

## A Note From Allyson November 2014

In October, Pegasus rescued a pony named Rosie. Rosie's story struck a deep cord with many of you because it illustrates what happens when horse owners do not seek education about caring for a horse. Born 20+ years ago on the land from which we rescued her, untrained, never taught to stand for a farrier or to load in a trailer, eye gouged out by barbed wire, her life completely devoid of veterinary or farrier care, living alone with no companionship . . . and so on.

Rosie had been allowed to founder more than four years prior due to improper feeding and lack of basic hoof care. Despite the pleas of a concerned neighbor, who spotted the pony in "founder stance," the owners never sought treatment for Rosie. So there she stood (or often laid), in excruciating pain, day after day, year after year.

After years of frustration, the neighbor learned of The Pegasus Project. We were able to work with local law enforcement to obtain a seizure warrant for Rosie. In court at the civil cruelty hearing, Rosie's tearful owners claimed to consider her a member of the family. Totally ignorant of ailments known to horses or how to properly care for Rosie, they chalked her lameness up to "being old." This is where the apathy part comes in.

Completely crippled and barely able to walk, Rosie was left alone with no treatment and no comfort care, while the owners did nothing for her. Not until they were facing a judge did their tears begin to flow. The court rightfully found that they had cruelly treated Rosie and ordered that Rosie be awarded to The Pegasus Project for humane euthanasia. What a sad day for all. We can only take comfort in knowing that we provided Rosie with love and comfort during her last days. Her gratitude was heart-warming.

How can this be? How could anyone who claims to care for an animal allow that precious being to suffer so? We ask ourselves these questions every day, as we see case after case like Rosie's. The answer is usually "ignorance and apathy." The owner doesn't know enough. The owner doesn't care enough. But, there is absolutely no excuse for either!

***(continued from eNewsletter)***

So, what is the solution? There are no easy answers, but all answers start with owning responsibly. Here at The Pegasus Project, one of our missions is to educate horse owners and prospective horse owners about RESPONSIBLE ownership. Learn about horses before you get one. Surround yourself with people who know more about horses than you do. If you don't know, ask! Consult with your veterinarian about proper care. Read books and horse magazines. **Do whatever it takes to LEARN about the horse who is now completely dependent upon you.** Own the fact that her health, safety, and well being are

your absolute responsibilities!

Now let's talk about what you, as a concerned horse lover, can do should you see an animal being neglected or cruelly treated. Trust your instincts. We all must become the voice for the voiceless. All too often, we hear people say they've watched a particular horse in decline FOR YEARS! If you see a horse in need, make a complaint and be persistent. Law enforcement may need many complaints from lots of citizens and animal welfare organizations before any action is taken. Again, be persistent.

**Never accept old age as a reason for a horse to be emaciated.** Old horses are skinny for one reason – lack of care. Just as humans, horses of advanced age require specialized nutrition and consistent dental care. We don't accept starvation amongst our elderly, yet some allow horses to starve to death because of ignorance and apathy. **Horses unable to maintain weight in spite of proper care should be humanely euthanized.** While the death of any equine is traumatic, professionally administered euthanasia is far and away a better choice for the horse than the horrors we see with starvation. We all must be the voice for the voiceless.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for topics of discussion, I welcome you to contact me at [allyson@mypegususproject.org](mailto:allyson@mypegususproject.org).

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