

## Second chances: Nonprofit provides a Sanctuary for Blind Horses

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MADISON – A nonprofit organization has a grand vision for blind horses.

Flurry's Hope, based on the 30-acre Second Chance Ranch in Madison, is a nonprofit organization that provides a sanctuary for blind horses.

“We give blind horses a second chance,” says Suzanne Hennes of High Point, a member of the Flurry's Hope board of directors. “Most people want these horses put down, but they don't need to be put down – they can be just as useful as other horses.”

Flurry's Hope, which currently has 11 horses, was founded last year by Emilie Storch, who is also the founder of HorseFriends, a nonprofit therapeutic riding program.

“Flurry was her first blind horse,” Hennes says, noting that Flurry was an Appaloosa, a breed of horse that is genetically more prone to blindness than other horses. “After working with Flurry, she realized that he was just as useful as any other horse.”



Deirdre Kevorkian rides Promise, a blind horse learning Dressage



Flurry, our first inspirational Blind Horse

When Flurry died, Storch founded Flurry's Hope as a tribute to him, “because he proved to her that blind horses were still functional,” Hennes says.

Storch was further inspired after a trip to Israel, during which she met a blind woman and her husband.

“It was then that she realized that when people are blind, their other senses are more heightened,” Hennes explains. “And she figured if it's true for people, it must be true for horses, as well, and she's found that to be true.”

In addition to training the blind horses for use as part of the HorseFriends program, Flurry's Hope also allows the horses to be “adopted” by young children, giving them a chance to bond with the horses.

According to Hennes, horses often have difficulty during the transition period as they're losing their vision, but once they've adjusted, they adapt quickly.

“Sometimes when they go blind, it kind of freaks them out a little bit at first,” she says, “but (Storch) works with them to help them adjust and learn to accept their blindness.”

Flurry's Hope currently has 11 horses under its care, some of which have been rescued from as far away as Colorado, Hennes says.

“There are second chances for everybody,” she says, “even blind horses.”