



Changing the conversation about horse racing  
to protect its future.

# CASE FOR SUPPORT

## DIRECTORS

Price Bell / Dr Jeff Berk / Christina Blacker / Roderick Wachman

America's horse racing industry is in perception crisis.

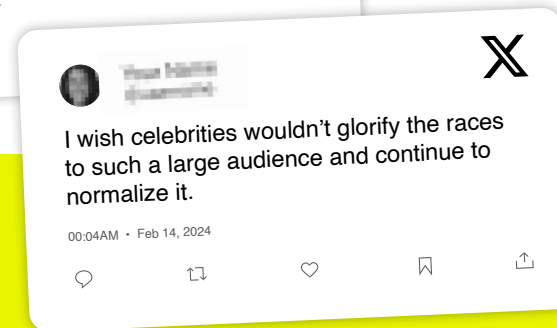
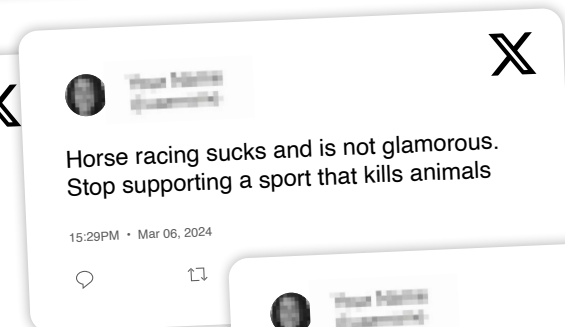
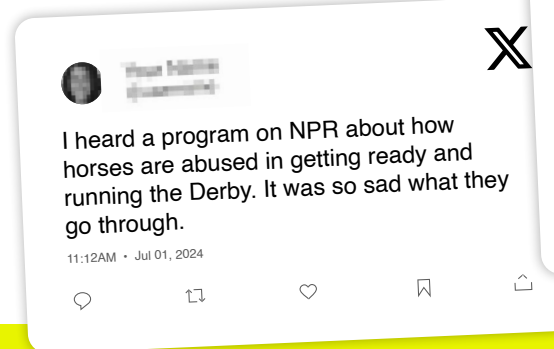
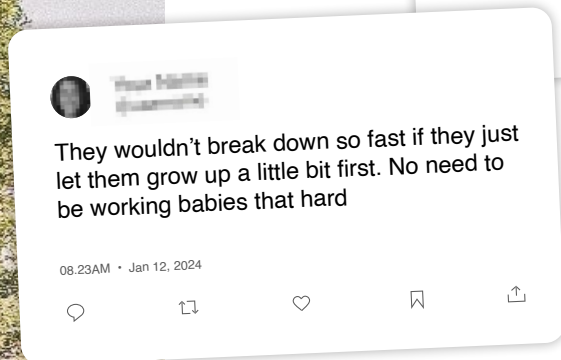
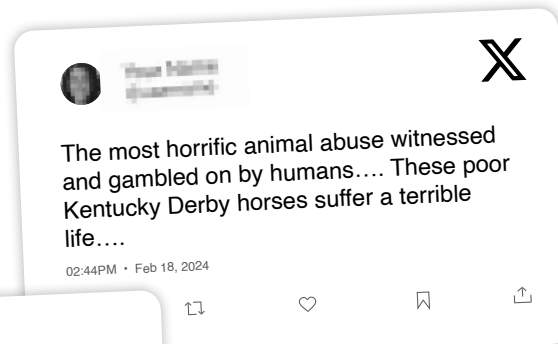
As the number of Americans who regard horse racing negatively increases, its future is under threat.

That's why Light Up Racing was born.

# LIGHT UP RACING

Changing the conversation about horse racing to protect its future.





# THE PROBLEM

Nearly 300 industry stakeholders participated in Light Up Racing's Spring 2024 community survey. Results revealed a majority of respondents feel:

- The public perception of horse racing is becoming increasingly negative.
- The perception issues fuel a sense of uncertainty for the industry's future.
- Social media is a core contributor to the public's poor perception.
- Stakeholders want to be involved in the solution, and be part of creating a unified voice for the industry.



# OBJECTIVE

Empower participants with the knowledge and confidence to engage in meaningful conversations with the concerned public and external media, and provide the information needed to make informed decisions that prioritize equine safety.

