Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Drill Team

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Cowgirl Spirit performs at Emerald Downs!

L to R: Juliane on Mollie, Kristin on Casanova, Casie on Amira, Charlotte on Cheyenne at Emerald Downs.

Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Drill Team had the privilege of performing a four-man drill on the race track at Emerald Downs during the track's opening night festivities on April 15. Our cowgirls and rescue horses executed their first performance of the 2011 drill season like real pros!

Juliane rode Mollie, a spirited four year old Morgan cross mare, who thoroughly enjoyed herself during the performance. Kristin rode CSRDT alumni Casanova, a 2009 rescue who found his forever home with Cowgirl Spirit's VP and Treasurer, Belinda. Casie rode team-favorite, Amira, a sweet, well mannered Arabian mare, and Charlotte rode Cheyenne, a jet black Morgan cross mare who is a pleasure to ride.

Cowgirl Spirit was also represented by dozens of other Cowgirls and Cowboys who joined the group in the Winner's Circle after the second race of the night. The dedicated members and volunteers also manned a CSRDT information booth during the rest of the races where they were able to spread the word about the group's mission.

Cowgirl Spirit's 2011 Officers

Cowgirl Spirit is thrilled to announce its 2011 Officers: Teri Gustafson was reelected as president (and continues to fill her permanent role of "Team Mom"). Teri's horsemanship experience and stable management skills make her an invaluable asset to this organization. This is Teri's second year as president of the organization, and the team looks forward to another fantastic year under her and the other officers' leadership.

Belinda Jensen was elected vice president and treasurer. Her strong business management and organizational skills make her the perfect member for these positions. Belinda joined Cowgirl Spirit in 2009 and has taken an active leadership role in the organization ever since, regularly volunteering for committees and coordinating successful fundraisers. Belinda is also the proud adoptive mother of team-favorite CSRDT rescue, Casanova.

Kristin Brown has been appointed as the organization's secretary for the remainder of 2011. Kristin served as secretary in 2009 and 2010, and after a brief hiatus at the beginning of the year, she is back as the organizations main communications contact and record-keeper.

Juliane Hanley is the organization's founder and lead horse trainer. Her experience with equestrian drill, her knack with training horses and teaching others the skills to do the same make her an outstanding resource to the organization.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Winter Floods	2
Poker Ride Recap	2
Trailer Fire	3
Drill Team Update	3
Adoptions	3
Rescue Updates	4
New Rescues	4
NWESC Spring Fling	5
Local Donation	5
Our Sponsors	5

OPENINGS FOR THE 2011 DRILL TEAM

Practices for the 2011 drill competition season are underway! Practices are held at 9:00 am until noon each Sunday at the Fall City Arena, and at 5:30 on Wednesday evenings at Kathryn Taylor Equestrian Park in Redmond, WA.

We are still accepting new members for this year's competition season and we'd love to have you be a part of our team! If you are interested in volunteering and performing with our rescue horses, please e-mail officers@csrdt.org for more info!

Rescues stayed safe and sound above winter flood waters

Much of 2010 was spent preparing for this past winter's flood season. Eileen Carrel, team member and adoptive mother of 2010 CSRDT rescue Tattle, worked tirelessly with the King Conservation District to develop a workable farm plan for the group's leased, 15-acre headquarters property in Carnation. Teri Gustafson, the team's president, spent hours coordinating load after load of fill dirt and gravel to make a safe area for our horses during severe floods that can occur in the Snoqualmie Valley. The work was completed just in time. Shortly after the last fencepost was in place, the floodwaters began to rise.

Knowing that the group's rescue horses were safe during the three major floods this winter was an enormous weight off of the minds of all of Cowgirl Spirit's members and supporters. After posting flood photos on the team's Facebook page, they received notes of support from their Facebook fans around the world.

We cannot thank our volunteers, members, BP Trucking, King Conservation District, and Meadowlake Farm enough for everything they did to assist us in making these incredible improvements to our property.

Rescues Jagger, Maya, Amira, and Honor investigate their pasture as the flood waters begin to recede.

2011 Poker Ride Fundraiser

Christina, Belinda, Casie, Eileen, Charlotte, and Khallie Jo get ready.

Joel Lewis & Guitar.

Cowgirls manning the registration booth.

Michael and Belinda prepare a delicious lunch for hungry riders.

April 9, 2011 marked Cowgirl Spirit's first annual Poker Ride Fundraiser. The group's Cowgirls and Cowboys spent several weeks preparing for the event by making and procuring donations for the raffle, marketing the event, plotting the trail course, baking, and preparing signs and materials for the big day.

Close to 100 riders attended the event, and funds were also raised by the sale of raffle tickets, lunch, and bake-sale items. Riders were also treated to live music by Joel Lewis and his Guitar. The event was wrapped up by awarding prizes for the best poker hands of the day, and by drawing for raffle prizes.

