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EQUINE VOICES RESCUE AND SANCTUARY:

# “Noticing THE unnoticed”



Gulliver, official mascot of Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary, is always a big hit with the kids. Here the gentle giant, who has his own fan club, visits with enthralled youngsters during Equine Voices' eighth annual "Very Special Horse Event" fundraiser on the ranch in Amado, Arizona.

**G**ulliver frolics with other happy horses at Equine Voices Rescue and Sanctuary in Southern Arizona. But he and his equine pals are a few of the lucky ones. Born on a pregnant mare urine (PMU) farm, he was a byproduct of the industry that produces hormone replacement products. Baby Gulliver was destined for slaughter and had Karen Pomroy not discovered his and his three herdmates' plight, that destiny might have been fulfilled as it was for thousands of unnoticed, unwanted foals born each year. Their perpetually pregnant dams are tethered in tie stalls, unable to move, turn or lie down, for up to six months each year, with catheters continuously attached to collect their urine, made richer by water deprivation. This was the birthplace of sweet Gulliver.



# INSPIRED BY A GENTLE GIANT NAMED GULLIVER, SAVING CASTOFF PMU MARES AND THEIR UNWANTED FOALS IS THEIR MISSION

BY DUTCH HENRY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EQUINE VOICES RESCUE & SANCTUARY

The year was 2004. Karen was working at a wild horse rescue in California when one day she learned more than she wanted to know about PMU farms. That very night she searched the Internet for more information and discovered a PMU farm in North Dakota that had lost its contract to produce pregnant mare urine, and the horses needed to go. Anywhere. Gulliver was not the most handsome horse, and his destiny was slaughter. Karen's heart immediately connected with young Gulliver and she made arrangements to rescue him. Even though they had not yet met, Gulliver touched her so profoundly she knew she'd found her life's purpose.

She'd already been on the search for a place to relocate her two rescue horses and now the additional four PMU foals. She found the perfect location tucked in the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains in Southern Arizona. She settled in, and Gulliver and his three herdmates were trucked to their new home. Once they were all relocated, she realized she could do more, and charted her mission. She would begin to do all she could to help save

"Karen's heart immediately connected with young Gulliver and she made arrangements to rescue him. Even though they had not yet met, Gulliver touched her so profoundly she knew she'd found her life's purpose."



Rescued mares enjoy their new life at Equine Voices.



Karen Pomroy, founder and president of Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary and Gulliver, the horse who started it all.

these foals and their mommas, who are forced to live a nightmare, while at the same time try to raise awareness of this practice. She would devote herself to finding ways to not only raise awareness but also to educate about alternatives to the drugs produced with pregnant

mare urine. The cancer risks and other dangers of these drugs to the women who use them have been known since the 1940s. Karen wondered if the women

prescribed these drugs knew not only of the potential dangers to themselves, but what the horses endured to produce them.

Karen's inner being wrestled with the idea of such a huge but necessary commitment. She sat with Gulliver and discussed with him the reality of saving more of his friends. Karen had spent years in the corporate world and knew of risk-taking, the disappointment of failures and the exhilaration of success. She set out for success. She incorporated Equine Voices in 2004 and became a non-profit 501 c-3 in February 2005, with a dedicated focus on PMU foals and mares. Since Gulliver found Karen and raised his plea for help, Equine Voices has helped rescue over 400 mares, foals and other horses. While their central mission is to rescue PMU mares and foals, Equine Voices is there to help any horse in desperate need.

During the height of the PMU experiment there were reported to be 450 PMU farms in the US and Canada, each with as many as 1,000 horses. So you can imagine how many foals were born each year just to go unnoticed, unwanted and discarded. Many were, and are, shipped overseas for slaughter for human consumption. These darling babies were born just to die, to produce a product that is potentially harmful to the millions of women who use it daily. There is suffering on both ends. The suffering of the women who may not realize the negative side effects of Premarin, including breast and ovarian cancer, blood

continued next page



Pirate, a mini mascot, pleases the kids at Equine Voices' 8th Annual "Very Special Horse Event."



clots and diabetes. Courts have awarded millions to women who have been harmed.

And there is suffering on the beginning and end in the PMU farms. Not only are those tens of thousands of foals born each year just to die, unnoticed. But their dams are forced to stand in "pee-lines" for years of enforced confinement and collection. Every mare Karen has rescued, or helped someone adopt, was in the same tortured condition: Feet that had lost their natural shape, legs that hardly worked, a blank look in their eyes. The look of a once noble horse who had lost its soul. The empty-eyed look of the standing dead. Pomroy wonders if the doctors who prescribe this type of hormone replacement drug ever looked into the eye of a sad and broken mare. Or touched an unnoticed foal...She

wonders if the women prescribed these drugs are aware of the suffering that goes into producing them, or the potential harmful side effects of using them. Were they ever told of the natural and synthetic alternatives to pregnant mare urine therapy?

