Trail to success in horse adoption

By Kathryn Godsiff Correspondent

Adopting a rescued horse is a process, one that can be fraught with unexpected bumps and bruises. Too often, when those rough spots crop up, the horse is passed along to another hopeful owner. Sisters horse trainer Alison Weston started a nonprofit this year with the intention of creating a trail to success for horses ending up in a rescue and those warm-hearted people who choose them.

Solid Strides, a 501(c)(3) entity, has a three-fold mission: to provide training for the horses, then to matchmake to find appropriate homes, and finally to provide ongoing training and support for the new pairs. The post-adoption services are an aspect not normally found in the horse-rescue world, one that Weston emphasizes.

The first horse to go through the program, Carmelita, found a committed home and the follow-up cemented a relationship between Carmelita and her new owner that showed Weston she was onto a good idea.

"The whole point of this is no failure. I want to send people on their way to a successful partnership with their new horse."

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Painkillers

Education for those who volunteer at rescues is also offered. Often those who run the rescue establishments are committed to the day-to-day operations and don't have time or space to train the volunteers beyond the basics. Weston's passion for developing horsemanship in every area of horse-care meets a need in the rescue world.

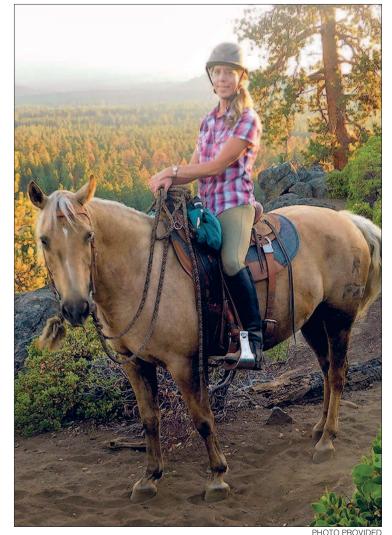
I want to send " people on their way to a successful partnership with their new horse. Alison Weston

A riding accident in October has Weston sidelined for the winter, and her current Solid Strides horse, Summer, will resume training in the spring. However, Weston discovered that the evaluapotential of some of their horse-adopter pairs.

Effective horse training is a long-term commitment. Weston doesn't believe in the quick makeover-type processes that capture attention but don't offer followup. She accepts that the Solid Strides approach will be slow and steady. This does present some funding challenges, however.

"The main source of steady income for Solid Strides is the \$1,500 adoption fee for each horse," Weston said. "With me out of commission, we'll be exploring alternative fundraising, and also welcome any end-of-year donations from people with a heart for successful rescue-horse adoptions."

Any branch of US Bank accepts donations, and there is a Donate Now button on the Solid Strides Facebook page. Also check the Facebook page for updates on events, education opportunities and training progress.



Solid Strides helps rescue horses and their people succeed.



