

The Story of Sarah

S.A.F.E. Save a Forgotten Equine

It was in a cold, dark cattle stall in the back of an auction barn where we first laid eyes on Sarah. She was a skeletal bay mare with filthy, matted fur, bald spots, burrs in her mane and tail, and a hugely enlarged front knee. She stood facing the back of the stall with her head down, and would not even look at us as we peered through the wooden slats at her. She seemed to have decided she was ready to die.

We soon learned that the mare had been abandoned at the auction, and had been living in that stall for nearly two months. At first the only comfort we could offer was to gently groom her and try to get her clean enough to be able to put a blanket on her. But as we brushed her and pet her and spoke quietly to her, a light slowly started to come on in her eyes. By showing her just the simplest kindness, we got to see this sad little mare come back to life just a little. And having brought her that far, we had no choice but to save her. While one SAFE volunteer persuaded the auction owner to give the horse to us, other members of SAFE were busy arranging transportation, vet care (many thanks to our wonderful rescue vet Dr. Hannah Evergreen!), and foster care. And when all the details were in place, Sarah left the auction barn on a windy Thanksgiving morning to start her new life.

Once in foster care, Sarah had a long road back to health, but she was a sweet girl who seemed to appreciate everything that was done for her. She greeted her caretakers with a nicker, and everyone who met her fell in love with her, humans and geldings alike. Her knee was enlarged due to arthritis, and she was almost always stiff in the morning, but after a quick roll to shake things out, she could often be seen frolicking in the pasture, or at least doing a good impression of frolicking. Her newfound love of life was evident in everything she did.

In early February, Sarah was moved to a new foster home at a small barn called Bedlam Farm in Bothell WA where the barns owners and some of their boarders had chipped in to offer Sarah two months of free board. It was less than two weeks later that SAFE received the following message from Melanie Baird at Bedlam: "Ok, so we didn't really win the lotto, but we would like Sarah to spend the rest of her life here with us. So, business sense be damned, the farm will support her. Assuming y'all agree, she can retire here."

Today Sarah is a transformed mare who looks nothing like the horse we first met in that auction barn. Her bright bay coat is dappled and her eyes shine. She is best friends with the mare in the stall next to hers, and they can often be seen "chatting" late into the night. She spends her days as part of a band of mares, and she loves to take a swim in her water tank on hot days, just so long as she can blow bubbles. Bedlam Farms has taken tremendous care of Sarah, and has provided her with excellent vet care in an attempt to make her bad knee more comfortable. She's not a young thing, and she'll never be rideable, but her new family treasures her all the same. Sarah is a testament to the power of love and kindness, and we are all thankful that our paths crossed last November.