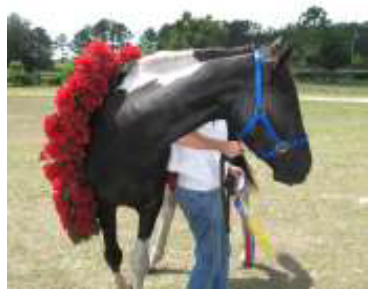
FEATHER SOUND NEWS

Serving the Tampa Bay Area, Florida

STELAH



Stelah

Stelah is a 'triple registered' Tennessee Walking/Spotted Saddle/Spotted Mountain Horse. A lot of good that did to protect her from abuse. In fact, most likely the potential for being more valuable on the market than an unregistered animal, is precisely why she was ridden too young to carry a rider. It may have been why her breeder worked her so hard to impress a buyer, or maybe all the horses where she was raised were simply part of an 'assembly-line breed and sell' operation.

Kentucky is a beautiful state. It is also a great state for a filly to grow up in… but not for Stelah.

A shopper took her trailer many miles to find a new horse with a smooth, pleasant way of going. Arriving at the advertised location she was appalled to find all prospects too thin, weary and withdrawn, each featured as having 'great gaits and lots of mileage' from hours and hours of riding through mountainous terrain. Although very concerned that most of the youngsters were too damaged to become her next pleasure mount, she could not tear herself away. By the end of her visit, she had purchased 2 fillies, heading home to explain to family and friends that ridable or not, she could not leave them behind. After much time rehabilitating one of the horses, the lady had herself a companion. We got the other one.

Four days, mostly laying down, full of gastric ulcers, disinterested in food, much less in water… the filly groaned and averted eye contact. For the most part, she appeared to be unaware of our movements or the dozens of horses within her sight. But we had a plan.

Between our holistic vet, an empathetic teenage volunteer, and our determination to provide for her every need, Stelah slowly rallied.

It is now 20 years later. This mare is one of our biggest equine photo-bombs. She fully recovered & never regressed back into ulcers, her weight is perfect, her attitude sincere and there is a glint in her eye that acknowledges that she has seen much, but revels in her time with us.

Stelah has been shown by children, participated in a national judge's clinic for horses of similar breeds. She has moved with us any number of times in search of our 'forever home'.

But the pages in her personal record book show months and months of foods and veterinary supplementation. Careful dewormings to rid her young system of parasites without compromising her body any more than it already was. Hoof care on feet that had been grown out long to 'enhance her action' (thank goodness they never got her into the tortuous shoes that have been illegal since 1970 yet are still in use today – yes, even on trail pleasure horses).

Stelah went through many changes during her convalescence. Medical science has much to offer on the wellbeing of lives including those who have been damaged, but it can fall short. Sometimes medicine lets a body down as life succumbs, internal repair unable to heal the spirit.

During the trailer ride from her Kentucky home to sunny Florida, she was numb.

Once free of her past she became sullen and angry from the pain in her belly, no focus on a future she never envisioned. We were strangers. The horses on our farm were strangers, our vets, staff and farriers, were strangers.

Those first four, disabled days, were spent mostly laying down, toying with food or water she was concerned about ingesting in fear of the burning in her tummy. But things began to change.

Along with every animal in our haven, the new horse received personal, gentle attention while a fourteen-yearold girl with her own history of medical challenges, volunteered to be Stelah's guardian. Day and night, hand feeding, dose watering and constant attention, was as important to Stelah's heart as the nutrition was to her stomach.

It is 20 years later for that young lady, too. Now grown, living out-of-state she manages a visit every year or so with immediate recognition by a fully healed, beautifully mature horse. Both lucky to have shared that time of life. Both with renewed spirit far beyond necessary meals. Both with a friendship deeper than explanation.

Equestrian Spirits 501(c)(3) animal sanctuary was recently visited by three lovely ladies, one of whom gravitated to Stelah's quiet attitude. If you would like to help feed or care for this mare or one like her, please consider a tax-deductible donation.

Stelah and her family have eaten every carrot our generous guests brought! Every dollar goes directly to the animals as our board is volunteer. Have a happy fall and thank you for caring! www.EquestrianSpirits.ORG
(863) 368-0775