



PRESS RELEASE

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Alaqua Animal Refuge to host Bark Park community meeting

Editor's note: Related high-res photos can be downloaded from:
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FREEPORT, Fla., (June 1, 2011) – Alaqua Animal Refuge officials were notified by the office of Florida State Attorney William “Bill” Edins today that the no-kill animal shelter and adoption center has been granted ownership of Champ, a miniature horse that remains at the center of a Walton County animal welfare case.

Champ was brought to the refuge, which is located in Freeport, on Aug. 20, 2010 by Walton County Animal Control. The horse, which is approximately 2 years old, was emaciated and unable to stand. Blood tests revealed that his near-death state was a direct result of malnutrition and starvation. During the past nine months, he has received specialized care, gained more than 200 pounds and is in excellent physical condition.

“At Alaqua Animal Refuge, it is our mission to save the lives of animals, and we have done so thousands of times since we opened in 2007; however, the role we played in Champ’s rescue has been among the most rewarding of experiences,” said Laurie Hood, founder and president of Alaqua Animal Refuge. “To learn that this little horse, who has become a symbol for the cause of humane treatment toward animals, will remain in our care, is a great relief and joy for the many volunteers, supporters and staff members who have watched his story of hope unfold.”

“I would like to thank State Attorney Bill Edins, Assistant State Attorney Adrienne Emerson, Walton County Chief Assistant State Attorney Greg Anchors, Walton County Sheriff Michael Adkinson, and all those involved in rescuing Champ. Together, we have given a voice to so many animals that have suffered, and we have taken steps that could save countless others in the future.”

About Alaqua Animal Refuge: Alaqua Animal Refuge, an independent, nonprofit organization located on Florida’s Emerald Coast, advocates the general welfare and humane treatment of animals by providing shelter, prevention of pet overpopulation and adoption services. Alaqua, located on 10 acres in the town of Freeport, was formed by Walton County, Fla.-resident Laurie Hood in 2007 when she discovered that countless animals were being euthanized due to a lack of a no-kill shelter/adoption organization in the area. Since that time, Alaqua Animal Refuge has helped find homes for more than 7,000 animals. Currently, up to 100 animals are adopted per month from this unique rescue facility, which serves as a true refuge for more than 250 animals at any given time.