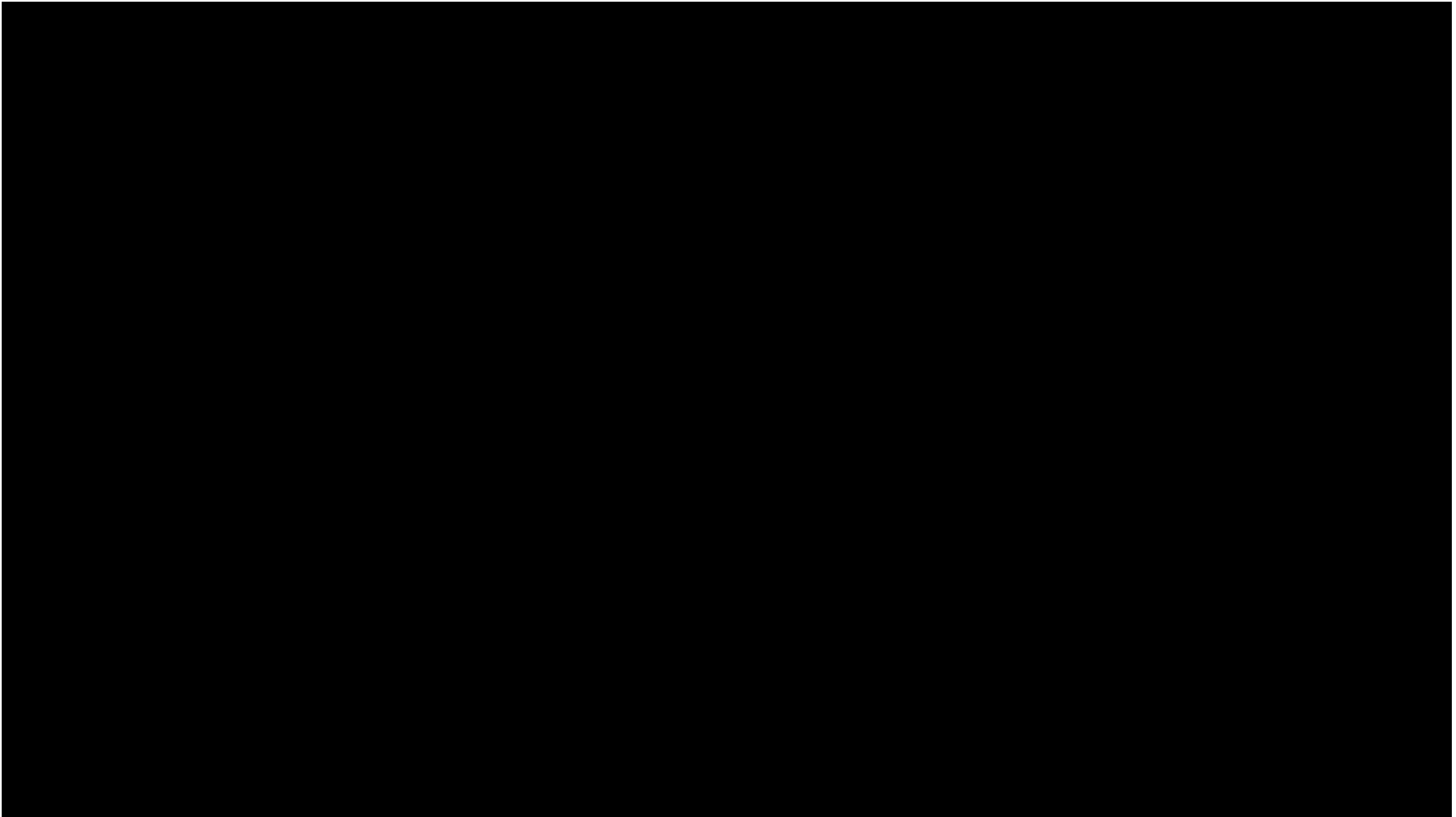
- Establish a veterinarian approved treatment plan
- Feeding protocol
- Sand clear
- Dental floats
- Vaccinations
- Lameness
- Farrier



Basic Behavior Evaluation



Step 1: Lameness



Things to Look for

- Stands tied
- Stands tied close to other horses
- Can be approached in turnout
- Calm when haltered
- Moves hindquarters away from pressure on hind
- Stands calmly while body is brushed
- Picks up all four feet and stands calmly while foot is held
- Stand calmly for blanket/fly sheet

