
Horse Helpers

1199 Odes Wilson Rd.

Zionville, NC 28698

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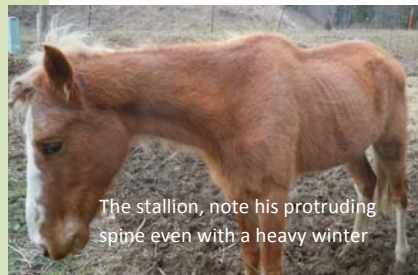
www.horsehelpersnc.org

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May 22, 2011

Dear Horse Helper,

Thanks to your support Horse Helpers made it through another busy year and--fortunately or unfortunately--increased the number of horses we helped. We rescued over 10 horses last year while maintaining the horses already on the property. At one point during the winter we were caring for 16 rescues---a lot of work and expense. We also spoke to the Rotary Club and the Grange, we conducted six workshops with horses on conflict resolution and gave more educational tours than we can count. We helped four families care for their horses when economic failure hit, eliminating the risk of more neglected horses. We adopted five horses and helped four horses over the rainbow bridge. Our investigators continue to go on equine cruelty calls, retrain, reefed newly arrived starved horses, and just generally love them. Presently, the barn is home to 9 rescues. Four are new and in rehab, one is a permanent resident, and 4 are ready for adoption. As I said, it has been a busy year!!



In March, Watauga County Animal Care and Control called us to help with three starved horses. After evaluating the three, a mystery from the year before was cleared up for us. Horse Helpers had been informed that there were starved horses and the carcass of another horse in an isolated pasture of western Watauga County. One mare had a foal by her side with a halter grown into its face. The informant said he cut the halter off the foal and grass was coming back so they had food. However, the informant refused to tell us where they were and we never found them. As I spoke with the owners of these three new horses, they admitted that their family owned the horses from the previous spring. No surprise that the vet and I were looking at three severely starved horses that had wintered in the same inaccessible pasture with no food. All of the owners of the horses, with much encouragement from me and pressure from the head of Animal Control, surrendered the horses to Horse Helpers.

One horse was a 3-year-old stud, one a pregnant mare, and the third a paint mare--hopefully not pregnant. All were severely emaciated with overgrown hooves and minimal handling. Horse Helpers only had room to "squeeze" one of the three horses into our barn. We took the pregnant mare--the one most at risk. Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary (<http://www.genesis-wildlife.org/>) found places for the other two and agreed to take on their expenses!! What an amazing collaboration of animal care organizations.

So our story really began with the arrival of the pregnant mare, now called Leyla.

Leyla was due any day and our goal was to get some nutrition and weight on her as safely and quickly as possible. When she arrived at the farm she hardly looked pregnant, an indication of how starved she was. Her ribs were showing and she looked thin, even though she was about 10 -11 months pregnant (gestation for a horse is 11 months). She and the stud were each a 1 on the Henneke Scale, the worst rating for body weight of horses.



Leyla was with us for two weeks and starting to look better and feel better. The baby was dropping down and moving toward the birth canal, but Leyla wasn't showing other signs of the birth being soon. We thought maybe we could get enough nutrition to the baby to increase its chances of survival. On the morning of April 1 I went down to feed and there was a foal in the

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stall with Leyla. She was only a couple of hours old. With no noise, no warning signs, and no help, Leyla gave birth to a beautiful little girl who looked, at the moment, like she was going to be fine.

We checked in with the vet and began to watch to see if she was strong enough get up and eat. By late afternoon it was clear she wasn't doing well. The vet came out and after giving us the "she is going to die, so be prepared" speech, he proceeded to do everything he could to save her. He inserted an IV for fluids and a feeding tube to begin giving her Leyla's milk. We started milking Leyla and feeding April. After pumping huge amounts of fluids into her, April got up and began eating from her Mom. We were so excited and hopeful! The vet came back and he too was amazed by what he saw. He removed the IVs and the feeding tube and said to keep feeding her every two hours by bottle. We set up a schedule of volunteers and someone was with Leyla and April every



April a few hours old

minute of the day for the next 64 hours. April appeared to continue to improve until the next day, late afternoon, and within an hour she was critical again. The vet came back out—he was dogged in his support, thanks Dr. Lang!—and after much effort got a new IV in and reinserted the feeding tube. We made plans with him to move her the next morning to Mountain Empire, an emergency hospital in Johnson City. There she could receive hospital care. Dr. Lang left about midnight. Thirty minutes later in the matter of 5 minutes April started showing discomfort and suddenly died. We were on the phone with the vet the whole time, administered chest compressions, and checked the tubes and IVs but to no avail.



