

# Hidden Haven Farm FAQ Page

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1. **What is the difference between a “rescue” and a “sanctuary”?** In general, a rescue operates to provide housing, medical care, evaluation, rehabilitation and placement of horses in need and will take in animals from any source. The horses are eventually placed up for adoption. We operate a sanctuary in which we select the horses that come to live here and provide for their care for the duration of their lives. Our residents are never placed up for adoption, sold, leased or transferred in any way. They remain on the farm until their final day.
2. **How many horses/ponies do you have at the farm?** We have 14 residents
3. **Where do your horses come from?** Many of our horses are from the Equine Rescue League in Lovettesville, VA. A few have come to us through private placement.
4. **How do you pay for so many horses?** Many of our horses help generate income through our lesson and show team programs. We also host several special events year round such as summer camps, group tours, on site pony parties, special horse care classes and programs we run with various youth organizations like MNCPP and the scouts. We get some of our funding through very generous donations made from companies and individuals. However, the majority of the money has historically been obtained through the “outside” jobs of our family. In essence, we have paid for the horses’ care out of our own pockets. By going nonprofit, we hope to be eligible for grant money and other special funding which will help offset the cost of operating the barn and to draw in more sponsors and donors as their contributions would then be tax deductible.
5. **How many stalls do you have?** We have 3 barns with a total of 13 stalls. Our resident miniature horse, Cocobear, does not have a stall. He is free to wander where he likes in the main barn.
6. **How many acres do you have?** The equine facility sits on approximately 3 acres and the house sits on approximately 2 acres making the total farm almost 5 acres.
7. **Don’t you need 1.5 acres per horse?** No, PG Co doesn’t have an “acreage” requirement. Also, the 1.5 acres per horse is a rule of thumb used to determine how much land you need per animal if you are using grazing as their main nutrition source.
8. **Why don’t you have pastures for your horses?** The vast majority of our horses cannot tolerate large amounts of grass. They all have either medical conditions or genetic predisposition to serious illnesses that can be caused by eating too much grass. Because we have to monitor their diets, we keep them on dry lots. Our horses get limited access to grass and hand grazing.
9. **What is a dry lot?** A dry lot is a paddock without grass. Because we have to be vigilant in terms of our horses’ diets (and medications), we keep them in paddocks without direct access to grass. This way, we can distribute hay to them and be sure of what they are eating and that each horse receives his or her required amount of roughage.
10. **Why are the horses in groups?** The groups are called “herds” and our herds are determined by the individual personalities of our horses. There are two main turn out groups. We separate the larger group into 2 smaller ones to keep peace and order and maintain safety for our residents.

11. **How often do you feed them?** The horses are fed grain meals and given any regular medications/supplements twice a day. They also receive hay 2 to 3 times per day.
12. **How are you licensed/regulated?** Each year we are inspected by both PG CO Animal Control for our Stabling License and the Maryland Horse Industry Board for our Instructional/Rescue License. Our instructor maintains certification with two different instructor organizations and we operate the farm under the accepted guidelines for rescue/retirement facilities as outlined by the American Association of Equine Practitioners.
13. **Where do you ride?** We work horses in the round pen and the grass ring. Horses that are trained and safe enough also go on trail rides on the WB&A which we have direct access to.
14. **How many horses are not able to be ridden?** We currently have 4 permanently retired residents. They are retired due to age and particular illnesses that while may be treatable, still do not make them healthy enough to be ridden.
15. **How old is your oldest horse?** Cocobear is approximately 38 years old!
16. **How old is your youngest horse?** Miles just turned 5 and is the youngest horse we have.
17. **What is the average life expectancy of a horse?** Ponies and smaller horses usually live well into their 30s and sometimes 40s. Larger breeds tend to live in to their 20s and sometimes 30s with appropriate care.
18. **Why do you have so many horses with health problems?** We want to show people that with a little bit of planning, effort and care, special needs horses with chronic medical conditions can be appropriately maintained and be happy, productive companions and friends.
19. **How long have you been doing this?** Hidden Haven was founded in 1991, moved to Bowie in 2001 and expanded into our newest role as a Sanctuary & Education Center in 2007. Our family has a combined total of over 30 years in the horse industry!
20. **Can people rent your horses?** NO... We give riding lessons and provide many hands on learning opportunities to the community. All of the activities that our horses participate in are highly regulated by our staff and always supervised to ensure the health and happiness of our residents.
21. **Can people visit the horses?** Absolutely. We don't mind visitors, but we ask that you call and make an appointment to come visit. Barn and group tours are by appointment only.
22. **Can you earn community service hours here?** It depends on the school/organization requiring the hours. We have had many volunteers over the years complete service hours with us from several county and local schools as well as home school organizations.
23. **How old do you have to be in order to start lessons?** Generally, between ages 6-8, most kids are ready to accept and process regular instruction and will have the strength to be able to ride. However, we start kids in fun, yet structured "pony play dates" as young as 3.
24. **How old do you have to be to volunteer?** Children as young as 8 can volunteer as long as a parent remains on the property to directly assist and supervise the child. Children ages 11 and up can volunteer without parent supervision. We gladly accept adult volunteers as well!
25. **Do you have any paid staff?** NO! Right now, ALL of our staff members are volunteers. 100% of the money generated by our programs and earned through donations goes directly to the horses and providing for their continued care.