By fostering industry unity, we will actively work towards driving positive change and pushing for best practice adoption.

# WHAT WE DO



## Educate

We educate the industry and the public on evidence-based practices and positive initiatives designed to ensure the welfare of our horses. By addressing misinformation and answering common concerns with accurate information supported by scientific papers in a palatable format, we can dismantle the wall of secrecy that separates the horse racing industry and the public.



## Empower

By shifting power from top-down to bottom-up, we empower our industry community to become ambassadors who possess the information, skills, and confidence to proudly represent our industry. Unity within our community holds significant power; standing together, we can bring about meaningful change and drive its evolution.



## Champion for transparency

With curiosity and a commitment to industry stewardship, we identify perception and welfare issues that require prioritized illumination and deeper understanding. This endeavor requires us to examine our industry with a critical eye, to acknowledge what is true, however unpalatable it may be, and bravely work to change what cannot be defended.



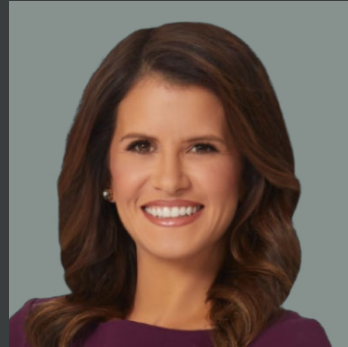
## Convene

We hold space for needed multi-stakeholder conversations that will foster systematic changes and growth, ensuring full accountability across everyone involved in the industry. When decisions are made with the welfare of the horse as the guiding value, the principles of humanity and the wider industry at large are also best served.

# THE TEAM



Price Bell



Christina Blacker



Roderick Wachman

## ◀ DIRECTORS ▼

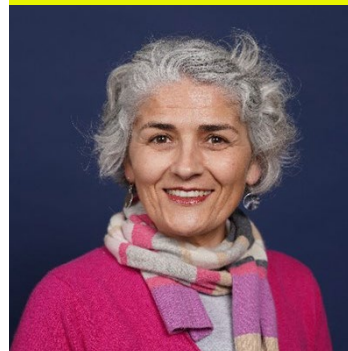


Dr Jeff Berk

## ▲ ◀ RESEARCH TEAM



Vicky Leonard



Emma Adam



Dr Wayne McIlraith

## STRATEGY ▶

Kick Collective, the marketing agency behind Australian-based initiative Kick Up For Racing, is delivering the marketing and communications.

“

Silence breeds suspicion. If an industry is not talking, people assume it has something to hide.

Communication creates confidence. When we shine a light on progress, transparently, we invite the world to stand by us.

Vicky Leonard

Managing Director, Kick Collective  
LUR's partner and strategy lead.

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# PHASE 1

WHAT WE SAID WE WERE GOING TO DO

**AND WHAT WE DID.**

# WHAT WE DO EDUCATE

## LUR Research Hub

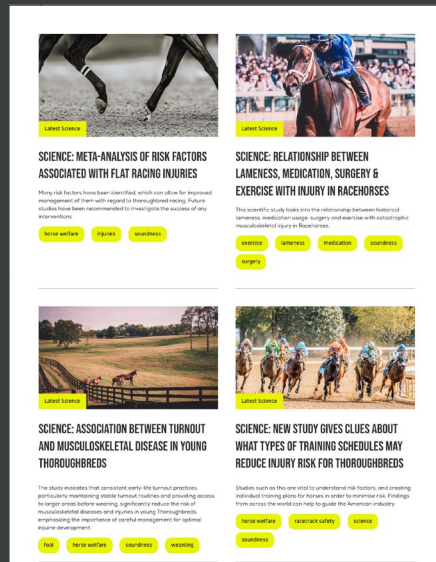
A digital resource dedicated to providing peer-reviewed resources and a balanced perspective on complex or misunderstood topics in the realm of horse racing to counter misconceptions.



**OVER  
2000  
visitors**  
within the  
first 30 days

**TOP PAGES  
VISITED**

- Is 2YO Racing Harmful?
- What happens to horses when they retire?
- How many horses die racing?



## LUR Webinar Pilot



We presented applied content on how the audience could publicly respond to misinformation regarding the horse racing industry featuring Dr Jeff Berk, Dr Jeff Blea, Dr Scott Hay, Christina Blacker & Vicky Leonard.



