

A SWEET OLD HORSE



Duke, photo by Karin Johnson, Cowgirl Designs

Arthur Chilcote first spotted Duke at the Healing Hearts Annual Gala at Westworld last October. There outside Brett's Barn stood the beautiful black gelding described by Arthur's wife Andrea as "a sweet old horse."

Life had not always been so sweet for the animal. According to Healing Hearts Rehab Manager, Nan Sonderer, Duke, a horse at least thirty years old, was "recently recovering and rehabilitating from a life of abuse."

Prior to coming to Healing Hearts, Duke had been used as a rodeo horse and had participated in "horse tripping." This "sport" is "played" by cowboys (charros) where they lasso the legs of a galloping horse, throwing the animal to the ground. The cruel and abusive "competition" terrifies, maims and often fatally injures horses. This horrific game is popular to this day in Mexico and still not outlawed in many of the states. Thankfully a horsetripping ban was passed in Arizona during the 2010 legislature session.

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Duke had already been rescued by another woman from Cave Creek who was able to acquire him and another horse from an auction. Both horses required immediate care for Cushing's disease. Duke had scars on his head and neck as well as trouble with his jaw when chewing. This woman worked tirelessly for nearly three years bringing both of these horses to their top condition. Unfortunately, later she lost her property and was unable to care for the rescued horses any longer.

Healing Hearts worked in conjunction with Arizona Equine Rescue in order to facilitate good homes for both of these horses that had been saved from slaughter after a life of abuse.

"It is important for people to know that we work as a cooperative with the best interest for the horses; we network ourselves and are not an isolated organization," Nan said when speaking of Healing Hearts Animal Rescue and Refuge.

After about a month of serious thought, Arthur knew that he wanted to visit the Healing Hearts Refuge in Willcox and see about possibly adopting Duke. In just a short time thereafter, Arthur and Andrea were approved for the adoption process. Once approved Arthur asked if Duke could be delivered to what would soon be Duke's new home, Morning Star Ranch. After a thorough examination from the veterinarian, Duke was set up with his own stall at Morning Star. Duke finally has the dream home that he has always deserved.

It takes a special person to undertake the adoption of a rescue horse. Arthur Chilcote is one such individual. Duke has had many good days but also has struggled with two serious bouts with colic. After spending countless hours caring for Duke, even the veterinarian was thankful to Arthur. "Thank you for letting him live!" he told Arthur after one recent treatment for Duke who suffered from colic.

"This made me feel really good and not give up on him", said Arthur. "Duke is a fighter too. I also find it interesting that Duke has returned back to the Cave Creek area."

Nan described Duke's loving home at Morning Star Ranch, "The name Duke fits perfectly, he is now being treated like royalty!"



Photo by Karin Johnson, *Cowgirl Designs*