

OVER HERD

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A Few of the Early Rescued Equine By Joanie Benson

The following equines arrived here before it became a nonprofit. For eight years, I rescued horses, rehabilitated them, and found new homes for most of them. Some lived out their lives here.

Sundance came here at 26 years of age, and she was vicious, ground-tied for 17 years, beaten, never trained, starved, and alone. The owner got her when she was barely two years old. I was told that he had two ponies for a short time and sold them to a woman in Mt. Oliva. (There is no such thing as coincidences in life!) You guessed it, the two ponies were already here, Jelly Bean and Gum Drop.

Moving Sundance without getting your face ripped off was special. Once I had her in a stall, she wouldn't leave it. My wonderful daughter, Patty, worked with Sundance all summer. She built trust and was able to work with the broken fetlock joint. Sundance got her entire movement restored, and sight returned in her blind eye. One step at a time, Patty encouraged Sundance to leave her stall. The day Sundance realized she was no longer tied and could move freely without Patty's hand on her neck brought tears to everyone who saw the transition. Now, Sundance could progress to saddle training, and Patty got her wish to ride Sundance before she returned to college.



The Following Stories Honor Mother's Day

I have never wanted to breed a mare or have a foal to raise. (God sometimes has other ideas for us.) A friend asked me to go to Vale Auction and help pick out some ponies. We were down to the last five horses to be auctioned off, and they ran them in together. The horses were filthy and covered with heavy, black, dry mud. It was impossible to discern anything about the horses. The auctioneer bid the herd off and then bid them off individually. The kill buyers bid on the herd, and individuals bid and bought the horses when separated. The last of the five came up for bid, and a small voice said in my left ear, "Bid." The next bid, the voice was louder, "BID," and I didn't. The third bid, the voice was demandingly loud, "**BID**," so I did and bought the horse. My friend was convinced that I was crazy.

The next day, I found a beautiful mare under the black mud, which I named Sienna. It was evident that she was an Arabian, but it was not until later that I learned that she was in foal.

A home was found for both when the foal was four or five months old.



Another Surprise Foal

I went to an auction to find a horse for my husband. There was a skinny mare with a nice smooth gait up for bid. The auctioneer missed my bid, and he bought the horse. After the auction, I offered him an amount for the mare he couldn't refuse. It took a little while to figure out Lacy was bred. I checked back with five people who had owned her the past summer. None of them were the person who bred her. *Continue to P.#2*



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The picture shows Patty helping Durango to learn to walk on a lead. When he was born, Sugar Babs tried to steal him from Lacy.

(The UK was in an outbreak of Mad cow disease, and too many horses were being slaughtered during part of the 1990s. People were buying skinny horses and fattening them to sell to the kill buyers.)

Sugar Babs Wanted a Baby

Many mothers will understand Sugar Babs extreme desire to have a baby. She and Lacy were arch-enemies until Lacy had her foal. Sugar Babs tried everything to make friends with Lacy, and when it worked, she attempted to steal her foal. Lacy wouldn't let her anywhere near her foal after that.

Sugar Babs bided her time, and when the colt was old enough, she secretly got into the field with Durango. When it became apparent that she was bred, we marveled at how she managed to get in with him and out with no one being the wiser. He was gelded before he was six months old.

I readied the front field and stall for Sugar Babs to have her foal and was due to put her up in the morning. The veterinarian predicted she would have her baby in three to four weeks.

I awoke the following day to the screams of a horse. I raced out to a terrible scene... Sugar Babs was racing around screaming, and Dakota had a tiny foal by its throat shaking it. I screamed, "DROP It!" And he did! I grabbed the poor little thing and raced to the front field with Momma chasing us. I put the foal down and backed off to let Momma check him. Sugar Babs nudged him to come to me when she was happy he was okay.

We named him Hersey's Kisses. He was weeks early, weighing only about 40 to 45 pounds. His coat was like brown velvet. He grew into a fine pony-sized horse.



Angel was our mascot for many years. She was 28" tall and typified man's inhumanity to equine.

Chief was over thirty when he came here. He was boarded in pasture with hay only. He was skinny and gained his weight.

Cupcake was a small skinny donkey with horrible overgrown hooves. Her best friend was **Lollipop**, a small mule.

Gum Drop and **Jelly Bean** had been with Sundance for a short time. **Gun Drop** was crippled from lack of trimming.

Paint Colt was only about 3 months old and taken from his mare. Notice the open wound on his back leg. I tried everything the vet had and nothing worked to promote healing. I had an old friend, in his 90's and when the vets couldn't help with an issue I would call David Humburger. His concoction promoted healing in just days.

The above equine are just a few of the **hundreds of horses** that came during the first eight years before HPS. In the beginning of 1999 there was between 20 to 25 horses here that became the first horse in the care of HPS, but that didn't last long.