Over  
**200  
PEOPLE**  
attended for  
over 90 minutes



# WHAT WE DO PARTNER



Guidelines  
for how to deal  
with a crisis,  
**FAST.**

Crisis plans are  
**ESSENTIAL**  
making sure we  
dictate the story.

LIGHT UP RACING

## Race Incident Communications Guideline

In the immediate aftermath of a race incident involving a horse or jockey, timely and transparent communication is critical. Concerned individuals will typically search for the horse or jockey name on social media soon after the incident, or Google the horse or jockey name later in the day. The following guidelines are designed to help manage communications effectively, ensuring that concerned individuals can easily access information and feel reassured about the well-being of those involved.

Aims to be balanced:

- Ease of information access to build trust**
  - Our primary aim is to ensure that anyone seeking updates on the condition of a horse or jockey can find this information swiftly and effortlessly. This approach helps to build trust with the public, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and the welfare of all participants in the sport.
- Minimize unnecessary attention to minor incidents**
  - While transparency is key, it's also important to avoid drawing undue attention to minor incidents that are resolved without significant consequences. This requires a delicate balance in how information is presented and shared.

### The role of Light Up Racing

Use the Light Up Racing social media channels and platforms, and engage the community network to step in on information corrections and clarification, particularly where it is inappropriate for the racetrack to do so.

### Accuracy and empathy

Prioritize the accuracy of information, reflecting a genuine commitment to the welfare of those involved and the broader community's concerns. Create authentic and empathetic connections between the public and the grassroots racing industry.

### Proactive Community involvement

Leverage and integrate the Light Up Racing community for a broader, more personal perspective, enhancing the authentic narrative.

### Compliment Racetrack efforts

Use the Light Up Racing social media channels and platforms, and engage the community network to step in on information corrections and clarification, particularly where it is inappropriate for the racetrack to do so.

www.lightupracing.com

2024

LIGHT UP RACING  
Race Incident Communications Guideline

### Incident Status

**Incident level: E**  
A drama-free incident.  
Horse and jockey appear to be fine.

**Incident level: D**  
A serious health issue for the horse.  
Not fatal and the incident not visible to race attendees.  
Not a Grade 1 race, feature raceday or high-profile horse.

**Incident level: C**  
A non-fatal health issue to a horse in a public area, in view of race attendees.  
A non-fatal, non-serious incident in a Grade 1 race or high-profile horse.  
A fatal incident not visible to race attendees, not on a feature raceday.

**Incident level: B**  
A fatal incident not visible to race attendees, on a feature raceday.  
A serious incident in a Grade 1 race or high-profile horse.

**Incident level: A**  
A visible fatal incident on a feature raceday.  
A serious incident in a Grade 1 race or high-profile horse.

### Communication platforms

**Racetrack Commentator**

- Whenever an incident occurs with a horse, no matter how minor or visible, it is recommended the raceday commentator provides an update on the horse's health and veterinary clearance status.
- Integrating updates on horse welfare into the raceday commentary serves as a proactive measure to promote a culture of care and transparency at the racetrack. This approach ensures that all attendees, from casual visitors to seasoned enthusiasts, are aware that the well-being of the horses is paramount.
- By making these updates a staple of the raceday commentary, it reassures spectators that horse welfare is not just a policy but a core value of the racing experience, enhancing the public's trust.

www.lightupracing.com

2024

LIGHT UP RACING  
Race Incident Communications Guideline

### Incident Level Flow-chart

Was the health of the horse or jockey visibly compromised during the incident?

YES	NO
↓	↓
<b>Level E</b>	<b>Level E</b>

Was the incident visible to the public, or did it involve a high-profile horse or a Grade 1 race?

YES	NO
↓	↓
<b>Level D</b>	<b>Level D</b>

Was the incident fatal, even if not in public view?

YES	NO
↓	↓
<b>Level C</b>	<b>Level C</b>

Did the incident occur in clear view of attendees OR during a feature raceday? OR Is it a serious incident involving a Grade 1 race or high-profile horse?

