

Passionate About Horse Welfare

Jessica Paquette is an avid horsewoman and has held many jobs in the equine industry. She is the only full-time, year-round female track announcer in the United States. She strongly supports the mission of Grayson-Jockey Club Research Foundation.



Every horse person knows the sinking feeling you get when you see your trainer or barn manager's name pop up on your phone at an odd hour. I have taken to answering the phone with "Is everything okay?" instead of "hello" in these instances. They are very rarely calling with anything good.

I recently got one of those phone calls. My 22-year-old Thoroughbred, fresh off of a three month all expense included stay at rehab facility with a persistent ophthalmology issue, was showing some troubling signs of a colic. As we loaded him on to the van to go to the clinic, I was concerned **I was about to have some serious decisions to make.**

Now, thanks largely to the breakthroughs and research by our friends at Grayson, there are a lot of happy endings for our horses. But, at my Trippi's advanced age coupled with a recovering immune system, there are never any guarantees when you send your horse to the clinic that you are going to get to take them home. The harsh reality of that emphasized something that has long been important to be as a horse owner – having a plan.

We pour everything we have into our horses – our time, finances, our aspirations and dreams. I have loved What a Trippi for 19 years now and I have been his guardian for 16 of those years. We have overcome a battle with laminitis (him) and a spinal injury (me) together and he is my oldest and dearest friend. Everyone who knows me, knows him. Knowing all of this, I have long had a plan in place for what measures I would and would not take if we found ourselves deep in the weeds.



It is very easy in the emotion of a moment and coming from nothing but a good place to want to take every extreme measure science has made possible to buy extra time. It's not always the right path. I am grateful that in the moment that we found ourselves in, I was secure and confident in the decision I had made long before this in preparation for this potential eventuality. There was no second guessing, there was no panic – there was just a focus to do right by my partner in the situation we were in.

These are hard conversations to have with your trainer, veterinarian and barn manager but they are important ones. It is critically important to go into a situation armed with a team in place and everyone on the same page. What measures I would pursue for one of my horses are not necessarily even the same as what I would do for another and it is not a matter of loving one more or less, they are just all different animals that dictate different paths of care.

We got very fortunate in this instance. A couple of days later, I got to drive to New Bolton and pick up Trippi and take my old friend home, happy and on the road back to healthy. **Many of the advances that helped diagnose, support and treat his issues were directly through research that was funded by Grayson.**

Thanks to the research and advances made by Grayson, our horses are able to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives. **The work that they do gives us more options as guardians of these incredible animals and allows us to make educated, humane choices with their best interests at heart.**

