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## ESS - A Helping, Healing Hand for Horses and People

### An Overview of 2009

This past year has been non-stop activity for ESS and we have made tremendous progress and accomplished many amazing things.

It was our second year here at the property leased in January of 2008. The facility has proven to be a wonderful home to ESS and the many activities and programs. If only there were 100 acres attached to it instead of 10. But for the people/horse programs, it's perfect!

ESS has continued to grow and evolve in many wonderful ways. Our kids "Learn About Horses" program was a great success, with much thanks to Ellie Behrstock, who was our main instructor this year. Ellie's teaching style and enthusiasm made learning fun for all. In addition to a nice group of Taos-area children, we also have several visitors to Taos who came out for lessons.

The Arc program has grown also, with more than double the number of visits with persons of various abilities.

ESS had mini clinics, all well attended. Dr. Heidi Hamlen from Santa Fe gave two great presentations on equine first aid and emergency care. MeSah, also from Santa Fe, did a couple clinics, one on natural horsemanship and one on horse psychology. We had guest clinicians MeSah and Ann Clemons who gave riding lessons at ESS. The horses benefitted from healing treat-



*Phillip walking with Mandy over the ground poles.*

ments by Margaret Henkels (Equine Natural Movement), Mary Sue Comstock and Carol Valenti (Healing Touch for Animals).

Special events this year included the Spirit of the Horse art show in February, a Donkey Fiesta in May, Animals Matter Day in June, and the ESS open house in September with a blessing of all the ESS equines by Rev. Pam Tyler.

In addition to the regular programs and happenings, ESS became more active with horse rescue and rehab activities. Through networking, we've helped find homes for some horses. We took in a few horses in need, who are now enjoying the good life at ESS - lots of TLC and special care for their physical and emotional traumas.

And, finally, our therapeutic riding program has gotten a great start with the gift of a donated wheelchair ramp.

As always, we have been blessed with many kind, energetic volunteers whose efforts have helped ESS to grow. We are greatly appreciative for these wonderful

people and also to those who have made financial donations and donations of much needed supplies and equipment.

We have taken on a lot here and sometimes it is hard to imagine that we have accomplished so much in such a short time. It never would have happened without so much support and encouragement. Besides the great local interest and support, we had visitors to the Taos area who came out to volunteer. Imagine that - volunteers from Indiana, Texas, Arizona, Pennsylvania! And riding students from Texas, California, even as far away as England! Our visitors list includes persons from Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Illinois, California, Colorado, and many other states.

I often start my days with a simple prayer, "God bless ESS." And He has. Thank you to everyone who has helped make ESS a success in 2009. We look forward to the new year, as we continue to grow and share our love of horses through the Equine Spirit Sanctuary.



*Dustee and Djuna*

*Ruth Bourgeois*

# ESS Helps Horses in Need

## Mateo

### An emaciated older horse kicks up his heels after diet change!

Mateo is a very sweet, cute horse. He is an 20+ year-old Quarter Horse/Arabian gelding. He arrived at ESS on October 18, 2009, and was in a very emaciated condition. So severely, that he measured a "1.5" on the scale of 1-9. This was due to his teeth being worn down so extensively that he was unable to chew fiber (such as hay) enough to safely swallow it. Mateo seems to have sustained a head injury some time in his life (possibly a jaw fracture), so his top and bottom teeth are misaligned. This contributes to the wearing down of his teeth. His owner had him for many years, and was unaware of any injury that Mateo may have sustained while in his care (including a corneal abrasion/laceration, possibly due to weeds). So it's probable that it happened when he was a very young horse.

Mateo's owner said that Mateo had always been thin, but was able to sustain a somewhat-healthy weight on grass. When the onset of Fall occurred and the Summer grasses deteriorated, unfortunately, so did Mateo's physical condition. He was then turned over to ESS.

Once extremely emaciated, moderately dehydrated and depressed, Mateo is now on the road to recovery. In just the short amount of time that he has been at ESS, his spirits have been lifted. He is much more active than he was when he arrived. As opposed to sleeping the majority of the time, he enjoys trotting around his pasture, rolling in the soft dirt and hanging out with his new pal, Bindy, the miniature donkey. He is well on his way to being the great trail horse that was ridden by children once more.



