FEATHER SOUND NEWS

Serving the Tampa Bay Area, Florida

WELCOME HOME

In 1956, I rescued my first animals… caterpillars. I was four.

That incident set a wheel in motion, that has yet to slow its roll.

We found out around that same time, that vaccines my father had while in the Army, had made him allergic to many things… sadly, cats and horses included.

Undaunted we cared for lizards, mice, and turtles. After my parents' divorce, dogs and cats made their way back into one of the houses while little fellows never quite left.

I did manage to ride, eventually with my own horse. Until then, I was blessed to be part of 3 stables who provided impeccable commitment to their charges, so I bore witness to quality care, educating me along the way.

As time progressed, I helped a myriad of pets, rescued who I could, calling for help as needed. By the time I was on my own, part of my path had become deeply ingrained. Through the decades, many dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, turtles, fowl, and livestock crossed my path.

By 2009, the equestrian world was encountering various challenges, leaving many horses homeless or all too often, greatly compromised. Pet education, dog adoption, trap and release feline programs were growing, while a variety of rescues for other species became more widespread. All of this seemed a movement in the right direction after years of announcements about the overpopulation of pets.

As much as I hope this focus remains and deepens, there are loopholes…

In 2010, I gathered 3 friends (one, a holistic veterinarian), a wonderful accountant, and a set of plans to form a non-profit animal rescue. So began Equestrian Spirits, Inc. Approved as a 501(c)(3) in July of 2010.

We already had charge of horses, donkeys, rabbits, dogs, cats, a variety of fowl and turtles but our setup allowed for more. Over time, pets came our way in bizarre, cruel, or sometimes kindly ways. Often our small animals come from other rescues who have an unadoptable individual. A 'no-kill' is supposed to keep those they cannot rehome but then finances, facilities, even caregivers, are spread thin.

Decades ago, to help a neighbor find her missing dog, I stopped by a local humane society, asked about the cat in the hallway and was told she was to be euthanized. Fruitless attempts to rehome herleft them little option. Within minutes they eagerly gave me the cat, waived their adoption fee and sent us on our way. Zhoie was the first formal rescue for Equestrian Spirits; she lived ten more years.

Many lives have come our way. As heartwarming as each survival is, the passage of time and, although seldom, the ones we cannot save, travel on while we are left with our memories. Those remembrances are fraught with angst when I recall the pain or fear, or both, in the eyes of a newcomer. But these images are balanced with the

joy of watching a fearful dog come rushing up to greet. Or a rabbit who used to violently attack all humans, now sitting in a lap nibbling treats. Or a horse who bit aggressively becomes a favorite to visitors.

Rescues are always in need. Food, shelter, medical care, facilities, all necessary for comfort and safety. We are no different. Our board is not paid. Our animals stay forever… costs rise constantly and donors are inundated by thousands of rescues making it difficult to decide if they can help, and if so, who.

Helping any life to be better, more fun, more peaceful… more loved, brings givers much in return. I hope this will be a year of giving and receiving! For any wishing to help us help others, please consider a donation to our Forever Home www.EquestrianSpirits.ORG.

Website, PayPal, Zelle to info@EquestrianSpirits.ORG, Save the Animals or Carl Jensen Memorial Farm Fund are just a few ways to show your support. Wishing you and your loved ones a very Happy New Year!!