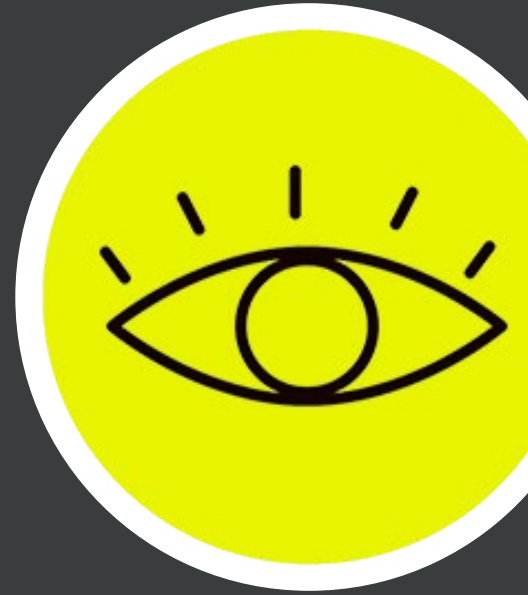
YES	NO
↓	↓
<b>Level A</b>	<b>Level B</b>

www.lightupracing.com

2024



## WHAT WE DO DELIVER



## WHAT WE DID

OVER  
**5000**  
Followers



Video content  
has received

**2.5 MILLION  
VIEWS;**

featuring updates on high  
profile horses, catering  
to the public's appetite  
for transparency and  
information.

**3200**

negative  
comments replied  
to during Derby  
week alone

### Social Media Channels

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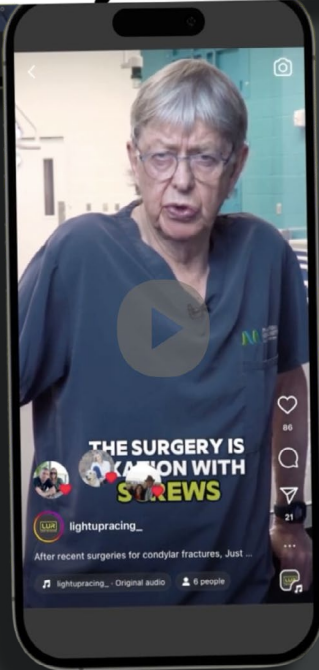
A consistent and engaging  
content plan was rolled out across  
social media channels where  
misinformation spreads. We utilized  
the channels to display topics in a  
digestible format.

# Just Steel update



**DR. LARRY BRAMLAGE**  
EQUINE SURGEON

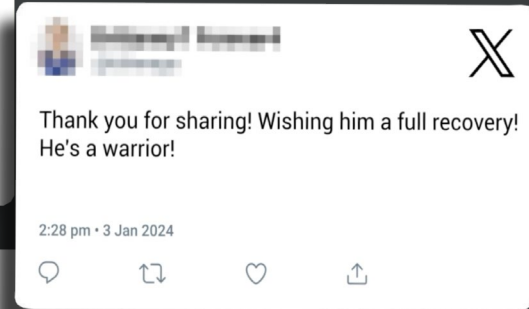
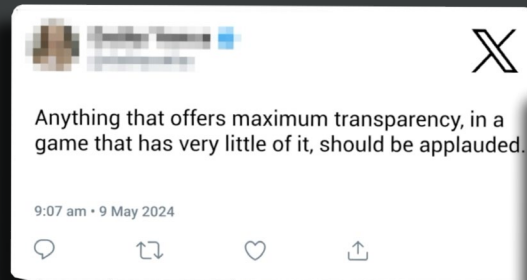
# Just Steel Injury Explanation



**DR. C. WAYNE MCILWRAITH**  
EQUINE SURGEON

# WHAT WE DO TRANSPARENCY

Being proactive when an incident occurs on the racetrack is essential to stopping rumours and misinformation spreading.