*Mateo, Nov. 2009  
Photo by Laureana*



*Mateo when he arrived at ESS*

Of course, Mateo is also gaining weight- thanks to the donations received! He is on a diet of soft mashes and special feed. He started out eating soaked beat pulp and alfalfa pellets, as well as Equine Senior, corn oil and various other supplements. He eats 4 times per day (which, along with the other horses' nutritional needs, amounts to a lot of feed!). Mateo is also eating Nature's Select extruded pelleted feed, which was donated by Diane Dau (she sells Nature's Select horse and pet feed products). He is now eating well, many thanks to donations from others!

If you would like to help, Equine Spirit Sanctuary has a flyer of a list of supplies that are needed, located at Chamisa Feed. They are also matching all donations-up to \$250.00- for all the rescue horses!

Thanks to the much-needed donations, volunteers and the care and love from ESS, the world will be one more sweet, well-mannered horse stronger.



*Best buddies  
Bindy & Mateo Jan. 2010*

## Mateo's story, by Laureana Miera

My name is Laureana Miera, and I am a senior at Taos High school. I am coming to Equine Spirit Sanctuary for a work study program. I am in the process of recovering from a six-year-long illness where I was unable to walk, speak, sit upright on my own, and other various motor skills.

I have always had a passion for animals, so although I have only been coming to ESS for a short amount of time, it has been a wonderful experience. The work that Ruth, the volunteers, donors, and so many others do here is amazing- not only for the horses, but for people, as well.

There are many who come here for therapeutic and or work experience (myself included). I will begin therapeutic riding soon. I am sure that this will aid in my continuing recovery.

To everyone who is involved in the many layers of ESS, thank you for all you do! Every component is integral and vital, so without you, none of the benefits, whether they be for horses or people, would exist.

*~ Laureana*



*Mateo and Laureana  
January 2010*

# Star -

## Working on being an ESS "Super-Star"!

Story and photo by Laureana Miera

Star is a very resilient, sweet, registered Paint horse. He is four years old, and, unfortunately, has endured much suffering in his short life. He arrived at Equine Spirit Sanctuary on September 29, 2009, and was in terrible condition. Star arrived depressed, lethargic, with a severely injured ankle/pastern and hoof, and an infection in the wound resulting in a fever of almost 105 degrees Fahrenheit (the normal temperature range for a horse is 98-101 degrees).

Star's owner believed that this injury was caused by Star's hoof becoming entangled in a fence panel while attempting to bolt after being spooked. The instigator may have been a bear, although it's difficult to be sure. The extent of the injury was great. The entire front of the ankle was torn apart, and he had a hole that reached his bone. Star also sliced the back corner of his hoof, penetrating through to the soft tissue. Due to various complications, by the time he came into the care of ESS, the injury appeared to be a couple of weeks old. This has definitely made the healing process more difficult- for Star and for those who care for him.

Some complications from the delay of treatment included infection, lameness

of the injured hoof, growth of proud flesh (excess granulation tissue), and, of course, prolonged pain. These have been (or are in the process of being) treated. It has been a long and difficult process, but Star has been a champ in enduring all that he has.

The healing is not over. His care is intensive and requires much work. His injury needs to be wrapped at all times and movement kept to a minimum to encourage healthy healing and discourage proud flesh from accumulating. As the pastern/ankle area has little blood supply, healing is difficult. It may take 6 months to a year for skin tissue to form over the wound. In the meantime, Star will still require stall rest, bandaging, medication, and debriding of the proud flesh. The care currently requires about \$300 per month. The extended time for healing may be not be easy, but he is strong, young, and otherwise a healthy horse. Star has the will to live.

Star has clearly progressed since his arrival at ESS. His infection, with the help of antibiotics, is gone; he no longer is lame, due to the removal of the broken piece of hoof; and while Bute assisted in keeping his pain under control when he first arrived, as his wound continues to heal, it is no longer necessary. Also, Star



is now castrated. Four corners Animal League helped by donating the generous amount of \$300. Part of his healing is also due in part to a bighearted donation of \$150 worth of veterinary supplies by Bill Hudson. If you would like to help, Equine Spirit Sanctuary is taking donations for feed and supplies at Chamisa Feed. Chamisa Feed also matched the first \$250 of donations!

