

## **‘ATTA’ BOY BARBARO!**

There’s no shortage of volunteers willing to hand pick grass for Barbaro, and the get well cards, e-mails, and treats keep pouring into the New Bolton Center in Pennsylvania, where Barbaro is being cared for.

Just recently, Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, sent a care package to Babraro. It contained twelve 6’ x 4’ cards with the signatures of thousands of fans, a 132<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Derby blanket with hundreds of Churchill Downs employee signatures, a Derby scrap book, a feed tub filled with horse toys and treats for Barbaro and other equine patients. That’s not all. An anonymous donor created a fund in Barbaro’s name, with a very large and undisclosed sum of money. This fund graciously accepts all donations from anyone who wants to participate. The money “will go directly to improving equipment and services of the New Bolton Center”, and it will be used “for treating animals like Barbaro, and countless others, in their times of need.”

Thousands of e-mails from all over the world contain encouraging words and are overflowing with genuine love and caring. Things like “...You are so very much loved...everyone is pulling for you...my thoughts and prayers are with you...you will always be in our hearts! I’ve cried a lot of tears for you, and I love you with all my heart...You are surrounded by love, so use that to strengthen you and guide you on your road to recovery...Be a good boy Barbaro. Junior, Onyx, Buck, Chris, Misty, Arizona, Dalota, and Teddy wish you the very best...I love you buddy! Keep fighting like you always do. And I’ll keep praying for you...We’re praying for you. Your recovery and courage and good nature have put a smile back in our hearts...We will be holding our breath each step of the way until you leave the hospital and walk into the paddock...Barbaro, hang in there. You are a fighter like another horse in my family – SEABISCUIT—You see, my grand-uncle was “Silent” Tom Smith and he would be very proud of you...Get well soon champ. This is your greatest test by far – be strong. All of Australia is behind you...Best wishes from Turkey. Get well soon...Here is the best to you – all the way from Switzerland...You are a brave soul and my heart and love is with you every day!! Get well real soon!...You have been the most talented horse I have ever seen. You brought out tears from millions of people. I wish from my heart that you can have a big family and that we can enjoy your legacy...

It has been three weeks since Barbaro sustained a devastating injury to his right hind leg, and it seems that he has no intention at all of giving up. He is very interested in life. He enjoys his visitors, and is described as a bright-eyed, intellectually engaged, curious fellow. He likes the girls, and knickers at them. Barbaro is being an excellent patient, and is doing much better than expected. He continues his daily regimen of eating like a king, and allowing check-ups, physical therapy, and quality interaction. He remains in his 12’ x 12’ stall with a 2’ x 2’ window.

Barbaro’s jockey Edgar Prado visited him on May 30<sup>th</sup>, and although still heartbroken, he found Barbaro’s progress comforting, and encouraging. Prado said that he wanted Barbaro to know that he still loved him, and his visit was beneficial to both of them.

Barbaro's exercise rider was also feeling better after his visit to the ICU at the New Bolton Center. Just seeing how bright his expression is and how well he is doing has given those who are so close to this horse, the much needed hope, to help heal their own hearts.

Owners Roy and Gretchen Jackson, and Trainer Michael Matz, visit Barbaro every day. Barbaro also gets groomed from head to tail at least once a day, and people scratch him, and spend time with him, to keep him from getting bored.

In addition to his positive mental health, Barbaro is able to put full weight on the injured right leg, and rest the left leg. This means that crucial parts of the lower limbs are getting the oxygenated blood supply that they need during use and rest. This is a very good indication that Barbaro is as comfortable as he can be.

Of course this sounds easier than it really is. In order to equalize the additional length that the cast has added to Barbaro's right hind leg (the cast goes all the way around his hoof), a very specialized type of glue on shoe has been fitted to his left hind foot. This special shoe supports the left hind foot, and minimizes the weakening and possible infection of the sole of that foot. Barbaro's limbs are not swelling up, and his blood work is coming back 'normal', telling everyone that there aren't any signs of infection at this point.

Dr. Dean Richardson, chief Veterinary surgeon at the New Bolton Center, says that he will make a decision every day, about when to change the cast. This will require more anesthesia, which is always such a scary thing. Some horsepeople remember the greatest racing filly of them all, "Ruffian". She sustained a severe break to her right front leg during a match race against Foolish Pleasure, in 1975. She underwent surgery, and during the phase of fogginess, before awareness, she opted for "flight", and thrashed about wildly. She not only seriously reinjured the original break, but also fractured her other front leg. She had to be euthanized.

The recovery pool at the New Bolton Center is in the C. Mahlon Kline building. It was built in 1975 through the generosity of C. Mahlon Kline, and the C. Mahlon Kline Foundation. This pool allows the horses to gallop and thrash in during this hazy consciousness, until fully awake. They are then lifted to solid ground.

Dr. Richardson remains very cautious, and upgraded Barbaro's chances from 50/50 to 51/49 in favor of the champion. Although this was said in a light way, which drew chuckles from those attending a Press Conference May 30<sup>th</sup>, Richardson is still trying to convey the very real fact, that we are a long way away from seeing Barbaro enjoying summer pastures.

Technology alone wouldn't save Barbaro. Care alone wouldn't save Barbaro.

The kind thoughts, the prayers, the marvels of modern science, the talent of skilled surgeons and care givers, the dedication, the determination and courage, are *all* combined in the formula for success so far in saving Barbaro... and it really does amount to something miraculous.

Read more of the letters to Barbaro at:

<http://www.thoroughbredtimes.com/todaysnews/newsview.asp?recno=64024&subsec=1>

Read the most recent updates about Barbaro at:

<http://www.vet.upenn.edu/newsandevents/news/Barbaro.htm>

Send Barbaro your good wishes:

<http://www.vet.upenn.edu/barbaro/>

Find out more about the new "Barbaro Fund":

[http://www.vet.upenn.edu/giving/giving\\_ways.html](http://www.vet.upenn.edu/giving/giving_ways.html)

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Adrienne owns and trains horses in Wilton Maine. She has produced a website for horse lovers, which features valuable information about the horse, and her nationally recognized artwork at [www.wingspanartsintl.com](http://www.wingspanartsintl.com)

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