

How Second Chance Ranch changed my life

I'm a person who grew up loving, riding and caring for horses from my early childhood into young adulthood. A fond childhood memory of a time when I was innocent to the world. I found myself dealing with PTSD in early 2009 and was searching for a meaningful opportunity to become involved horses again, thirty years later. This is why it is so important for kids and teens to experience horses now - most people always full circle back to the thing that made them happiest in the past. It's like a reset button! The Seattle Times/PI did a feature article about the work that Katie Merwick was doing with Off The Track Thoroughbreds at Second Chance Ranch in Elma, WA. I was deeply moved by the newspaper piece and began volunteering regularly at the ranch.

The horses were in various states of transition and from varying backgrounds - from well known athletes and champions to those who had seen far more neglect than any animal should. Some nearly escaped death by slaughter. It was and still is an enormous job to bring these animals back to health, or to rekindle trust with mankind. The horses from a more fortunate background seemed to have an understanding or recognition of this - I found it fascinating to observe the herd mentality and the mentoring between the horses.

Katie is a master at reading horses and explaining herd behavior. The learning and healing of each person who visits is passed on through her connection with them, but it's the horses that have the magic ;-). Their progress was amazing, and there have been so many success stories; was a success story for me on a personal level, too. My entire life has changed in these past six years. The crossroads I was at... it could have gone either way, but because of the horses at this farm, my life took a positive turn. I still struggle with a normal amount of depression, fear, insecurity like everyone else, but I have a tool and a skill to manage it.

She matched me with my wonderful, retired rodeo horse, Todd, and we've moved to a country setting and built a barn AND a wonderful new life. I owe it all to the horses at SCR. They are family for life!!

Sincerely,
Constance Fleming
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