

My name is Keith Kremlick and I am a volunteer at Horses Haven in Howl, Michigan. Horses Haven is a shelter for abused and neglected horses. We take in horses whose owners can no longer take care of them, have been seized by animal control due to cruelty or neglect, severely ailed horses, and any horse that could possibly need a home. They are not euthanized unless there is absolutely nothing that we can possibly do. I wish that I could take you judges for a tour through our barn, but since it would seem that I may never even see your faces, I suppose that the best thing that I could possibly do is just tell a few of the horses stories and a bit of an overview of how things are done at horses haven.

Horses Haven is operated entirely by volunteers, and is funded totally by donations. We are non-profit and looked over not by a “boss” but by a board of people. Horses Haven has been operating for years now and has gone through two different locations. The original was much smaller and to accommodate for the large number of horses that we have, which at the moment numbers twenty one, not including our ponies, donkeys, mules, and, of course, cats, we moved. We will often receive an animal out of the blue from any number of places across the state due to an abuse case so we are always adding new pastures, setting up stalls, or doing some sort of work to accommodate our new guests. That is not to say that a horse will stay with us for their entire life, though some do. Many of our horses and ponies are openly adoptable and there are a lot of foster homes that our animals can go out to. Most of our horses are not in the best of health when they come to us so we have what we call the “kitchen.” The “kitchen” is our grain room where we mix the feed for all the horses. Every horse has their own recipe card and we follow them to the tee. Feed for the horses usually involves supplements, Grain, medications, and sometimes flavorings for those too finicky to eat just anything. The most common supplements are Fasttrack and Yucca, but depending on the horses ailments they can get a great

deal more. Feeding is always a bit of a complex ordeal. At the beginning of each day the horses are given hay, one gets haycubes because of bad teeth, many get wet hay because they can choke, and then the rest get normal hay. The next step, feedwise, is actually bringing the grain to horses. Some horses are food aggressive due to starvation, others are too shy to come near their food with anyone around it thanks to the treatment of their previous owners. A number of the horses, being blind, need to be lead to their food. While they're at their grain buckets we will put on masks, which shield their eyes from the sun, which they no longer know to block. One of our horses has no eyes at all and we will take this time to clean out the sockets which were never sewn over. After graining treatments are taken care of, water is filled, and horses are taken outside into their pastures.

Treatments are probably some of the most interesting things to do at the farm, besides actually being with the horses, of course. Whenever a horse has a cut, it has to be cleaned by every shift. There are two shifts daily, both comprised of volunteers. Some of the horses with chronic ailments, such as Sarge, have these treated. Sarge is a quarterhorse who has chronic diarrhea due to a case of Potomac Horse Fever during which he suffered intestinal damage. There are so many treatments to be done every day, I wish I had more essay space to talk about them. After treatments are taken care of we give a second amount of hay, do a final walkthrough and sometimes groom the horses.

As I'm sure you've seen so far, there is a lot of work to be done at the shelter. We never forget who we're doing it for, though. Each horse has their own story and each is as inspiring as the next. Take Solo for instance. When Solo was a yearling she was put up for auction and was sold to a slaughterhouse in Canada. Sadly, this is the fate of thousands of horses yearly. She was loaded onto a trailer and was on her way north. Just when the truck got to the ambassador

bridge, however, it caught fire. Solo kicked open the trailer door and escaped. She was the sole survivor, hence her name, Solo. After this incident she was adopted by her previous owner. Unfortunately she contracted moonblindness and her owner could no longer care for her, so she came to us. She is one of the horses that has been with us for years and will probably stay with us for the rest of her life.

One of the worst days of my life was when I learned what true injustice was. This was the day that I met Angel and Cloud. They came to us from animal control early this winter. If you have ever seen the skeleton of a horse on display, I would like you to think of that image and add skin to it. That's all that these two poor horses amounted to. Angel is about twenty five and Cloud is less than a year old. To live your life in starvation is something that no human should have to endure. Why would anyone put an animal through such a thing? We have taken in these two horses and given them a loving home. They have begun to put on weight, but to this day we are unable to open the barn door next to their stalls for fear that they will take ill due to their lack of body fat.

There was an occurrence that we all refer to as "The Davison Rescue." The details of this case are gruesome. An entire farm had been set up to breed racehorses. Over fifty horses were housed there. Manure in stalls was 71" deep, there were babies that had never been outside the stalls they were born in, the roof to the barn that the broodmares were housed in had collapsed and kept them from ever eating or drinking, and many horses had simply been given up on. Some had to be put down on the spot. All of them were taken. They either ended up with us at Horses Haven, adopted families, or foster families. Fifty Seven horses were rescued in all. Eighteen horses had to be euthanized. Two were sent to the facilities at Michigan State University, both died. Two mares from this event had their babies at horses haven. The Davison

Rescue happened in 1998 and to this day in 2008 we still house horses from this horrible event.

It is hard for me to put into words exactly the extent of what we do and how much of a Godsend it is that we have been able to do as much as we have. I do hope that I have been able to bring to your attention what the darker side of humanity can do, exactly how much power that people have over the fates of animals, and how that power can be misused. I also hope that I have been able to renew your faith in the human race as well. There are those of us out there pulling for these creatures and as long as we have a single breath left in our lungs we will continue to. Mark my words, we will persevere and we will do all in our power to help the animals of this world in any way that we can.

Sources-Well I suppose my only source would be my life and memory, but if you'd like any info on Horses Haven, please don't hesitate to go to our website.

<http://www.horseshaven.org/>

I really appreciate what you are doing and I thank you for your consideration. It's easy to forget that there are those of us out there who don't have thousands of dollars for college the second we get out of highschool.