Karen and the 150 volunteers at Equine Voices last year racked up over 16,000 volunteer hours saving and rehabilitating mares and foals. They have as their mission to inform as many women as possible about not only the suffering but also the alternative treatments for hormone replacement products. Alternatives such as bioidentical hormone replacement therapy and many natural herbal treatments have been used and found effective for hundreds of years. There are also new synthetic drugs made without pregnant mare urine. Karen suggests

women ask their doctors about alternative treatments. Equine Voices has many alternatives, and much more helpful information, listed on their website [www.equinevoices.org](http://www.equinevoices.org)

At Equine Voices, Karen has designed a wide variety of programs where folks who have always wanted to know horses, but never had the chance, can meet horses and learn basic, and even not so basic, horsemanship skills from qualified staff and once discarded horses.

Their volunteer program is specifically designed not only to rehabilitate the horses but also to teach horsemanship to anyone who would like to learn. Volunteers also learn important life skills

"Since Gulliver found Karen and raised his plea for help, Equine Voices has helped rescue over 400 mares, foals and other horses. Karen and the 150 volunteers at Equine Voices last year racked up over 16,000 volunteer hours saving and rehabilitating mares and foals."

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**Kachina, a victim of violence, and Carol Grubb, trainer for Equine Voices Rescue & Sanctuary, share a tender moment.**

by helping to fundraise, handling the adoption process for rehabilitated horses and pitching in to help the never-ending list of chores that are part of a busy horse sanctuary.

Youth play a big role at the sanctuary. Each summer dozens gather as part of the "Youth Corral" program, designed to enlighten young people to the plight of the American horse, provide physical activity away from computers and television, and teach responsibility, teamwork, compassion and the innate connection between humans, horses and nature.

Equine Voices also partners with The Youth Center of Southern Arizona, allowing young people to spend time at the farm, learning by helping. They discover new skills and ambitions by interacting with other volunteers and the horses. Friendships are formed, and the thread that connects them is the love of life that cradles Equine Voices.

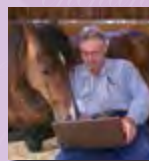
These and other programs at Equine Voices create fun and exciting adventures and learning opportunities for children and adults. And the teachers are those once unnoticed, unwanted horses who are happy and grateful for the chance to help.

Did you know Gulliver has a fan club? You can join his fan club for just \$10 a month. You'll get newsletters, a cool sticker and be part of something wonderful helping to change lives, animal and human. To find Gulliver's fan club go to [www.equinevoices.org](http://www.equinevoices.org) While you're there check out all of Equine Voices terrific programs, success stories and links. Check out their horses and foals ready for adoption.

In March 2010, Equine Voices became the first equine rescue and sanctuary in Arizona to be recognized and certified by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), the nation's premier organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries.

"Equine Voices is exemplary in so many areas, it is hard to choose just one to highlight," says Patty Finch, executive director of GFAS. "But clearly laudable is their work to help pregnant mares and their cast-off foals, cruelly exploited for urine collection, used in the production of estrogen-replacement drugs. And their efforts to educate the public and medical community about the cruelty inherent in procuring them."

Gulliver, we thank you and Karen for helping so many to notice the unnoticed.



Dutch Henry is a novelist and freelance writer who writes about "People & Horses Helping Horses & People." He resides in Virginia with his wife of 35 years, Robin, along with his horse and dogs, cats and chickens. You can reach Dutch at [dutchhenry@hughes.net](mailto:dutchhenry@hughes.net). He would love to hear from you. His novel, "We'll Have the Summer," is available on Amazon and Dutch's website [www.dutchhenryauthor.com](http://www.dutchhenryauthor.com)



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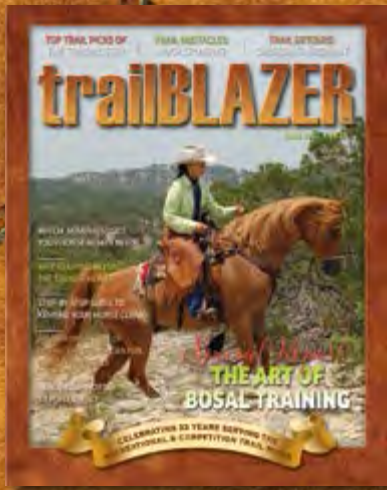
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