FEATHER SOUND NEWS

Serving the Tampa Bay Area, Florida

REIGNITED

Spharrk

Many styles of riding and various disciplines are commonly blamed for levels of abuse and injurious performance, but cruelty comes in many forms. Just as a large number of competitive horses excel in their talents and thoroughly enjoy what they do, still others… well, many of those come to us.

Equestrian Spirits is a not-for-profit Forever Home for animals. We provide sanctuary and safety to many species; with their many stories…

Spharrk is what the equestrian world calls a Warmblood. She is part Thoroughbred and part Trakehner, both glorious breeds in their own right. No matter how well-bred a mount or well-intentioned a breeder, time often turns against them. When people get greedy, and often negligent, the humans wash their hands of what has become a burden, while the horses simply find themselves… alone. Spharrk is not the only mare to find herself with no place to go. When she found her way to our door, her world shifted and for however many years remain for her, she has a home here – forever.

When Spharrk (short for Spharrkhil) first came to us, she was forlorn and withdrawn, lonely, sad and without interest in most things. Hari (an individual rescued a decade before) befriended her, reassuring things would now – be different. Although her memories of emptiness and failure will remain a lifetime, new memories form daily while she meanders through delicious spring grass, snacks on tasty winter hay, or lingers over feeds to fill a once empty belly.

Kindly, quiet, and reliable humans replaced those who came… went, then kept going, relinquishing responsibility of care, believing that as a nice horse, she would find her way to comfort. For Spharrk that became true, but not until she had been left behind from someone's quest for their own path. For others, they do not make it into our arms. Their stories do not close – as softly.

In her aging years Spharrk is beautiful once more. She plays with pals, eats enjoyably and rather than hide like she once felt obligated, she poses for pictures and comes up out of curiosity to greet visitors as if her life had always been mellow.

When I met Spharrk, she was skinny, not emaciated like many others. She was sore all over due to inconsistent, poor-quality foods, rather than lame from ignored injuries. But.. her heart was broken. The life she began promised comfort, maybe even luxury, excitement, maybe even success but the tides shifted, and she found her world empty of hope. The deep-seated withdrawal was in her every move even as her tummy filled and friends gathered around her. She became safe and her appearance improved drastically. Stiffness vanished, meals rounded out her frame, exercise and grooming brought her brightness a new shine, but feelings of failure pervaded.

Solace was all this mare aspired for and more than she had expected. Thoughtful human hands were fine, but not the key to her heart… another horse was. Hari was smitten by her immediately, but it was months before she did more than acknowledge him. After all, she was content with feelings of worthlessness once her surroundings steadied.

Hari's story is different from most. He kept the silly, fun-loving attitude he came with and was determined to see his new girlfriend shine. And so, she has. His patient reassurance topped all the good food and medical care, bringing a glowing spirit back to life.

For many animals a comfortable bed, safety, and consistent quality meals is all they need to recover. For so many others, a broken heart and empty spirit can be as painful as an open wound. If you would like to help horses like Hari remain in their joy and others like Spharrk rejuvenate back to life, please consider a donation to their care and forever home: www.EquestrianSpirit.ORG. As winter approaches, all the needs of our animals increase. Since our board is all volunteer, every donation goes directly to the beings we support. We appreciate your kindness and sharing of our stories, during this month of Giving Thanks.