



People

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NOBLE FILLY

It's not unusual for a sale yearling to come with high expectations, but when **Bill DiScala** purchased a Say Florida Sandy filly at the Fasig-Tipton Saratoga open yearling sale Aug. 15, his expectations were slightly different than normal. That much was clear when he bought the filly in the name of "Karakorum for the Children of Chernobyl."

DiScala, who is the founder and president of the Karakorum horse racing partnership, became interested in the plight of the children of Chernobyl several years ago after seeing the Academy Award-winning short documentary "Chernobyl Heart" on HBO. He got in touch with Kathy Ryan, the executive director in the United States for the Chernobyl Children's Project International, and Karakorum became a sponsor. The filly is DiScala's latest donation.

"Karakorum is going to pay the bills on the horse, and we are going to split the horse 50-50," DiScala said. "They get 50% of the purses and the first \$25,000."

Others who have participated in the charity include U2's Bono and his wife Allie Hewson as well as the NBA's Orlando Magic.

"What Karakorum is doing is going to raise awareness to a whole new audience about Chernobyl," Ryan said about the racing stable.

On April 26, 1986, an explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in northern Ukraine was caused by a testing error, and an estimated 5.5-million people, including one-million children, still live in contaminated zones.

"You know, some people have nothing, and some kids

have less than nothing. These kids have *nothing*," DiScala said. "What I decided to do when the right horse came along was to buy them a racehorse."

The dark bay filly is out of the Buddy mare Buddy's Bird and is a half-sister to the stakes-winning Southern Halo mare Lapis. Consigned by Saratoga Glen Farm, agent for Winter Creek Farm, she was purchased for \$6,000.



Karakorum's Children of Chernobyl filly

"I saw the horse, and I said, 'This is the perfect horse,' because she is really nice looking," DiScala said. "She's a New York-bred, and that type of horse sometimes will generate a lot of money in New York-bred company. You know, sometimes you just get a feeling."

Ryan said the charity is trying to select a name to suit their filly, and that names such as Chernobyl's Hero and Chernobyl's Challenge are being considered.

"We want something that has the name Chernobyl in it but is uplifting at the same time, and you also want the horse's name to sound strong," Ryan said.

A common disease faced by children in affected areas is ventricular septal defect, or "Chernobyl heart," which means they have single or multiple holes in the wall between the two lower chambers of the heart. This condition inspired the title of the documentary, and a \$1,000 procedure is required to repair it. In the past, Karkorum has paid for an average of one procedure a month.

"The doctor (William Novick) doesn't make anything for doing this, and what we try to do is help out with projects like that," DiScala said. "If this horse earns them \$100,000 then that will save 100 children's lives." *By Amanda H. Duckworth*