

Prince Part II:

And Our Newest Rescue Gets a Name...

So in usual style, Sue laid awake all night her mind thinking and thinking about how we could help this horse. Of course, the biggest concern now was safety for all (more on this later). We are a volunteer run 501(c)3 non-profit and some of our volunteers have horse experience and some have never been around horses until they came to Casey's. Nevertheless, all of our volunteers have huge hearts and want to help all of our equine no matter the breed, age, size, color, or abilities. Every equine at Casey's is a soul in need of help, and that's why they are here. So, the energy at our barn is that of happy horses and the new horses can definitely pick up on that good energy. We usually change the rescued equine's name and give them a new halter when they arrive. A new life, a new beginning, a new name. Our animal communicator works with our new rescues asking if he or she wants to keep their old name or pick a new one (if they come from a loving home they may want to keep their name). When our new guy was asked what he wanted his name to be, he picked Prince. He chose a regal name hoping no one would abuse him or lock him up again. Prince is a sentient being who thinks and feels and from this day forward, he would now have a say.

Prince came to us with a runny nose and was on antibiotics. (Thank goodness Prince ate his antibiotics in his food, otherwise, we don't know how we would have given them to him!) His previous owner's vet cleared him to leave as he had no temperature or other signs of sickness and his mucus was white. And, thankfully, Prince was down in the end stall by the entrance into the indoor ring. The plan was to just let him decompress until his new owners picked him up in a couple of weeks. Prince's new stall was nice and roomy with two windows to look out and to let in natural sunlight. We set up gates to use as a "shoot" so he could walk into the indoor ring on his own (this was the idea Sue again landed on in the middle of the night!). We had a water trough set up in the indoor ring and would hang a hay net so he could munch all day. We were going to give him the space he needed to observe and comprehend what was going on in the barn. Our hopes were that, with space, Prince could take in the good energy and to see that all our equine here at Casey's are treated with respect, dignity, kindness, and the love that they deserve. No one is abused and no one, like Prince, will be locked up all day in a box.



So we set up the shoot from his stall to the indoor ring, and the plan was for Sue to go into the stall (with a lunge whip for protection) to help move Prince out of the stall and into the aisle so he could walk into the ring on his own. When Sue walked in to his stall, he backed off and she maneuvered so he could walk out the stall door. But Prince didn't know what to do, he did not understand what was being asked of him. He kept stopping at the door as if he's never had the experience of walking out on his own. Sue then made a soft, gentle clucking sound to encourage him and he scrambled madly to get out of the stall – so incredibly sad to get such a dramatic response to a soft cluck!

That tells a lot all by itself on the kind of life he had before. He walked out into the ring unsure and almost in shock of his surroundings. He just didn't know what to do, how to act, how to be curious - he was at a loss. After he walked into the ring and we closed the gate, he stood frozen in the corner staring at his surroundings for over two hours. This was so incredibly heartbreaking to us. This poor guy did not know who he was or how to be a horse. Everything he was doing told us that he must have lived most, if not all, his life in a stall. This was complete sensory overload for him- from spending life in a box, to being recently gelded and just thrown back into his stall in pain, then to be sold at auction and moved several times in a month and a half. It was very clear to us that he really needed to have some time alone to decompress, to settle. So that's what we gave him.

While in the ring, Prince could hear us moving around in the barn doing chores and could see us in the viewing room. It was also a good time for us to clean his stall, clean his automatic waterer, and give him fresh hay. (We used a lot of lavender essential oil to help him relax too.) After the first two hours, Prince started moving around and checking things out. A few hours later when it was time to come in, we again set up the shoot. Sue walked in (again with the lunge whip for protection) and Prince walked cautiously back through the shoot and to his stall knowing exactly where to go – his security blanket was his stall as it was all he knew. Now, the best thing we could do was nothing. Many people wanted to stand by his stall, talk to the new guy, but it was time to leave him be. He needed to be free of distractions and worrying about defenses so he could observe and think as we worked with the other horses and tended to our chores around him.

The next morning when we started the process all over again, Sue walked into his stall and he knew exactly what he was supposed to do and walked into the indoor. He was a very smart boy! When one considers he most likely lived the majority of his 10 years in a box and on the second day he knew what he was supposed to do, that is smart! This was now going to be our daily routine until he went with his new owner in hopes he could adjust before he had to move again. After day two, we threw some toys in the ring (balls, cones, shavings bags, and gallon water jugs) for him to investigate.

Well, after a couple of days, the future owners decided they didn't want him due to his size so they were going to try to help us find another home for him. They did contact a friend of theirs from another state who did try to help us, but it didn't work out. And after a week, they no longer returned Sue's texts or calls. So now, as fate would have it, Prince was to be part of our Casey's family. We didn't have a long term plan and we were taking on a big expense during a tough time of canceled fundraisers due to the pandemic, but we could not turn our back on him. So for now, we decided to just continue his routine until he showed us he was ready for more.

It took two weeks before Prince showed any personality or interest in anything other than food. By now, the indoor ring looked like a giant playpen due to all the toys in the ring! He could check the toys out when he was ready. We tried to rearrange the toys daily to spark an interest as we wanted to encourage him to explore. Back in his stall, he was able to observe the volunteers grooming his equine neighbor, Rio, and see that it was good- nothing bad was happening to him. He watched us walk the horses out to the pastures with just leads around their necks – no halters- and he saw that they all know and love the routine. This was his time to watch and to learn, he was taking things in.



On Feb 23rd, three weeks after Prince came to Casey's, the weather was nice enough where we could open the big sliding doors in the indoor ring so he could see the world outside. We only opened the door about two feet as we didn't know if he would try to jump out. By the end of the day, he still had not walked down to look out the door, so Sue went outside and was able to coax him down. Then, at last, he was brave enough to stick his head outside and look around! Sunshine on his face – it was so wonderful to witness!

In another week, it looks like he could be ready to take another big step and be introduced to the run attached to his stall. Stay tuned for Part Three!