

July 26, 2013

Let's Stop The Excuses —

Happy Trails Assists Greater Akron Humane Society With Rescue Of Two Sadly Neglected Horses

(Please pardon the quality of photos included in this article. We did the best we could with the lighting in the barn where the rescue took place as well as in the Happy Trails rescue barn that evening. Better photos will be posted as soon as we can do so.)

Do you know how often we see repeat offenders in animal abuse cases? There seems to be a familiarity with people who neglect or abuse animals, a common friendship between abusers who justify their lack of care with each other. Chance are if you neglect or abuse an animal, you have a friend or family member who has also done the same. In this case, the owner is tied to past neglect situations and also tied to other people who have been found guilty of animal abuse.



With this pattern of neglect comes a pattern of excuses.

I could have written the script for the past few rescues that Happy Trails was involved with. This current horse neglect case is no different. I guess you can try to justify anything you do, and then after a while actually convince yourself to believe it.

On Thursday July 25th, Happy Trails assisted the Greater Akron Humane Society with the removal of two sadly neglected horses who had been kept in stalls inside a barn for about two years...with no turn out. There wasn't even fencing on the property where a horse could have been turned out, should an owner have chosen to do so. We will not release the name of the owner at this time due to

pending charges, but this story should be told.

The excuses for the extreme neglect was 'family issues'. As I spoke with the owner, I got the, "*You don't know what I've been through these past few years,*" speech. It was followed by a long list of woes that is on my list of things that I call 'life'. Apparently all of us who have family issues or personal problems should be granted a cart blanche pass to not feed or care for any animals in our possession. I am guessing that pass will also apply then to any children or elderly parents in our care also. I get so tired of hearing the same excuses time and time again. Sure, they may be slightly different, but not much. They all have the same tone. We apparently are now living in an age where we can excuse pretty much anything we do. At what point do we step up and take responsibility for our own actions and say, "*You know, I did that and it was wrong. I am sorry and will do my best to make it right.*" Whatever "*it*" may be.

One of the reasons that Happy Trails was originally created was to help farm animals, just like these two horses, who are hidden in off-the-road barns and are in need of medical and veterinary attention, proper nutrition, sanitary living conditions, and a caring, responsible owner. *We discovered that these two horses were in need of all of the above.*

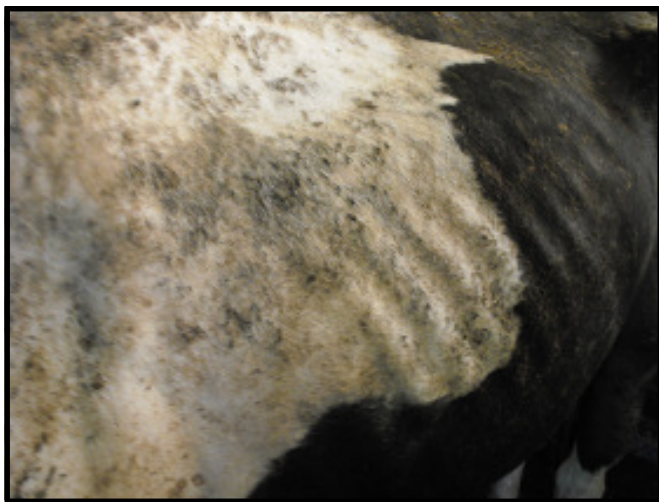
The paint horse shown in the photo on the front page is a six year old black and white stallion. *Of course* there has to be a stallion in every rescue. No sense in properly gelding a stud to prevent irresponsible breeding or to afford him turn-out with other horses. That would make too much sense.



He was caked with dried manure from laying in his own waste. He was painfully thin, with hooves that are extremely overgrown. The photo on the top right shows his front hooves. The front left hoof was beginning to curl up and become deformed.

His water bucket was actually dry at the bottom - not even a sign of having had water recently. As we observed his behavior before loading him in the rescue trailer, the emaciated stallion would walk from his water bucket to his feed bucket, dipping his head into both as he searched for food and water.

The photo at the left shows his ribs are clearly visible. The veterinary medical profession teaches us that a quarter inch of fat should be present over the rib bones. There is no fat on his rib bones here. I am hoping that we can rehabilitate the stallion, and as soon as it's safe and the horse is healthy enough, get



his gelded. We'll see what the vet has to say during their examination today.

I don't believe that the mare, I am sad to say, has a very good chance of making it. Once again I heard the typical excuse of why she's in such hideous condition. "She's old. She's arthritic." I've worked with a lot of older horses and ones with arthritis. Just because they are old or arthritic means that they have to be starved to death on top of those things too.

Of course the owner, as per the pre-written script of people who neglect horses, miraculously made bags of grain and a mound of sawdust appear the day we picked them up.

The sweet older mare (shown here on the right) is supposed to be in her late twenties. The photos shows her now in a recovery stall at Happy Trails. (We still need sponsors for our recovery stalls. Check out the website at www.happytrailsfarm.org for more information.) When we lead her out of her feces-covered stall, she stopped for a moment to blink and look around. She couldn't believe her good fortune that she was being taken out of her stall. When we



reached the open ramp of the horse trailer, I wasn't sure how she would react. After not having been out of her stall for so long, would she be fearful of the trailer? As Ashley began walking the limping mare toward the trailer, there was no hesitation whatsoever. The mare was more than ready to leave. Looking straight ahead she didn't even stop at the ramp, but instead continued on with determination. She entered the trailer and stood quietly and politely. She thought her rescue was long overdue.