Leyla, Dr. Lang, Megan, and Amy having a meeting about little April

Sweet beautiful April exploded into our lives and took us over; just as quickly she was gone. The intensity of those few days is indescribable and still very painful for those of us who were involved in her care. The most frustrating thing for all of us is knowing that April clearly died a preventable death from complications due to malnutrition.

After recovering from the immediate shock of April's death our job became helping Leyla through her grief and depression. The next day, when we had to finally take April's body away from her, Leyla was distraught and it took a few days before she began to come around. Today she is doing much better and although she will always be a pasture horse due to a deformed hoof, she is interested and has an emerging strong personality. She will make someone a lovely friend.

At the risk of sounding like a "soap box," Leyla and April's story is all too common and exactly why horse rescues must continue education as part of their mission. Leyla has a deformed foot and should never be bred, it puts unnecessary pressure on her leg, and there risk exists of passing on deformities to her offspring. The stud in the pasture with her is likely related to her, another reason not to breed. And pregnant animals must have sufficient nutrition to birth healthy offspring. These statements may seem *oh so* logical and yet it happens all the time! Backyard breeding is *the* biggest problem with the deflation of the American horse market and the increase in horses with no homes. We have to help people understand that poorly planned breeding is not wise. It is all about education, education, and more education.

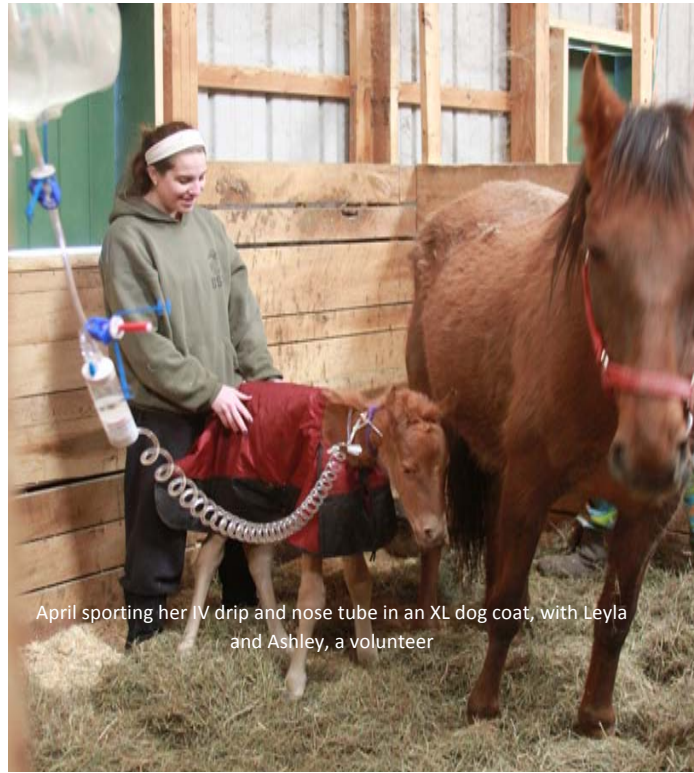
Please be a Horse Helper. Your donations will pay vet bills for Leyla and April, help maintain the other horses in our care, and help us continue with much needed education.

Sincerely,

Amy Hudnall
President

Add our summer schedule to you calendar:

- Every Wed and Sat the farm is open to the public from 1-5
- June 9-12 Blowing Rock Saddlebred Horse Show, visit us or volunteer for us at our booth
- June 24, Conflict Resolution Workshop with Upward Bound, you can come observe or volunteer
- June 20-26 Fjord Fest at Blowing Rock Equestrian Center, a week of horse fun
- July 15, Conflict Resolution Workshop with Upward Bound, you can come observe or volunteer
- July 26-31 Blowing Rock Saddlebred Horse Show, visit us or volunteer for us at our booth
- August 2-7 Blowing Rock Saddlebred Horse Show, visit us or volunteer for us at our booth
- August 6-7 Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture High Country Farm Tour, visit us at the farm



April sporting her IV drip and nose tube in an XL dog coat, with Leyla and Ashley, a volunteer

Horse Helpers Donation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Donation amount: _____

Tax deductible donations may be sent by check to Horse Helpers, 1199 Odes Wilson Rd., Zionville, NC 28698. Make your check payable to Horse Helpers and include this form. Horse Helpers also accepts donations through Pay Pal.