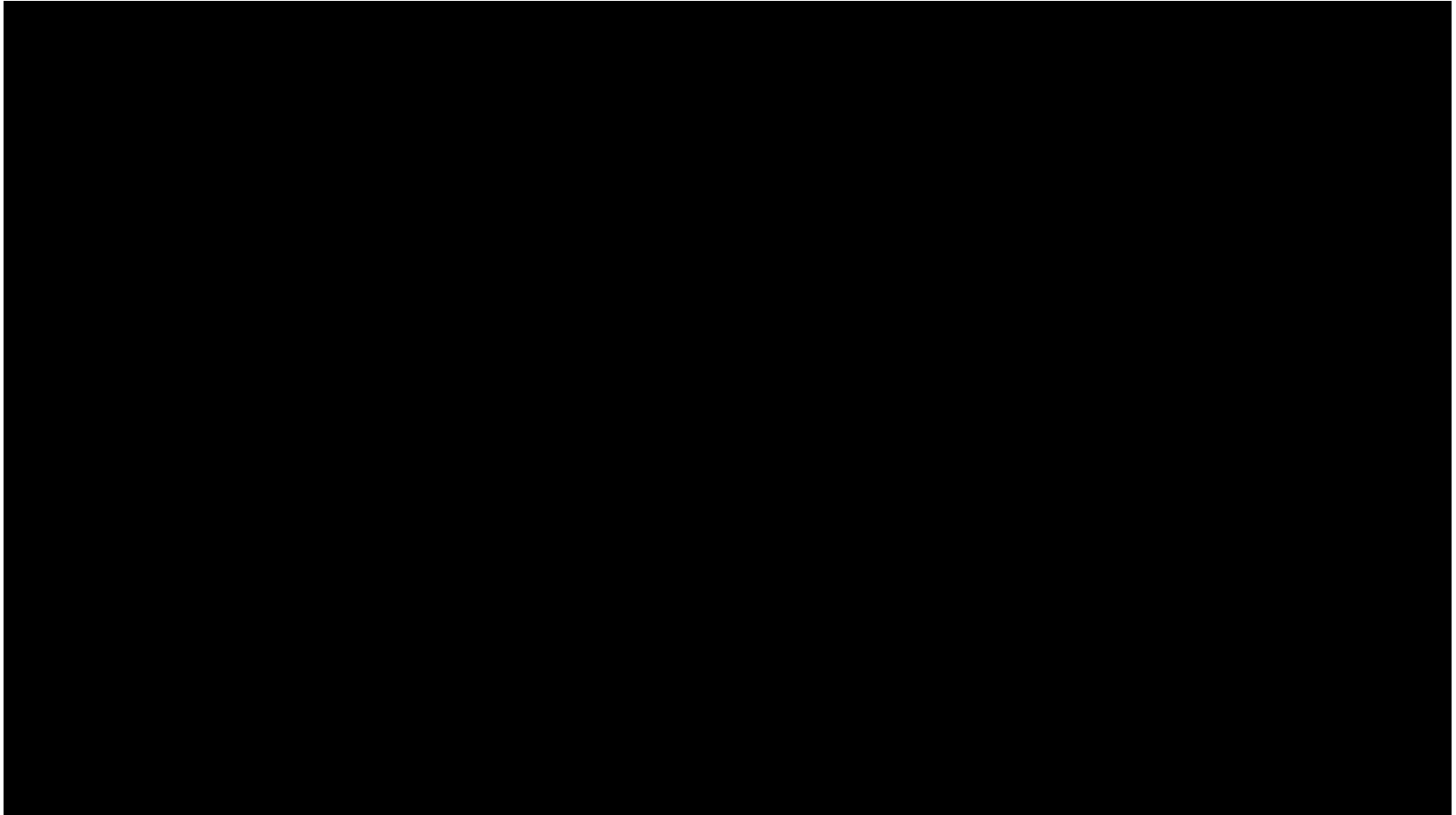


Things to Look for

- Stands calmly for fly spray
- Stands calmly while legs hosed with water
- Stands calmly for rectal temperature
- Stands calmly for oral administration of fluid from syringe or tube
- Leads, turns, stops and backs
- Led through a gate
- Calmly trailer loads and unloads