Overall, the group raised enough funds during this event to almost completely finance their 2011competition, entry, and transportation fees. This means our rescues will reap the benefits of attending major competitions and local shows, which will increase their chances of being adopted, as well as make them more well-rounded horses. Thank you to all who helped to make this event such a huge success, especially Kelly Taylor, DVM, who stayed on hand during the event in case any of the participating horses needed medical attention.

The team looks forward to hosting this annual event for years to come!

The Great Trailer Fire of 2011

Team members were treated to quite a sight as they pulled into the Fall City Arena parking area for practice one January morning: As the trailer pulled into the lot, the team members could see a small fire burning in the rearmost wheel bearing of the large stock trailer that the group uses to transport their rescues for practice each week. Member Khallie Jo ran across the parking lot at the same time Juliane saw the fire in her side-view mirror. Cowgirl Spirit Cowboy, John Croon, immediately jumped out of the truck to put out the fire. The horses were safely evacuated from the trailer and had a brief warm-up in the arena before the team began the four hour process of transporting horses back to their headquarters in the Cowgirl Spirit two-horse straight-load trailer.

Thankfully, Cowgirl Spirit has an amazing cast of highly-skilled members and volunteers. John Croon was able to repair Juliane's trailer within a week, so she was able to, once again, transport the team's horses to drill team practice. Since the team only owns a two-horse trailer, they often find themselves in a pickle when it comes to trailering to practices and competitions. If you or someone you know has a 3 horse or larger stock trailer in solid condition for a very reasonable price (or for donation to Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Drill Team), the team would love to hear from you!

A dandy brush, strategically wedged into the trailer's suspension, allowed Juliane to carefully limp the damaged trailer back to her home for repairs.

Drill Team Update

Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Drill Team is having a great 2011 so far! The rescues and riders are working hard at their Sunday and Wednesday practices, learning new four- and eight-man drills and practicing basic maneuvers during team warm-ups. The team has also begun integrating a warm-up period of suppling exercises for both riders and horses. The team is looking forward to regularly focusing on increasing the flexibility of both its horses and riders!

With trailering costs and gasoline prices soaring ever-higher, the team has had to reevaluate their game plan for showing off their rescues this summer. Instead of attending all six major Washington drill team competitions at various locations across the state, Cowgirl Spirit has decided to diversify its performance venues. While the team will still compete in a couple of the closer drill competitions, they will also investigate performing drill demonstrations at local shows and events throughout the summer, which will allow them to not only show off their rescues to potential adoptive homes, but also spread the word about their organization to the local horse community. Keep your eyes peeled for CSRDT this summer in local parades, horse shows, community events, and more!

If you'd like information on having CSRDT perform at your Seattle-area event this summer, please contact officers@csrdt.org.

Adoptions

Wingman, aka Blazing Wing Command, never even made it to the Cowgirl Spirit headquarters before founder, Juliane Hanley fell in love and adopted him. Wingman had been spending quarantine time at Juliane's after he was rescued from the auction, and as she got to learn more about this impressive, triple-registered gelding, she knew he had to be part of her herd. Wingman has proven to be a very flashy boy, and Juliane looks forward to showing him this summer at local schooling shows.

Tattle, Cowgirl Spirit's second off-the-track Thoroughbred rescue, was adopted in late 2010 by Cowgirl Spirit member, Eileen Carrel. Tattle is now wowing her family, trainers and onlookers as she shows off her new talent as a hunter/jumper. Eileen and Tattle have worked tirelessly on making the transition from race horse to riding horse, and their hard work certainly shows! Eileen and Tattle will be competing throughout the summer at various Hunter/Jumper shows, including the 2011 Evergreen Classic in Carnation, Washington.

Current Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Updates:

Cowgirl Spirit's rescues have had a pretty good winter season as far as health is concerned, but weren't without typical veterinary issues. The rescues and members are thrilled that spring is finally here, and have begun preparing for the summer competition and show seasons. If you would like to arrange a time to meet Cowgirl Spirit's rescues, or visit their headquarters in Carnation, Washington, please e-mail officers@csrdt.org. Members are also available to provide educational tours at our HQ to scout troops, home school groups, etc.

Mollie, a 14.1 hh, four year old mare, developed a very severe abscess in her front left hoof, requiring veterinary care plus weekly farrier treatments. Mollie was placed on stall rest until her hoof was able to heal. She was unable to attend practices for almost a month, but she mended quickly and is now back to her funny self. Mollie is a very smart mare, and is definitely one of the bosses of the herd. She is a handful and is a very fun horse for experienced riders!

Cricket had a slight chest-cold and persistent cough early in the year, but is now back to good health. She can be kind of finicky with her daily grain ration, but remains in good weight for her petite build. Cricket is a very personable horse, and is a favorite of the CSRDT members and volunteers. Since she has such a willing and friendly personality, and is so proportionately built at 13.3 hands (she's built like a tiny Thoroughbred), she would make an outstanding child's show horse. She has shown interest in jumping, but hasn't done so with a rider yet. The team hopes to start her over small jumps under saddle in the next few weeks.