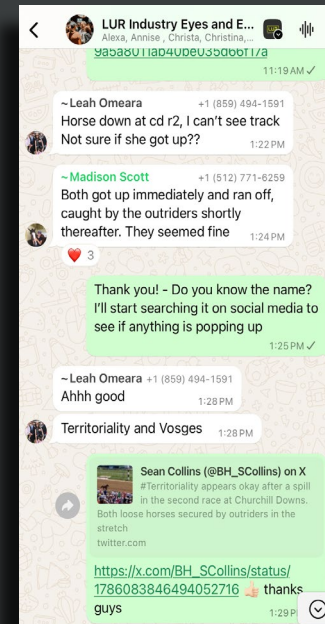
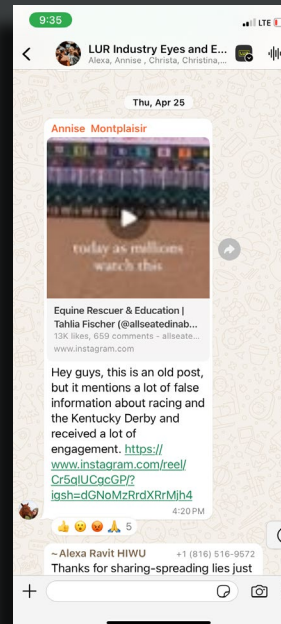
# WHAT WE DO

## EMPOWER



## Whatsapp Community

The goal was to foster a digital industry community that was armed with information and empowered to address misinformation about horse racing and share positive stories. The groups have been utilized for insights on trends for each demographic and to stay informed about the industry's common questions and concerns. 74 people joined the inaugural LUR watch group.





*"The cohort training program was a major success. **100% of attendees reported a significant increase in confidence** and know-how for handling public communication moving forward. It's important that more people are trained so we can maximize the reach of our industry's messaging."*

Price Bell, Chair LUR.

## COHORT TRAININGS

We understood that the industry needed to better understand how to use social media to unify our industry's voice.

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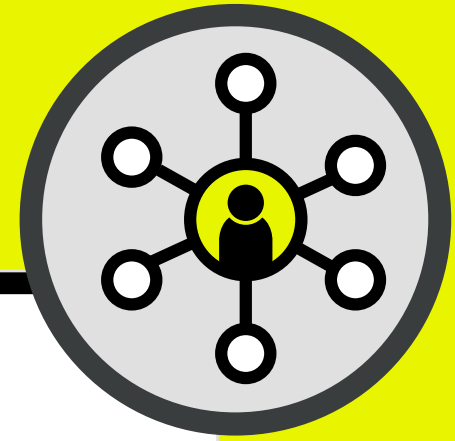
So, this is what we did

- Pilot cohort training hosted in April 2024 in Lexington
- 22 participants over a two day training
- Participants included marketing executives from Breeder's Cup, Equibase, Fasig-Tipton, Spendthrift & The Jockey Club.



# WHAT WE DO CONVENE

Over 1,200 members joined LUR in first 90-days to raise unified voice for the industry, as in the published letter to refute the documentary, "Broken Horses."



LIGHT UP RACING

996 E New Circle Rd  
Unit #153, Lexington, KY 40505  
hello@lightupracing.com

March 28 2024

Jason Stallman, Liz Day, Sam Dolnick and Stephanie Preiss  
The New York Times  
620 8th Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10018

Dear Ms Day, Mr Dolnick, Ms Preiss & Mr Stallman,

We are writing to you on behalf of Light Up Racing, a non-profit organization dedicated to the wellbeing of horse racing and the best interest of the horse. Our mission is to ensure that the public receives accurate and unbiased information regarding the horse racing industry and its affiliated sectors.

We have come to understand that your upcoming documentary, "Broken Horses," aims to delve into the intricacies and issues surrounding the horse racing industry. While we applaud your efforts to bring attention to this subject, we also recognize the profound impact that media representations can have on public perception and, subsequently, the lives and welfare of those involved in the industry.

Considering the significant audience your documentary is poised to reach, we feel that it is imperative that it is accurate and does not convey any incorrect or misleading statements or perceptions. We trust that you have these same goals and that you want to ensure that the documentary lives up to the high standards of your organization. Given the highly technical nature of some of the subject matter and terminology used in the horse industry, it is certainly possible that misleading information could be conveyed, even if done so unintentionally.

In this spirit, we kindly request the opportunity to view "Broken Horses" prior to its public release. Our aim is to engage in a constructive dialogue with your team, ensuring that the documentary portrays the most accurate, fair, and balanced depiction of horse racing.



LIGHT UP RACING

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hello@lightupracing.com

Our concern is the potential for misinformation or inaccuracies to be promoted, which even if unintentional, could result in irreparable damage to the image of horse racing and those featured within it. Such outcomes not only affect the livelihoods of countless individuals but also potentially jeopardize the welfare of the horses at the heart of this industry.

