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From: Susan Rothwell [<mailto:mason4213@comcast.net>]

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To: Katie Merwick

What Horses Teach Us

I first met Katie some years ago when I had heard about Second Chance Ranch and her work with the rehoming of retired racehorses - many saved from sad endings. This was just the outlet I needed to get my horse "fix" as I no longer owned my own nearby. (I am still involved in race horses, owning a few back East.) My love of horses has not abated in 60 some years.

Horses transform people and people are transformed by horses. I have seen this even when the people are not in direct contact with the horses. As I became involved in helping to raise money for Second Chance Ranch, I turned to my customers at Galloping Gerties (restaurant and bar). My customers, some who do not have two nickels to rub together, take great interest in the horses and contributing what money they can, opening their meager wallets to be a part of these horses lives, even tho they have never met. And my staff is always dreaming up ways to raise money for hay for the horses. We are happy to buy a bale at a time.

The effectiveness in physical and emotional therapy is huge when working with horses. There can be dramatic turn arounds in the emotional and physical lives of people who are in regular contact with horses. It goes one step further tho: horses make a difference in our lives, but we make a difference in the horses lives. I have lost myself in grooming a SCR horse that hasn't had hands on for days and they relish it - horses need attention and need to feel useful. Using horses for therapy is good for all of us. When I am involved in brushing or nuzzling one of Katie's horses, I enjoy myself in the moment and think of nothing else. The best therapy of all!

We learn compassion, commitment and become partners with the horses whether we are at the barn with them or just involved in their lives by donating to their care. It calls to our compassion. And compassion is practicing magic.

In my own life and those of our Galloping Gerties people, we feel we belong to SCR and we are making a difference even if just at a little bit at a time. The horses join us together in that passion for SCR to succeed and the horses to lead happy and useful lives.

Susan Rothwell
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