Jagger remains his sweet, spunky little self. He is quite a ham and is very inquisitive, needing to be in on everything that is going on. Eileen has been working with him each week for practices and they are always stunning to watch together. Jagger currently has a family interested in him, and will most likely be going to his new adoptive home in early May.

Cheyenne, a 14.3 hh black Morgan cross mare, has been a great horse since she began practicing with the team several months ago. She stops on a dime, neck reins, and is very sensitive to leg cues. Cheyenne is ready for adoption whenever the right family comes along. Cheyenne had a small fungal skin condition in the beginning of the year, but with treatment, has recovered perfectly.

Ruben is still enjoying his time at National School of Academic Equitation in Woodinville, Washington, where he is being sponsored by Christie and Nate Fisher for his full board and ongoing training. Ruben is an original Cowgirl Spirit rescue from 2005, who was returned to the organization when his adoptive owner ran into financial difficulties. Ruben is blind in one eye, is approximately 18 years old, and is a creature of habit. He would make an outstanding pasture friend, and bonds quickly with another horse if pastured together. If you are interested in adopting Ruben, he is available on a gift contract with no adoption fee.

Amira is a sweet, wonderful mare who is by far the current "Cadillac" of the Cowgirl Spirit herd. She is basically bomb-proof, has great ground manners, and will do anything she is asked under saddle. She has the most darling habit of flapping her lips when she gets the slightest bit concerned about something. Amira is also ready for adoption, and would make an outstanding beginner's or child's horse.

Honor is a very intelligent mare, who is definitely taking her time in developing her trust of humans. Each training session sees new advances in her progress, yet always has to start from ground-zero each time. She is a beautiful, fascinating horse, and will be a trusted, lifelong partner for the right person. Honor is currently working through her tying issues, but has made great progress in the past couple of weeks. Since the humans of Cowgirl Spirit are on to her tricks with tying, they've been able to work past Honor's avoidance tactics and make real progress with fixing this dangerous habit.

Newest Rescues:

Maya is a gorgeous 3 year old Quarter Horse filly with a chestnut coat and flaxen mane and tail. Maya was rescued from starvation and neglect, but has recovered beautifully thanks to the care of the Northwest Equine Stewardship Center. Maya was born blind in her left eye, but is not letting it affect her training. She has been started under saddle and is proving to be a willing student! Maya is very sturdily built and is approximately 14.2hh. She will be ready for adoption in the next few months.

Sunny is a 4 year old Thoroughbred who was rescued in early January 2011. She was to be euthanized by her original owner because of ongoing health and behavioral issues, but came to Cowgirl Spirit as a last chance for rehabilitation. She hasn't joined the Cowgirl Spirit herd yet since she currently requires regular medication as well as regular bodywork treatments. She is currently receiving treatment at the Northwest Equine Stewardship Center in Monroe, where she is receiving regular medication, acupuncture, and chiropractic work for her chronic body pain. NWESC has arranged for her necessary ongoing treatment and board to be sponsored at the center for the next six months. Cowgirl Spirit cannot thank Dr. Hannah Evergreen and NWESC enough for their assistance and generosity with Sunny.

Feel the Spirit...

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NWESC Spring Fling Performance

Cowgirl Spirit Rescue Drill Team had the great pleasure of performing a drill demonstration at the Northwest Equine Stewardship Center's Spring Fling in mid-March. The fundraising event benefitted NWESC, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting a mutually beneficial relationship between horses and humans by encouraging community responsibility and stewardship for all horses. NWESC provides veterinary rehabilitation for local equine rescue groups and is also committed to providing educational and therapeutic opportunities for people and prevention of unwanted horses in the first place.

Cowgirl Spirit's rescues and riders performed proudly during their demonstration. Unfortunately, Maya, a NWESC alum, came down with a serious abscess that day and was unable to perform with her fellow Cowgirl Spirit rescues! There were, however, many old friends from NWESC who were thrilled to see her, even if she couldn't show off her new skills under saddle.

Carnation Business Donates $1000 to CSRDT

In early March, Cowgirl Spirit received a $1000 donation from Business Telecom Products, Inc., a local Carnation business. "As a company, we know how important it is to stay involved with local charities," said Marilyn Torrison, president of BTP. "We are thrilled to be able to contribute to this great horse rescue group. Our donation will be used for medical and farrier treatments, as well as the group's regular ongoing feed costs."

BTP has been a supporter of Cowgirl Spirit for years, but the organization was still surprised and thrilled when BTP made such a large donation to the group. "Times are still tough for a lot of people, so this contribution makes a huge difference for us as we come out of winter," said Teri Gustafson, Cowgirl Spirit president.

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Special thanks to our dedicated sustaining donors: ***Sylvia Starr, Belinda Jensen, Christie and Nate Fisher, and Anne Polavin. If you're interested in becoming a sustaining donor, please contact officers@csrdt.org.***