

The Rundown

A Quarterly Newsletter

April 2021

Issue #10

Snow Day

The wind bit at my face. The windchill sat steadily at -4. Thigh-high drifts were mostly firm enough to walk on until you broke through in a soft spot and had to climb out, then they seemed to swallow you whole. The horses didn't mind though. They were made for this. Cezar, Winston, and Faith had been confined to their paddocks behind the barn to save the fragile grass roots for healthy spring growth and robust summer grazing, but since the turf was buried under a foot of snow, we decided to let them out to play.

Juli, one of our volunteers, took her place to photograph the display that was sure to come. I opened the gate and got out of the way as two frosty horses thundered past. Strong legs cut through the snow as they leaped and bucked and ran through the drifts. Pure Joy.

Then Winston found his way out the gate. As soon as he knew he was free, he took off at a trot. The ground felt different, and since his feet are his eyes, he proceeded cautiously at first. And then Faith found him. She ran circles around him as if to show him it was okay. He took off. The first steady canter I have ever seen him take. He ran a small circle in the middle of the pasture where he knew no fence would stop him. He bucked and rolled, just like the rest of them, continuing to have near misses with Faith and Cezar to make sure the way was clear. Newfound confidence bloomed. If he got close to a fence, I yelled his name

through the wind. He would stop, listen for the others, and continue playing.

When they were huffing and puffing great clouds of steam and frost, we brought them back to their paddocks. They got a snack of sweet, grass hay and sighed, contented. Humans aren't the only ones who enjoy a snow day.



Winston wears a fly mask to protest his eyes.

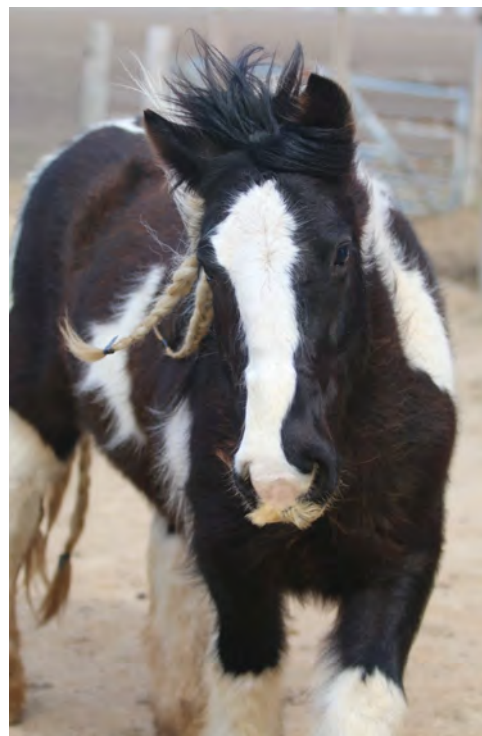


The Great Escape

I woke up one Thursday morning and got the kids ready for the day as I would any other. They were particularly resistant, so I didn't look at my phone until 8:30. I had a missed message that sent my heart racing. "Are you missing a horse?"

It was the neighbors. I tried to remember what I did with the horses the night before. They should all have been closed in their stalls since the temperature was supposed to dip below zero. I threw on my boots to go outside and investigate, but before I reached the barn, Tish Lane, the neighbor, was already pulling into the driveway. They had caught Winston, she said. He had let them walk right up and slip the halter on his head like he had known them all his life. Emily VonBeron was walking him up the road as we spoke. I looked at his stall and found his door in pieces with no clues as to how he did it.

I checked on the girls and a few minutes later Winston and Emily came down the driveway. He nickered to his friends and casually walked into his paddock. There wasn't a scratch on him. The theory is that he was leaning on his door to reach some hay on the floor and because he is so strong, the screws pulled out. Needless to say, he's a little food motivated.



Winston is a big, strong sweetheart!



**The 2021 season will begin on May 3!
Applications are on our website.**

Notice! We have a new web address.

We renewed our website address to better reflect our name. You can now find us at www.hopelivesyouthranch.org

How to Contact Us:

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Also Find Us on Facebook and Instagram!

www.facebook.com/hopelivesrr/

www.instagram.com/hopelivesrr/

How We Are Funded

Every session at Hope Lives Youth Ranch is free of charge. However, we request a donation from students to cover babysitting charges incurred by our director, Emily Reichmann. We are a registered 501(c)3 and are funded solely through solicited donations and the generosity of our community. 100% of the funds donated to Hope Lives Youth Ranch are used to care for the horses and create a safe environment for the children we serve. If you would like to donate to our program, go to www.hopelivesrescueranch.org/funding or mail your contribution to: 976 E 2250 North Road, Monticello, IL 61856.