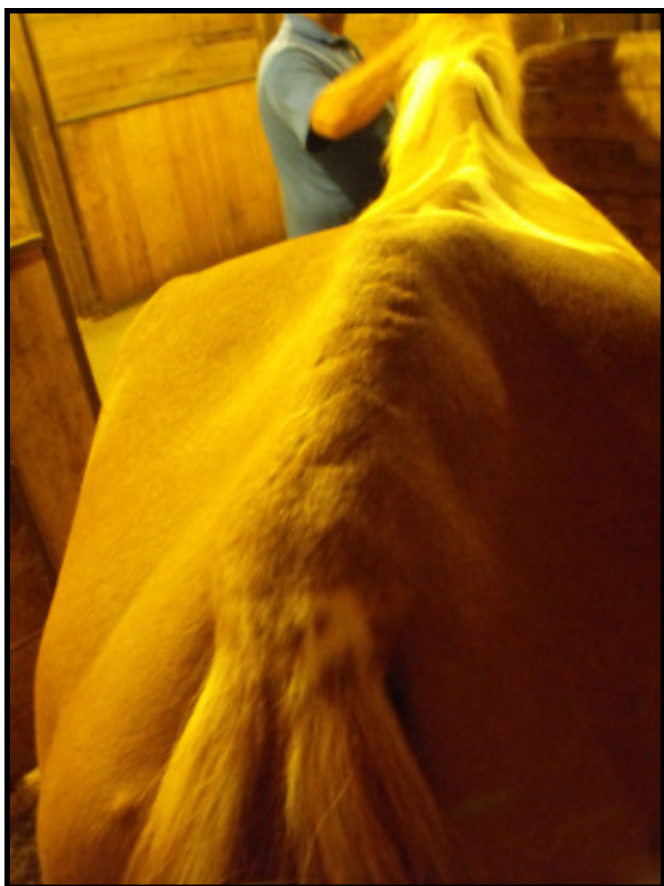
She is emaciated, with her spine, hips and ribs protruding (photos left and bottom right show this). Her hooves (shown top left) are in terrible shape, with layers



of the hooves peeling upward and outward. Her front legs are bowed and her one knee is enlarged.

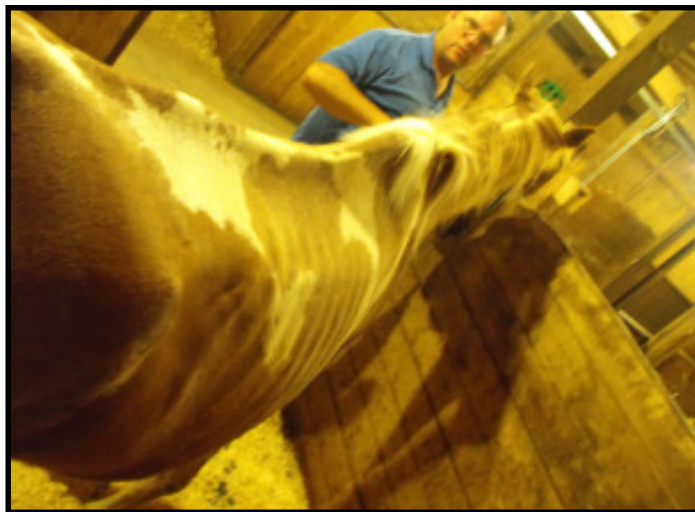
The vet will be giving both horses a complete examination today and providing us with an overall assessment of their health and projected recovery prognosis.

Sadly, we understand that



other horses had been kept in the barn also, but they died. These are the two remaining horses.

Happy Trails is choosing to be the responsible party that their owners could not be. If we can provide each horse with a good quality of life and a realistic rehabilitation program monitored by the veterinarian, we will go above and beyond to make their recovery happen.



If the older mare has health issues that will prevent her from having a good quality of life, we will also take that responsibility to help her cross into the world of the spirit.

Either way, we will not give these horses any excuses. We will give them our all, even if that “all” means making difficult decisions for their higher good.

Once again, together we are reaching out to provide abused and neglected animals the care they need. The care they deserve.

If you are interested in helping out with the cost of their care, donations are tax deductible and can be made either via PayPal on our website at www.happytrailsfarm.org, by calling in your charge card to Happy Trails at 330-296-5914, or by sending a check with “paint horse rescue” in the memo to Happy Trails, 5623 New Milford Rd., Ravenna, Ohio 44266.

In addition to a thank you letter and tax receipt, all donors will receive updates and a color photo of the horses.

Thank you for helping us stop the excuses.

PS As you may already know, Happy Trails only assists in farm animal abuse and neglect cases when cruelty charges are filed against an owner or caretaker and they are held responsible for they suffering they’ve created.

The Greater Akron Humane Society is indeed filing cruelty charges against the owner. We will keep everyone posted as to the progress of the court proceedings.



NAMES WITH MEANING

Happy Trails often gives a new names to the rescued animals that have a special meaning. These two rescued paint horses need a special name, maybe a Native American name, to grant them peace and healing in their lives. If you have any name suggestions and the meaning behind the name, email us at office@happytrailsfarm.org.

