

HRC FOUNDATION – WHY DOES IT EXIST?

In 1991/1992 it became apparent that the costs for conducting business within HRC, as proposed by the Executive Board, would exhaust the HRC treasury. The HRC Executive Board was working diligently with UKC to absorb several aspects of the organization, primarily the Field Reps. and their related expenses and also consideration of new programs, such as the Judges/Handlers Seminar. UKC had controlled most of the HRC operations and it was time for HRC to take control of its future.

The need for a significant influx of money would be necessary to even begin the process and as we grew those financial costs would also grow. Because of the tax code that HRC was operating under, we were restricted from accepting contributions that would exceed 30% of our total income and we were dangerously close to that percentage. We had two choices. We could request a change in our tax status, which would allow HRC, Inc. to solicit higher contribution percentages, but that would then restrict the percentage of our income that could be derived from our members and their dues, etc. The other alternative was to establish an entirely different corporation, under a different tax code, and solicit contributions without risking any tax violations. After months of consultation with a tax attorney, it was decided that we should pursue the new corporation alternative and establish the HRC Foundation. It should be noted that the Foundation receives its income only from corporate donations and the Memorial Fund. (There are no HRC funds, member hunt fees, or membership fees used.)

Of course there were many considerations in the formation of a foundation, but one clear purpose of the foundation would be education, acceptable under the tax codes and our new seminar program would fit right in. We knew we needed contributions to underwrite such a program and this would give us the opportunity to solicit funds for this and other purposes without jeopardizing HRC, Inc. The process began and finally in 1994, The Hunting Retriever Club Foundation, Inc. received the appropriate tax exemption codes.

Since the inception of the Foundation, education has been the primary focus. The initial seminars were conducted by two people, Tim Gibson and Brian Miller who were later assisted by Bill Rath and Paul Ramponi. These guys spent endless hours (months) formulating and continually improving the seminar booklet and its presentation. They traveled throughout the country conducting Judges /Handlers Seminars. Gradually, the Field Reps., who had been placed under the jurisdiction of HRC, were trained to do the presentations. As HRC has grown, the costs of this seminar have continued to increase, with nearly 60% of the Foundation expenses attributed to the seminar program. That percentage will probably continue to rise because the Foundation has underwritten the purchase of new power-point programs for the seminar presentations. This was a very expensive undertaking but the benefits far exceed the costs.

Because of the generosity of many companies, members and others, the Foundation has had the financial opportunity to expand its horizons beyond underwriting the seminar program. Staying focused on the primary guidelines of the Foundation, in 1998 the Foundation Executive Board appropriated \$4,000 to be donated as scholarships to HRC members' children, which could assist in off-setting some of the extremely high costs of a college education. Some might say, "If you can afford to play this retrieving game, then you can afford to put your own kids through school", but of course, those of us who have paid for that college education know that the cost of playing the game with these dogs is no where close to the cost of a college education (or 2, or 3, or 4). There is no guarantee that these funds will always be available for this program, but the Foundation Board will certainly keep it prioritized.

In addition to the seminar program and the scholarship program, The Foundation Board has also approved contributions for canine research programs. We all benefit from these programs and the generous contributions made to the Foundation have allowed us to show some support to those who have helped us all. Like the scholarship program, this is on a year-to-year basis, but we will try to continue this valuable program.

The Foundation has exceeded the expectations of all of us who were involved with its formation. The overwhelming support of the Foundation by HRC members, corporate sponsors, and others has allowed the Foundation to underwrite the Judges/Handlers Seminar which we all have available in our regions at no cost to the participants. That same generosity has allowed the Foundation to expand its educational program into the Scholarship program and the Research program. Thank you all for your help in making the HRC Foundation a success and a force in the education of all HRC members.