



2020 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Art, Essay, & Multimedia Contest

Dr. King stood up for the issues he believed were true. His impact was and still is significant to the creation and evolution of equal rights. What Dr. King did may seem undoable, but this is far from the truth. One of the largest injustices in our modern world is that of animal abuse, more specifically racing equines. Every day, hundreds of equine injustices occur out of the public eye. Many Americans aren't aware of the impact they could have on equines' lives, even if you have no ties to the racing industry. I believe that with the help of major organizations, we can put an end to the cruel industry. Dr. King created a world in which humans could live happily and easily with each other, and now's the time to do the same with animals.

One of the most common misperceptions about the racing industry is the belief that whipping horses repeatedly makes the horse gallop harder. A recent PETA study, however, proves to whip or to crop horses serves as a punishment for galloping, rather than a motive. The cruel idea of whipping horses has been around for such a long time, so it may be challenging to convince the general public whipping and cropping is an equine injustice. In the meantime, however, there is something we can do. We can help out animal and equine activists by signing petitions and voting against the use of crops and whips in professional racing.

Although the topic of unnecessary whipping is extremely severe, there may be an even worse idea, which is the use of illegal drugs. Against our knowledge, drugs like Lasix, which is intended only to prevent bleeding on the lungs, Thyroxine, which is a prescription drug created to cure equines with hypothyroidism, and even Liquid Nitrogen which burns the horses' legs so the horses would feel pressured to gallop faster than they are physically capable of, are used in racing almost daily. These drugs are indeed illegal, but the trainers and jockeys injecting the equines obviously do not care.

In addition to illegal drug use and unnecessary whipping, another reason why horse racing should be eliminated is the injuries and fatal breakdowns that are associated with racing. An average of 24 equines die on racetracks every week, concluding that an average of 8,760 pass away each year. A leading cause of the catastrophic number is the use of illegal drugs, which kills about 5,500 horses a year. In a commentary on the racing industry, a reporter for the Philadelphia Daily News remarked, "It is not something they talk about much in their advertising, but horses die in this sport all the time – every day, every single day." The other leading factor of the insane amount of death is the horse's bone structure. Horses' ankles are the size of human ankles but are supporting over 1,000 pounds of body weight, plus a jockey. Imagine, the equivalent of a human with ankles the size of a monkey's being forced to sprint down a dirt road carrying a six-month-old baby on their backs. The only way we can prevent the injustice from happening is to eliminate drug use, eliminate whipping, and educate the public about how to protest against horse abuse.

The first thing we need to do to stop this brutal misrepresentation of the equine world is to speak out against the people who give it a bad name. As a twelve-year-old, making a significant difference in the large equine world is very challenging. Every day, I try to get the truth about horse racing out to as many people as I know, even if the individual has no ties to the equine world. The more people that know, the larger impact we can make. When enough people learn about the horrific story that we call horse racing, it is expected we will stop attending events at all.

In addition to speaking out, I believe it is important to make your voice heard, despite if they're simply people you know. In my free time this summer, I did some research about horse racing. After I had gathered enough about the topic to compose a small speech, I sent a few emails out to my friends who live near and attend horse races. To my shock, one of them responded and said she had never known about the sad life that most racehorses live. Once she has digested all the information, my hope is she will have a new view on the sport of horse racing and will tell others about the horrors of the racing industry. Although it may only be one person, that one person could make a prominent difference in the way the world views horse racing.

Because the issue is masked and hidden so well, very few people know about the effects it has on racehorses. Although it may seem like the issue is unsolvable, but there are many ways we can help. For example, if you are given a chance to sign any petitions to or to vote against racing, by all means take it. Your one signature or your one vote will make a difference. Even if it may not seem like a lot, sometimes a vote is the best thing you could give. Another extremely necessary thing we must do is to educate the public. The reason that this injustice has continued on for so long is the fact that people simply don't know. If more people are aware of what's going on, we could resolve the issue. We must be like what Dr. King once said, "A man dies when he refuses to stand up for that which is right. A man dies when he refuses to stand up for justice. A man dies when he refuses to take a stand for that which is true." Although it may be hard, we must give racehorses a voice. Every day, equines around the world are fatally breaking down due to all the stress they've been put through. Hopefully, we can change this injustice and make the world a better place for all humans and animals.

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