When Star has recreational time in between health care, he enjoys being groomed and watching the other horses from his stall. He is very well mannered and kind. Although the healing process may be long and difficult, ESS is optimistic that he will eventually be able to be ridden and trained-ultimately leading to a good and useful life. Given the tremendous will to live that he possesses, Star is sure to surprise everyone with how well he recovers.

## Determining a horse's body condition

Dr. Don Henneke, PhD, developed a system of objectively gauging a horse's body condition based on the amount of body fat on horses in six key points – neck, withers, shoulder, ribs, loin and tail head, assessing bone prominence, muscle development and fat deposits. This system is now widely used and accepted by veterinarians, nutritionists and horsemen. Scores range from 1 (poor or emaciated) to 9 (extremely fat or obese), with acceptable Body Condition Scores (BCS) ranging from 4 to 7. The ideal BCS is 5 (moderate), indicating that they have adequate fat reserves to draw on during stressful times, such as winter cold and storms. Horses with a BCS of 3 or lower or greater than 7 generally need a change

in diet to either increase or decrease their caloric intake.

Scores are determined based on visual appraisal and palpation (feel) of six conformation points:

- A - the amount of flesh or fat covering on the neck
- B - the withers
- C - down the crease of the back
- D - at the tailhead
- E - ribs
- F - behind the shoulder at the girth.

For a poster with these points outlined and drawings of horses of various Body Condition Scores, go to: <http://www.thehorse.com/pdf/nutrition/bcs-poster.pdf>

## Bindy Visits Cid's



Above, Betty Bee Backer and Ellen Wicai with Bindy at Cid's Food Store, September 24. Bindy greeted visitors and helped promote the ESS Fall Open House.

# ESS Horses are blessed

Rev. Pam Tyler blessed each of the equines at ESS in a special ceremony at the Open House held September 26, 2009.

Photos by Janet Elder



## How You Can Help

Volunteers are always needed to help with horse care, special events, programs, office work, gardening, cleanup (a never-ending job!), painting, feeding, fund raising. Whatever your interest, we have work you can do! Call or email to learn more.

We especially need help on the days that we are open to the public, which are Wednesdays and Saturdays now for the winter months.

New volunteer orientation and training is held the second Saturday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m.

Our equines all need sponsors. Their ongoing needs include feed, hoof care, basic veterinary care, supplies. You can sponsor an ESS program horse for \$150 per month, or a donkey for \$75 per month. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated. You can do a partial sponsorship or a regular contribution towards the sponsorship.

We appreciate donations of equipment or supplies. We need things like muck buckets and cleaning supplies, and stall mats. Check the ESS website for details for other supplies that are needed.

[www.equinespiritsanctuary.org](http://www.equinespiritsanctuary.org)

### ESS Directors:

Ruth Bourgeois    Beth Robinson  
Mark Eden        Sarah Reeb  
Sandra Miller

### Advisory:

Ruben Baca  
Dr. Doug Thal

Newsletter by Ruth Bourgeois



*Baylee and Rev. Tyler*



*Above, Mariah is blessed.*

## Reporting Neglect, Abuse

At ESS we sometimes get calls about horses that appear to be starving, neglected and uncared for. We always advise people to do the following: Call the local brand/livestock inspector - Ruben Baca (758-1490). He is the person locally who is in charge of checking out reported abuse and neglect cases.

Sometimes well intentioned people will try to buy feed for horses that they see going hungry. It's important that Ruben be notified so that he can do his job, assess the situation and contact the owner so that a solution can be found in cases of true neglect.



*Bindy receives his blessing,*

**Check out the ESS web site for stories about our horses, activities and upcoming events!**

## ESS Mission Statement

*The Equine Spirit Sanctuary is a non-profit, volunteer-based healing center that believes in responsible horse ownership. ESS is dedicated to the safety and welfare of all equines and through a program of rescue, rehabilitation, relocation or permanent retirement, and education, serves to establish a connection between equines and humans.*