Step 2: Horse Temperament



Things to Look for

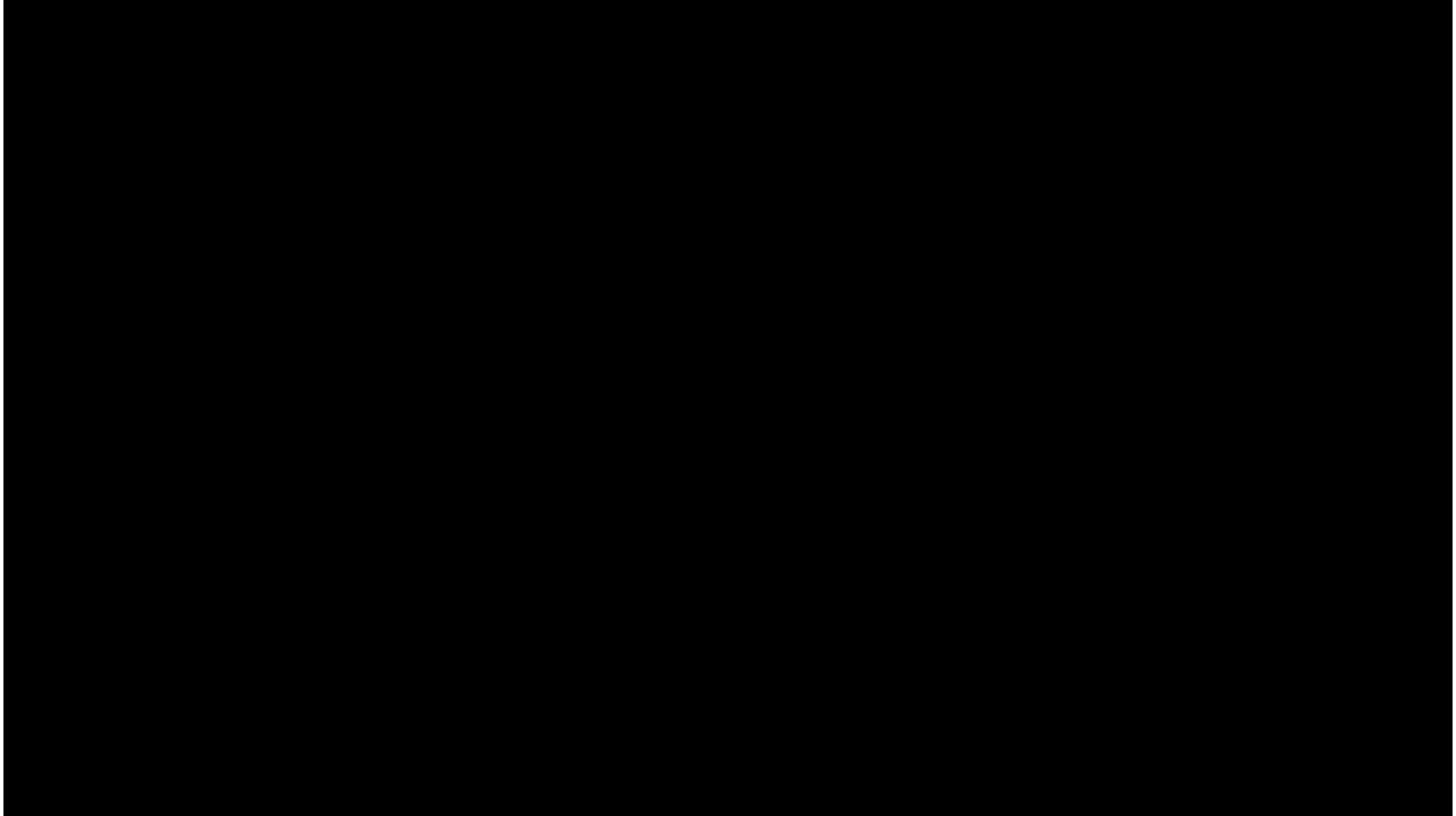
- Kicks
- Bites
- Hard to catch/handle
- Run's over handler
- Fearful
- Strikes
- Rears
- Threatening/Aggressive
- Fights with other horses



Training Techniques



Step 3 Moving with a Saddle



Training Techniques

- Natural horsemanship (Pressure and Release)
- Not every horse is a riding horse
- Find what a horse does best
- Pass the basic behavior test
- Not every horse can be trained
- Willing to learn
- 30 day increments
- Record progress
- We didn't create the problems – it's up to us to find solutions

