

## Alfred equestrian alumnae to compete at national Thoroughbred Makeover

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Kristen (Kovatch) Bentley '10  
(left) and Kait Schultz '12

Alfred University alumnae Kait Schultz '12 and Kristen (Kovatch) Bentley '10 will be competing with their ex-racehorses at the Retired Racehorse Project's Thoroughbred Makeover competition next month in Lexington, KY.

The competition, Oct. 4-7 at the Kentucky Horse Park, will see over 500 horses and trainers from all over North America compete for \$100,000 in prize money. All horses in the competition have been retired from the racetrack in the past two years.

Schultz lives in Saugerties, NY, where she owns and operates [Thunder Crest Performance Horses](#), a training and sales business built on her expertise with off-track Thoroughbreds. Her horse "Frankie" raced under the name Fakeittilumakeit, which caught her eye when she was browsing race results one day.

"I looked him up and discovered that he was actually a horse I had worked with as a foal," explained Schultz, who had worked at a breeding farm for years growing up. She reached out to Fakeittilumakeit's then-owner, offering a second career home when it was time for him to retire from the track. Two weeks later, Frankie was hers.

Schultz and Frankie will be competing in the Makeover in the discipline of eventing, which is equestrian's answer to the triathlon: horse and rider pairs perform a dressage test to demonstrate training, then ride cross-country in a test of stamina, and finally complete an arena course of jumping to demonstrate agility.

Bentley lives in Mayville, NY, and is the managing editor of [HorseNation.com](#), an online equestrian magazine with international readership. Her horse Jobber Bill, known around the barn as "Jobber," was turned out for a year after he retired from racing, owned by a friend.

"She was preparing for a cross-country move and had to sell Jobber," Bentley shares. "He had essentially no post-racing retraining, but he was a sweet and quiet horse and I thought he might be well suited to ranch riding."

Bentley's husband's family runs a beef cattle operation outside of Jamestown, NY, and while Thoroughbreds are not commonly used for western disciplines, Jobber has transitioned well to his new role as a ranch horse. They will be competing in the Makeover in the working ranch division, plus demonstrating Jobber's ability to work cattle in the

freestyle.

As undergraduates, both Bentley and Schultz competed on the western equestrian team and completed the Equestrian Studies minor (Bentley majored in English; Shultz in biology). Both horsewomen believe wholeheartedly in the mission of the Retired Racehorse Project, which is “to facilitate placement of Thoroughbred ex-racehorses in second careers by increasing demand for them in equestrian sports and serving the farms, trainers, and organizations that transition them.”

Thousands of Thoroughbred ex-racehorses come off the track every year at the end of their careers, and while a percentage will go on to careers on breeding farms or stay with their current owners, many are in need of second homes and new careers. The Thoroughbred is an athletic, versatile breed that can thrive as both a show and recreational horse, despite stereotypes of being hot-headed or flighty.

“The more I work with other breeds, the more I love Thoroughbreds,” said Schultz. “I always find that my best warmbloods have some Thoroughbred blood in them too. Even the ones with little bumps or imperfections from the track have a place.”

“Even in a somewhat less-conventional discipline for a Thoroughbred, this is the most trainable and rideable horse I’ve ever had,” added Bentley. “People have met Jobber and not believed that he was a Thoroughbred because they’ve heard all the negative stereotypes and he’s about as opposite as you can get. I’m really proud to represent this breed and show what they can do in their second careers.”

To learn more about the Retired Racehorse Project, please visit [retiredracehorseproject.org](https://retiredracehorseproject.org).