Our request is made in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, with the shared goal of fostering a more informed and compassionate understanding of horse racing among the general public. We believe that by working together, we can help to prevent the dissemination of misinformation and contribute to a narrative that accurately reflects the complexities of the industry.

To facilitate this process, we are prepared to offer our expertise and resources in fact-checking and providing accurate information. We have significant information and resources rooted in scientific research and data that we will be glad to share or direct you to if necessary. We assure you that our intentions are rooted solely in the pursuit of truth and the well-being of all parties involved in horse racing.

We look forward to the possibility of collaborating with you and your team. Please feel free to contact Dr Jeff Berk directly at +1 (352) 843-3030 or via email at hello@lightupracing.com to discuss this matter further or to arrange a viewing.

Thank you for considering our request.

Yours sincerely,

**Directors**  
**Light Up Racing**

Price Bell  
Dr Jeff Berk  
Christina Blacker  
Roderick Wachman  
Jason Litt

# PHASE 2

TAKING LIGHT UP RACING TO THE NEXT LEVEL



1

Establish \$1M fundraising campaign

2

Expand LUR programming, impact demonstrated in Phase 1

3

Launch Spanish-translated LUR website

Increase LUR ambassadors across US by hosting cohort trainings throughout the year

4

5

Hire Executive Director to lead LUR from US



11

Establish LUR as an independent organization (501c3)

6

Grow LUR's content and resource library for industry to utilize in combating negative public image

7

Expand fresh, social media content

8

Utilize social listening tools and definitive metrics to guide content

9

Partner with track and sales staff to provide crisis communication in the case of unfavorable events

10

Lead mainstream media PR effort



# 1

## HOW CAN YOU HELP LUR?

Join the effort! If you have not yet joined LUR as a member, please do so by signing up at: [lightupracing.com/sign-up/](http://lightupracing.com/sign-up/)

# 2

Spread the word! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, X and Tik Tok. Like, comment and share our content!



# 3

## SUPPORT THIS NEXT PHASE OF LUR IMPACT

2024-2025 budget: \$1,043,460



**PROGRAMS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

\$777,700



**OPERATIONS**

\$239,360



**TRAVEL**

\$26,400



Your investment in this next phase of LUR's growth will further its impact in the horse industry by:



Double the size of LUR's online resource hub to arm the industry with latest tips and tools of how to combat negative public perception.



Host fresh and high-energy events to further engage with the public and share the truth about horse racing.



Conduct annual community assessments to discern industry's most pressing issues. Findings would serve as a backdrop for subsequent convening of multi-stakeholder town halls that provide a space for transparent conversations about survey's findings, as well as opportunities for collaboration amongst appropriate organizations and industry teams.



Triple the amount of annual cohort trainings provided around the US to build an army of industry professionals ready and able to amplify truth and transparency for the industry.



Construct the first-of-its-kind learning management system to provide continuous, accessible online education to multi-stakeholders in English and Spanish.



Collaborate with universities' equine programs to pilot innovative opportunities to engage with next generation of horse industry leaders.



Build an independent, accountable, and best-in-class nonprofit aimed at unifying the industry's voice to ensure facts and not fiction are shared w the public, driven by competent and well-visible leadership.



Launch media campaign that gives horse industry's truth premiere visibility within the public's discourse.



Establish the industry's first learning collaborative to train leading tracks, sales and marketing teams in best practices of acute crisis communication management. Facilitate efforts to produce consensus guidelines to provide consistent guidance to stakeholders when an unfortunate event occurs.



Utilize cutting-edge marketing technology – like social media listening – to measure impact in campaigns.



# DONATE

Contributions to Light Up Racing are tax deductible, pursuant to rules of 501c3 contributions thanks to the fiscal sponsorship of BGCF.

To make a contribution, please use the donation section below, or send a physical check to Blue Grass Community Foundation at:

Blue Grass Community Foundation  
Attn: Light Up Racing Fund  
499 E. High Street, Ste. 112, Lexington, KY 40507

## CONTACT

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[www.lightupracing.com](http://www.lightupracing.com)



It is ~~your, our~~, everyone's  
responsibility to push for  
a positive perception of  
horse racing.