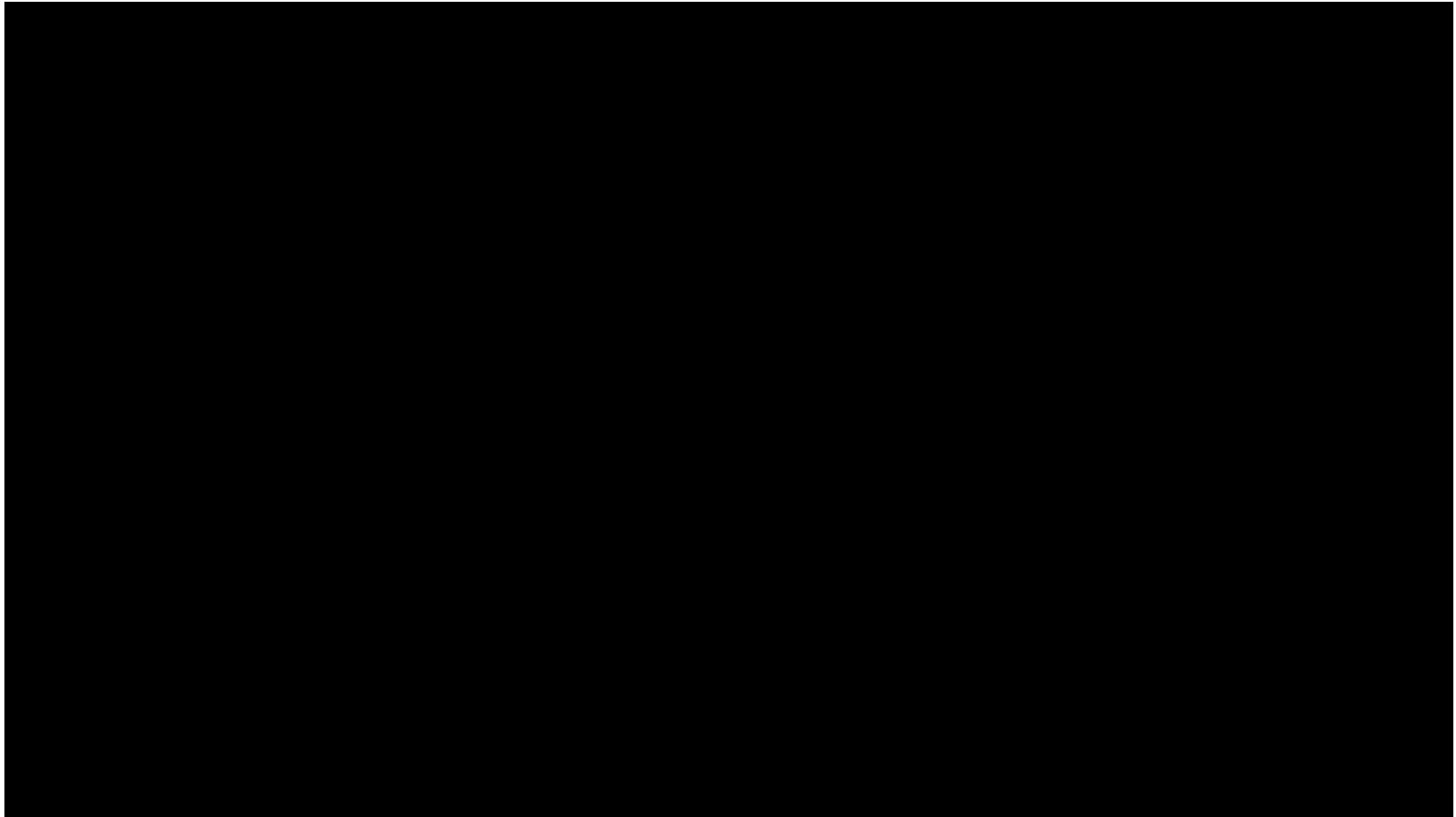


Training Techniques

- Professional trainers
 - Saddle horses
 - Ground work
 - Volunteers
 - Farrier
 - Veterinarians
 - Staff
-
- If you can't afford a trainer, at least invest in someone to help evaluate your horses



