

The horse rescuer

Photos and text
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One of the Enders horses comes eye-to-eye with visitors. The Enders family owns and operate Sweet Talk Stables

*"The wind of heaven
is that which blows
between a horse's ears."*

Arabian proverb

A pretty buckskin mare pushed her head through the bars of the fence and inspected the visitor closely and calmly.

"That's Angel," said Joyce Enders, owner and president of Sweet Talk Stables, the place Angel now calls home.

"She's blind."

Angel was on her way to the meat truck when Enders first met her. Because of her blindness, Angel was deemed useless to her owner. Her fate seemed to be sealed, until Enders decided there was more to the sweet, good-natured mare than her disability.

Originally looking to buy a Shetland pony from the person who also owned Angel, Enders was told that if she cared so much for the mare, she

could take her as long as she bought the pony.

Both animals ended up going home to Sweet Talk.

Angel isn't the only animal lucky enough to have met Enders, who opened Sweet Talk Stables in December. Walking around the outdoor paddocks, Enders is able to point to every horse she has rescued, and name them while telling their stories, some of which, despite the happy ending, aren't very pretty.

A thin, skittish brown mare in a side paddock is a cold reminder of why the horses need someone like Enders. It's possible to count the mare's ribs just by looking at her, and her hip-bones jut out sharply beneath her scarred and scab-ridden coat.

Half-starved, the animal was in such bad shape and looked so ragged that Enders guessed her age to be around 20-years-old. It wasn't until she got the horse home and the mare relaxed enough to let Enders check her teeth that she realized the animal was closer to being only 4-years-old.

"She'd just changed her last set of teeth," said

Enders about the mare. "I had thought she was old."

Enders started the mare, which still doesn't have a name, (see below) on hay and will soon supplement the diet with grains to replace the minerals the horse needs to get healthy again.

Enders wonders, out loud, how anyone could do this to a horse. "If you don't have enough to money to feed it, just give it away," she said as she shook her head.

"One person's garbage is another's treasure."

Of the almost 50 head housed at Sweet Talk, about one quarter are rescued horses, bought from meat dealers and at auction. Some of the others belong to the Enders family, and the rest have owners who board them at the stables.

The Enders, Joyce, husband Dan and daughters Hope, 8, Shaelynn, 7, and Karissa, 5, used to lease land for their horses, but found there just wasn't enough room. "I couldn't have as many (horses) as I wanted," said Enders. The family bought its own, larger, spread about 15 minutes east of Chestermere and opened Sweet Talk, December 1. The facility, down Range Road 275, has both an indoor and outdoor arena, inside stalls and outdoor paddocks. Lead hand Jonathon Poulsen is also the stable's ferrier.

Enders is a certified riding coach, and has another instructor on staff. Lessons are available in English and Western riding and some of the Enders horses are available for lease to other riders.

Recently, Sweet Talk held a spring day camp for school-aged children. It will be offering week-long summer day camps when school lets

out. Campers will learn basic horse care and be able to ride for two hours per day. After lessons there are hayrides, games and campfires. At the end of the week, parents will be invited to a horse-show, put on by the campers.

"I think everyone should experience a horse," said Enders.

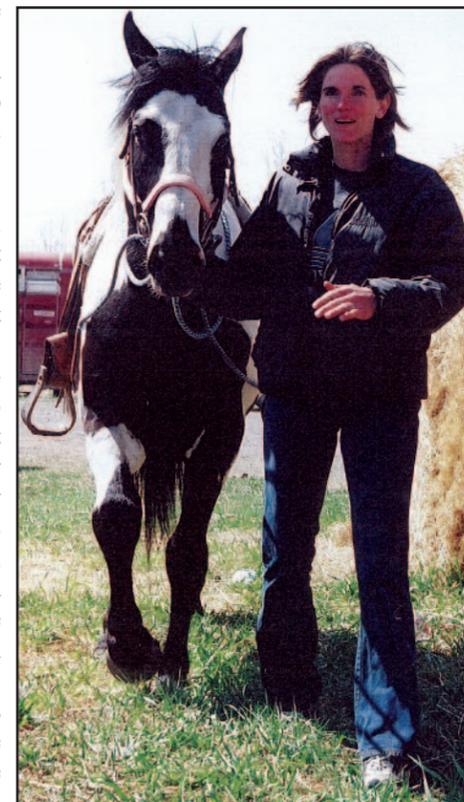
Enders rehabilitates the rescued horses, and those that are able become lesson horses or go up for sale. "These guys are spoiled," laughed Enders.

Maxie Stuckel and her daughters Britany, 14, and Natasha, 10, can confirm exactly how spoiled the former throw-away horses can get. The Chestermere family bought Thunder, 11, from Enders in February.

"When we first came here, we had another horse for a month. He was just too much horse," said Maxie Stuckel. "Joyce said, 'Boy, do we have a horse for you.'" Enders brought out Thunder for the Stuckel family. "Britany got on and fell in love with him," said Maxie Stuckel.

Thunder was quickly joined by fellow rescues Jasmine, 14, and Flicka, 8. The Stuckels board their horses with Enders, and lease all three back to Sweet Talk for lessons. "Realistically, if we hadn't done that, we couldn't afford Flicka," said Maxie Stuckel.

Basically, said Enders, the lessons and horse boarding pay for the feed of the family horses and the rescued animals. Saving horses is a passion that Enders won't be giving up anytime soon. "I would never trade it in," said Enders. "I think it's terrible that people waste horses just because they're not 100%."



Sweet Talk Stables president, Joyce Enders and Sir Lancelot, coming back from a ride.

Sweet Talk Stables 207-3353



WANTED: MY NAME

This mare has a new home and a new lease on life, but she's still missing the one thing that will make her an individual: her name.

We want one of you to name the horse. Put your thinking caps on, because the person who submits the winning name will win one free riding lesson (value: \$30) from Sweet Talk Stables.

'Name That Horse' is open to all school students in the Chestermere area, so if you go to school in Chestermere, Indus, Langdon or are home-schooled, you're eligible.

Use the ballot over to the right and fill in your name, age and phone number (Make sure it's ok with Mom or Dad) and where you go to school. Tell us what you think this mare's name should be, then mail, fax, e-mail or drop off the ballot to The Anchor.

She's a lucky girl. She's a survivor. She deserves a name.

NAME THAT HORSE

Your name: _____

Age: _____

School: _____

Phone number: _____

I think the mare's name should be: _____

I picked this name because: _____

YOU COULD WIN A FREE RIDING LESSON

Deadline for entries is June 15, 2005

Drop off or mail entries to:

The Anchor #8 East Chestermere Dr.

Chestermere AB T1X 1M1

email your entry to news@theanchor.ca fax: 272-4405