Shared Signals: Nonverbal Communication across Species

By Ruby Baker

During July 2023, I had an amazing opportunity to volunteer at another rescue as a part of a summer trip. Unlike HPS, this rescue centered its efforts on a completely different animal: the wolf. Located in Westcliffe, Colorado, Mission: Wolf offered new insights into nonverbal communication. Although horses and wolves have clear contrasts, I found myself using a lot of my equine knowledge while interacting with the wolves. Before we met some of the animals face to face, the owner of Mission: Wolf asked if anyone in our group had worked with equines. After I answered various body language questions, it became apparent that whether you are working with predators or prey animals, body language is key to interaction. Focusing on approach, pressure, and release is applicable to both horses and wolves.

A four-year-old wolf named Ydun (pronounced Eden) was advertised to our group as rambunctious and excitable. We went into her enclosure exactly like we were instructed to, but instead of approaching us, Ydun went and hid in one of her many hiding places. After we sat far away to see if she would approach us, we had no luck. The owner instructed me to walk farther into her area, leading four other people with me. Sitting down, I made an effort to avoid looking directly at her. As she observed us, she slowly took a couple of steps toward the group, so I matched her movement by quietly reaching out my hand. I made eye contact with Ydun, and she made a beeline to my teeth. Wolves greet each other in the wild by touching teeth, and they will do the same to humans. It didn't wholly occur to me that I was face to face with a wolf until after she greeted me, but it was such a memorable experience.

Ydun hung out with me for almost 10 minutes, which was a considerable time, considering wolves typically greet each other and move on quickly. As I scratched behind Ydun's ear, I was careful to pay attention to how she was reacting because I didn't want her to leave. I could hear the owner sitting with the rest of the group say, "I can tell she's the girl that works with horses because of her body language." Clearly, there are connections between animal species!

The entire time I was with Ydun, her eye contact was unwavering. It was such a surreal experience. While petting Ydun, she took her wolf arm and wrapped it around mine, pulling me down to the ground. Laying together in the grass, my leg fell asleep, but I wasn't about to risk her leaving by shifting my position. Who knew I would lie in the cool Colorado grass with my arm between two wolf paws on a random summer morning!



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Eventually, I was asked to move so the others could see Ydun. The second I got up, she looked at everyone warily and retreated farther into her enclosure. Although I felt bad that no one else got to share my experience, it was such an unforgettable and educational moment.

From my short time at Mission: Wolf, it became clear to me that body language is a universal communication skill, regardless of what species you're interacting with. Whether you're paying attention to head position, eye contact, or other telltale signs, many of the noticeable ways horses communicate with us at HPS is directly comparable to how we can understand other species. If you're paying attention to the horses at our rescue, you're probably learning more than you realize!



Leptospirosis

The bacteria that cause leptospirosis are spread through the urine of infected animals. Leptospirosis is a zoonotic disease that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Humans can become infected through:

- Contact with urine (or other body fluids, except saliva) from infected animals.
- Contact with water, soil, or food contaminated with the urine of infected animals.

Some people have flu-like symptoms of leptospirosis, and some have no symptoms. In some cases of leptospirosis, you have symptoms of internal bleeding, organs infected, and collecting in your kidneys.

Almost any mammal (like rats, dogs, horses, pigs, or cows) can get leptospirosis. Symptoms may be few or none. Animals with leptospirosis can contaminate water or dirt (soil), which spreads the bacteria to other animals or humans.

Excreting the bacteria into the environment continuously or occasionally for a few months up to several years.

In some cases, leptospirosis can cause illness in animals characterized by fever, lethargy, anorexia, and muscle stiffness. It continues dullness as the infection spreads through the body and damages tissues and organs. These more severe cases include:

- Yellow skin (jaundice)
- Red spots on the gums
- Swelling and redness of tissues around the eyes.

As it progresses to the eyes, the horse can go blind. It would be best to have a test done as soon as possible. The disease can be challenging to diagnose and treat.



What the horses would tell you:

*“My life was filled with lack of feed, water and care,
Without hay, I was always cold and it was not fair.
My belly hurt since there was no worming,
I was left out in all weather even storming.*

*Then my horrible life changed and it was all so sweet,
With good feed and clean water, all the hay I could eat.
I was no longer a bag of bones, gaining weight each day,
There are still so many horses in misery, and I pray
That each will be saved by folks like you, what a feat!”*

Thank you!

Lynn & Paul Baldwin

Wendy Baynard

Kathy & Tony Bell

Elizabeth (Liz) Bergeron

Amy & Douglas Bernstein

Amy & Douglas Bernstein

Boeing

Boeing

John A. & Judy Bonk

Jacqueline Calderon

Eva R. Duggins

Eva R. Duggins

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Joellyn Kobler

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Carolyn J. Miller

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Bonnie & Jack Munday

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Gerald & Lisa Jordan- Pearce

Gerald & Lisa Jordan- Pearce

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News From the Herd

Veterinarian checks: Gypsy—Cushings test. **Galant**—tests for neurologic issues. & exam, **Pecos**—Lung issues. **Dreamer**—Coggins test.

Dental care and Check for Cataracts: 1. Onyx, 2. Queen Ann, 3. Dreamer, 4. Athena, and Cadbury. Whistler - Cataracts.

The Herd is doing great. HPS continues to treat the horses that are positive for EPM.

Cadbury is gaining all of her weight back and soon will be able to join the herd.

Dreamer has an approved placement application.