A Glimpse into Horse Rescue

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A Voice for Animals Contest

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My Introduction to Horse Rescue

In the Spring of 2020, my family made the move from West Palm Beach, Florida to the small, rural town of Bell, Florida in Gilchrist County. As a family who loves horses and desires to work around them, we began searching for opportunities to work with them. Soon, my dad found a rescue online that happened to be less than ten minutes away from our house. This organization is known as, ‘Horses Without Humans’, and assists horses in need. This was a perfect opportunity, since I needed community service hours for my high school. Soon after signing up for the program, I completely fell in love with the ‘work’. Now, I spend multiple days a week interacting with amazing people that are fighting tirelessly for the lives of these majestic animals.

Why I Chose to Write about H.W.H.

When you volunteer at a place that rescues animals, it is inevitable that you will see sad, gruesome, and unbelievable things. The reality is there are many more horses being mistreated in my area than I previously believed. Because I spend time at this rescue, I have the honor of being someone that is part of the rehabilitation process for these wonderful animals that are fighting for their lives. By raising awareness about what these horses face and what we can do to help them, I hope to make a positive difference in their lives. As a result of my involvement in this rescue, I have learned that regardless of how horrendous it is for me to see what these horses are going through, it is much worse for them, therefore, I will do everything in my power to show them what they deserve. With that in mind, I am sure it will not surprise you that I am striving to become an equine or a large animal veterinarian.

Our Work
To provide you with a better understanding of what we do, I chose a specific horse to write about. Roxy Balboa, a mare from a herd that we call The Warriors. Roxy and multiple other horses came from an extreme neglect case that a neighbor called in. The condition of these horses was miserable unfortunately one of the horses was too far gone and was euthanized at the property, it looked like Roxy could have the same fate. Roxy was unable to stand on her own and our team was unsure how long this mare had been down for. A horse's body is unable to lay down for prolonged periods of time, which can cause loss of blood circulation, resulting in irreversable damage to tissues, muscles, and organs. (Hitting the Snooze Button: How Long Can Horses Lay Down?) Thankfully, they saw the fight in her eyes, they were able to get her standing and into a trailer on the way to her recovery. Roxy and her herd arrived at the rescue in the middle of the night. For the next couple of months, she would go down in the middle of the night and our team would have to wake up in the early hours of the morning and get her back on her feet, sometimes using heavy machinery. Roxy had to be fed food high in fat and protein and Alfalfa hay to help her gain weight. Today, Roxy Balboa has gained weight, become much healthier, and can hold her own weight. A rescue like ours may be a final chance for many horses, including Roxy and her herd.
Yvonne Barteau with Roxy recently. (HWH Facebook)

How Our Rescue Began

Yvonne Barteau is a well-known, successful, horse trainer and author. Yvonne grew up in Toronto, Canada and always knew that horses were her passion. Yvonne said, “I was born to become a horse trainer, of that fact, I am sure.” (KYB Dressage) She was always reading and learning as much as she could about horses any way she could. After high school she started working at Greenwood Raceway in Toronto, she worked her way up from a groom to a trainer. She moved to Florida and continued her career in the race horse industry. Then, she discovered dressage, a way to work with your horse in flexibility, obedience, and gracefulness. (British equestrian) Yvonne then found herself in the position of training and selling over sixty horses on her own farm, then she had the idea to create her own business, KYB dressage. After many years of horsemanship Yvonne noticed many cases of neglect in horses and ultimately decided to create her own rescue, Horses Without Humans. In the past few years, hundreds of horses have been saved and adopted thanks to her efforts.
Fundraising and Outreach

A public open house was held on Saturday, May sixth in an attempt to raise funding, recruit volunteers, and expand our presence. There was a great turnout and everyone was entertained and had a very good time. Some of the activities held were meeting all of our rescue horses, paint a pony, rider demos, horse handling demos, pony rides, we also had auctions and HWH merchandise for sale. Many people donate their old tack to our rescue and we resell it to people who can not afford brand new tack. It was a fun way of interacting with the public while simultaneously gaining attention to the rescue.  

Conclusion

In Conclusion, Horses Without Humans was a perfect candidate for this contest. Our rescue has saved the lives of many horses that had no other options. The sole purpose of Horses Without Humans Rescue is to advocate for the needs of these horses who have no voice. It is an honor for me to be a part of this rescue and I am grateful to be able to share what we do.
Citations