Step 4: Riding

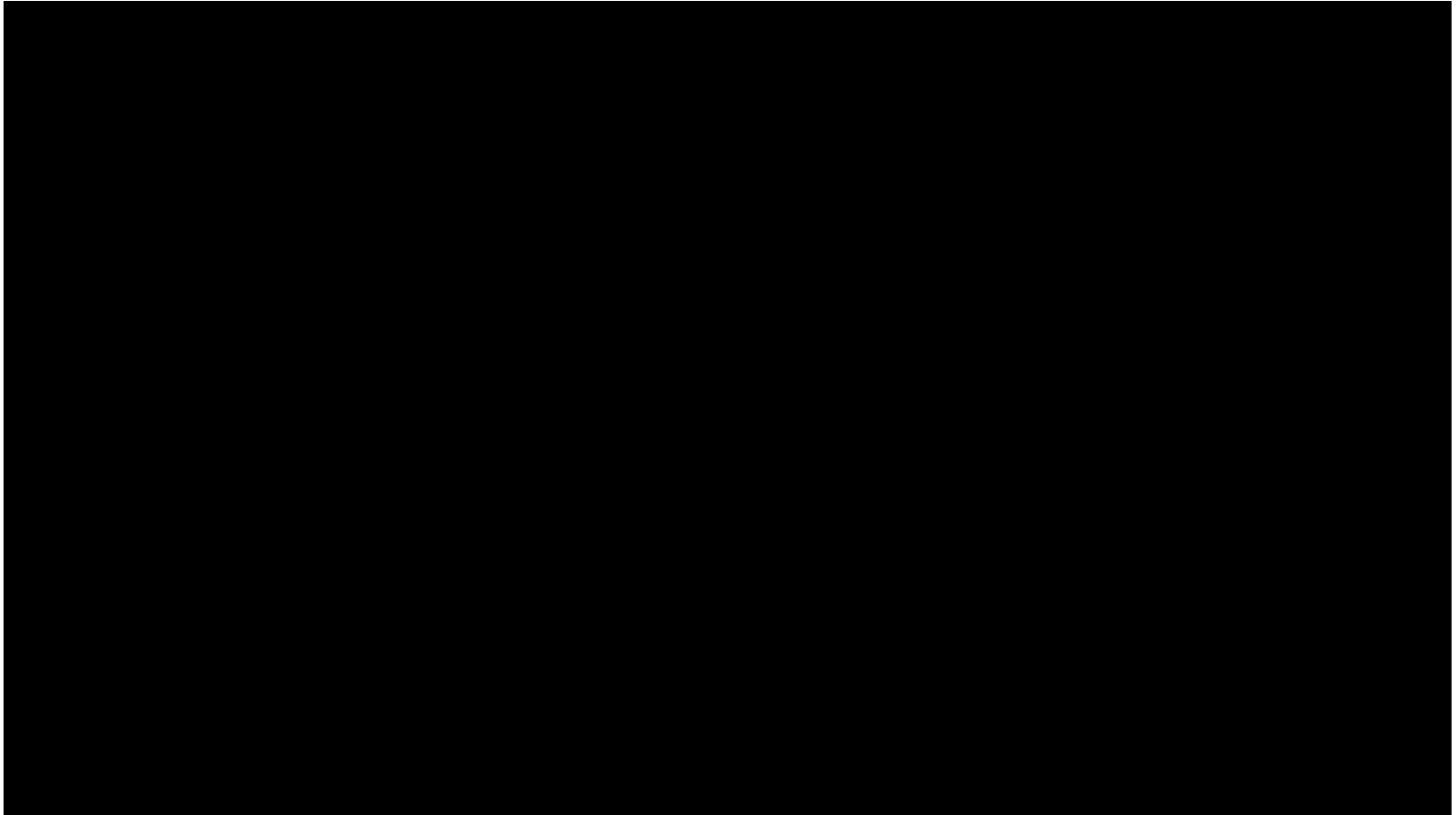


Training Techniques

- **Invest in the evaluation process.**
- We have evaluated hundreds of horses for rescues and found they are misinformed on what the horse is and what the horse is best suited for.
- People don't tell the truth when they surrender horses.



Right Fit for Your Program



Making the Match

- The horse has been evaluated, trained and passed your evaluations. If you don't know your horses, how can you make a match?
- Team has evaluated the horse and everyone agrees the horse is ready to be shown
- 3 lessons with adopters
- No home is perfect
- Don't make it so restrictive
- No one is good enough
- Take time with adopters



Not a Fit for this Program



Making the Match

- Develop a **Follow Up Program**
- Stay in communication for the first 60 days
- Be honest about the horses limitations and abilities
- Interview the adopter to really get to know what they are looking for and what they plan on doing
- Plans and lives change
- Don't over or under sell your horse
- Take the time and work with adopter



Questions to Ask Adopters

- What are your goals?
- What is the age range you are interest in?
- What is your size range?
- What is your experience level?
- Are you willing to work with a trainer?
- What is your perfect horse?
- How many days a week do you plan on riding or working with the horse?

How We Find Adopters

- Attend local events: Horse Expo, Colorado Horse Park, Douglas County Fairgrounds, Colorado State University
- Host continuing education classes for community
- Television interviews
- Equine comeback challenge
- Adoption Days Fri-Sun
- Harmony Horse Expo
- Community papers
- Radio advertising
- Print advertising
- Social media



Questions?



Garret Leonard
gleonard@ddf1.org
harmonyequinecenter.org