

Challenge pairs trainers and rescue horses

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

Take a group of skilled horse trainers, add some horses languishing at a local rescue, organize an event to showcase the efforts of the trainers and you have the Rescue Revolution Trainers Challenge.

This unique collaboration is a first between Equine Outreach horse rescue, Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition and the trainers, who are scattered across the state. The Challenge culminates in a competition and live auction of the trained horses on May 30-31, at the Rim Rock Riders Event Center at Brasada Ranch in Powell Butte.

Modeled on the highly successful Mustang Makeover competitions, this one has several features that make it much more accessible and interesting to the average horse owner.

First of all, none of the horses are mustangs fresh from the range. Several of the horses are from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs herd, which does run free on the reservation but the horses have been handled. Several more are well-bred thoroughbreds from a neglect case that occurred in Powell Butte several years ago. These fine and athletic examples of the breed have also been handled and around humans for

several years.

The focus of this event is on building a solid training foundation over the course of several months, enabling the horses to transition to the riding style of their new owners. This highlights the commitment the trainers have to finding good homes for these deserving rescue horses.

“The odds of an untrained horse finding a home are just about nil.”
— Alison Weston

Alison Weston of Sisters is one of the trainers taking on the challenge. She chose two horses, a thoroughbred gelding, Buddy, and a Warm Springs mare, Carmelita. Both are making good progress, with Buddy making particularly large strides. He’s gone from an intractable, frightened rebel to a friendly and teachable horse willing to make an effort.

“The odds of an untrained horse finding a home are just about nil,” Weston said.

She’s worked with other

rescue horses, and liked the months-long timeline in this event. It gives the trainers time to really know the horses, which in turn helps if the adopters have issues down the line. Weston will make herself available for the new owners of Carmelita and Buddy and hopes the other trainers do the same for the purchasers of their horses.

Trainers are asked to commit to posting updates on their training progress so potential adopters can chart progress and see the changes in the horses. These updates are on the Rescue Revolution Facebook page. So far 10 trainers are putting the foundations onto 18 horses. But there is room for more.

Gayle Hunt of the Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition is one of the organizers of the event. She said there are still some horses available if there are other trainers looking for a worthwhile challenge. They will be accepting applications from trainers until February 14. She’d especially like to see more of the thoroughbreds going to work.

“There are so many skilled hunter/jumper trainers here. This is a great opportunity,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY BARBY SNELL

Carmelita is undergoing training as part of Rescue Revolution.

Hunt and Weston both noted that there are individuals and businesses that believe in the concept of horse rescue but don’t have the facilities or desire to actually own a horse. Participation is possible in the form of sponsorships of horses

or trainers during the Rescue Revolution. All this adds up to a winning situation for each participant – trainers, horses, and new owners.

Information and applications can be found online at www.rescuerevolution.info.

Agenda

Sisters City Council
City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Ave.

January 29, 8 a.m.

Goal-setting session

- Expectations.
- Review councilors’ goals.
- Review current financial projections.
- Review current and projected cash positions.
- Review current public works projects, timing, sources and uses of funds.
- Review potential public works projects, sources and uses of funds.
- Review public outreach / involvement; survey concept; CCI; other ideas.
- Review EDCO funding.
- Review forgivable loan program.
- Review urban renewal grants.
- Review community grants.
- Review SDCs.
- Review long term infrastructure — plan for growth.
- Review Chamber funding/purpose.
- Prioritize goals.

Spread Love
This Valentine's Day in Sisters

Watch February 4 & 11
for The Nugget's
Valentine's Day Special Section

Find the perfect gifts to show the
special people in your life
how much you care.