

Her Vision Leads to a Worthy Cause

Karen Everhart is one of those lucky people who chased a lifelong dream and found it. Thanks to her vision, horses which have been abused, neglected or abandoned are living a better life on a scenic ranch in southeast Kansas.

Karen, 53, and her husband, David, 57, established Rainbow Meadows Equine Rescue & Retirement, Inc., last October. They operate the not-for-profit enterprise on a 240-acre site outside Sedan in Chautauqua County. Caney Valley Electric Cooperative Assn., Inc., Cedar Vale, serves the ranch, called Rainbow Meadows.

A love for horses has long been a part of Karen's life. Though she grew up in urban Haysville near Wichita, her roots developed near the Elk County town of Grenola, where her grandparents had a farm.

"Horses have been a passion of mine all my life," Karen said, "thanks to my granddaddy."

With the acquisition of their farm in 1999, the Everharts started a horse training business (www.horsecalls.com). But, it didn't end there. Karen was educated in healthcare through undergraduate and graduate degrees at Wichita State University. This background led her to an interest in horses that are exploited in the medical industry.

Premarin, a drug long used in hormone replacement therapy for women, is made from the urine of pregnant horses. These mares are confined to narrow stalls for more than 20 hours a day while strapped to cumbersome urine

collection devices.

When recent studies brought into question the safety of hormone replacement therapy, the demand for the drug dropped. And so did the need for thousands of horses. The number of mares needed by the industry across the U.S. and Canada was roughly cut in half. Suddenly, 20,000 to 30,000 horses were expendable. Most were to be sold through auction or slaughtered.

The Everharts decided to act. They paid an adoption and transport fee to bring a pregnant mare named Lexi from Canada.

"We drove in a blizzard from Wichita to Denver," Karen recalled, "to bring this mare out of an incredibly difficult life."

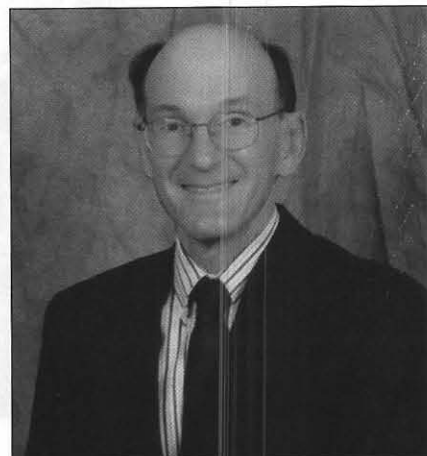
Karen and David picked up Lexi in February 2004 and she gave birth to a foal named Indi three months later.

"It was that rescue that created a very deep passion for me about the need to join other rescues across the United States in providing homes for rejected animals," Karen said.

There are now eight rescued horses at Rainbow Meadows Ranch. Although there is room for more, the real concern is money. As an enterprise that runs solely on donations, the more money that is contributed, the more horses can be cared for.

The Everharts sustain the business on David's military retirement income, the horse training business and through several offshoots of the rescue operation.

For instance, in addition to taking in downtrodden horses, Rainbow Meadows offers space



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for horses that are retired after a lifetime of service or performance, like in a boarding environment. There's also a perpetual care program. An owner can designate through will or living trust that a horse go to Rainbow Meadows in the event of the death or incapacitation of the owner. And the owner can be assured that the horse will never be sold or taken to slaughter.

One truth is evident, however, in any animal rescue operation: There is no grant money, federal assistance, or "animal welfare." These kinds of programs only exist because benevolent people make tax-deductible donations.

"There is no funding without their help," Karen said.

To learn more, contact Rainbow Meadows Equine Rescue & Retirement, Inc., 1949 Dalton Rd., Sedan KS 67361. Phone 620-725-3402. E-mail president@rainbowmeadowsranch.com or visit www.rainbowmeadowsranch.com. ❖