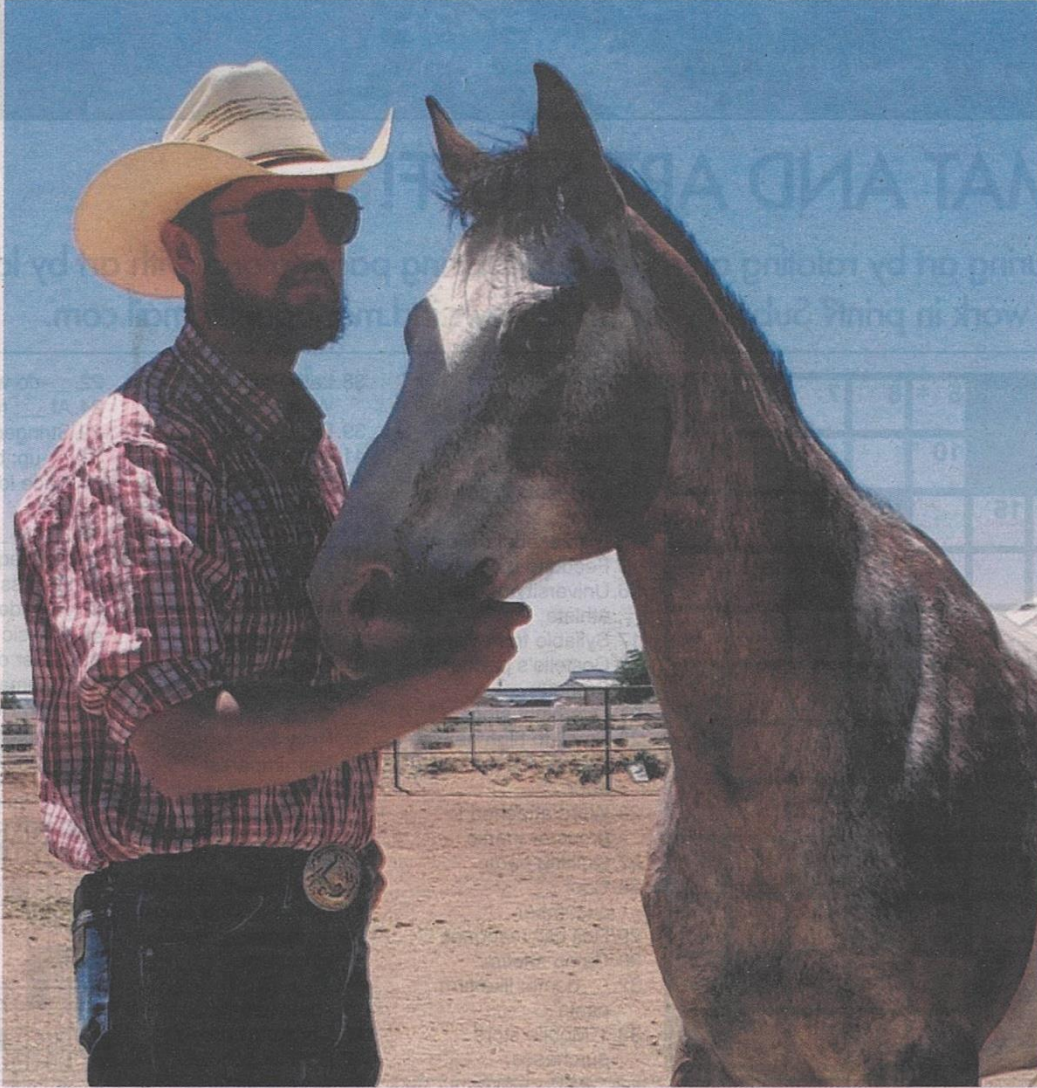




20 years of rescuing horses in Edgewood

By Tamara Bicknell-Lombardi



Walkin N Circles Ranch is celebrating its 20 year anniversary this summer. Since its inception, the horse rescue ranch has rescued over 500 horses.

Located in Edgewood at the foothills of South Mountain, the ranch is one of the biggest horse rescues in the state, and operates entirely with the help of volunteers.

The Novonty family began rescuing horses on a 20-acre ranch in 2002. Soon after receiving nonprofit status, they sold the property to WNCR, which took over the rescue and expanded the operation to 30 acres.

“It started out as a house taking in strays and turned into a full-blown rescue,” said Larry Smyth, executive director.

The ranch is currently home to 46 horses, most of them rescued. Smyth said the ranch does get a few owner surrenders as well.

He said most of the horses on the ranch come from abuse or neglect.

Because they come in with issues, the horses have to be taught how to trust humans.

Smyth said they start off by deter-

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mining if the horse has an emotional issue or a physical issue, or both.

Once that is established they quarantine the horse and immediately get to work on getting them healthier with things like regular vet check ups, farrier visits and steady healthy diets.

He said the horses get rated on a one to five scale, five being “untouchable,” with those horses rated three and under being able to wear a halter and get adopted.

The average stay of a horse at Walkin N Circles is eight months,

Smyth said. He said the average stay of a horse at other rescues is two years. Walkin N Circles currently has the fastest adoption rate in the state, he said.

“From the beginning, our organization has been steadfast in our mission to rescue, rehabilitate, and retrain horses that have been abandoned, abused, or in some cases, destined for the slaughterhouse,” said WNCR’s board president Lauri Michael said. “This important work has been made possible because of the generosity and devotion of hundreds of volunteers and donors over the past two decades. In 2021 alone, we rescued 38 horses, found adoptive homes for 28, and currently

have 35 awaiting forever homes.”

The ranch provides classes for volunteers, and the first classes are required before volunteers are allowed to interact with the horses. Anyone interested in pursuing more of an education about horses and horse rehabilitation can take more classes provided by the ranch.

Higher level classes provide the knowledge to become a trainer. “We were looking for a way to give back to our volunteers,” Smyth said, adding, “We ask so much of them, they deserve a little something back and so many volunteers just want to be able to touch and interact with the horses. Some

folks volunteer just to groom the horses,” he chuckled.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, Walkin N Circles will be hosting a drive-in movie night fundraiser on June 11 at Wildlife West Nature Park. For tickets visit: wncr.org/drivein-movie.

In addition, on August 20 the ranch will host an Adopt-a-thon and festival at the Bernalillo County Sheriff’s Posse Arena. For more information on that event, visit wncr.org/2022-adoptathon.

On October 22, they will host a Halloween Fun Open Horse Show at the Stanley Cyclone Center. For more information see wncr.org/2022-halloween-horse-show.