



FREE REIN

HORSES HELPING HUMANS

August 2020

MUSTANG ROUND-UP: Where are they now?

Last summer when Free Rein Foundation rescued six two- to three-year-old mustangs with the goal of gentling and finding each a forever home, volunteers and local horse trainers embraced the "Mustang Challenge." Here's an update:

Rocky Gerber (shown below) came to Free Rein in early 2020 to volunteer, not to adopt rescued horses. And yet, in June she adopted a mustang, as well as an older Free Rein horse, also named Rocky. She recalls, "When I came here, I basically had a broken heart. I got involved with Free Rein and these beautiful horses healed me. I believe animals choose their 'humans.' I'll never forget the day I saw **Duke** and something in my heart said, 'He's my boy.' When (Lead Mustang Trainer) V gave me permission to groom and walk him that feeling grew stronger. Now, Rocky, and Duke and I are a family. I am just so overwhelmed with gratitude."

Pedro resides in the Free Rein pasture, and will need a very experienced trainer before going to his forever home.

"**Tru** is back and forth between Huntington Central Park Equestrian Center (HCPEC) and a pasture. He excels in his training. He is a sound, happy and healthy boy who loves

to work cows and explore the trails," says owner and trainer Natalie Donaldson.

"**Tango** (formerly **Sanders**) is growing into an amazing horse," says owner Beverly Walters. "While his true talents are still developing as he is young, he's a great mover and quick learner. I feel so privileged to be part of his journey. He's my forever boy."

Teddy (Misol) is owned by Isabella Darling and her mom, Gina Knight. Isabella describes Teddy as having a "sweet, easygoing personality – like a puppy dog. Sometimes when I'm having a hard day, I will just go hang out in his stall with him. He always walks right up and puts his head on my chest like he knows I just needed a hug."



John Henry (formerly **Tucker**, above) also lives at HCPEC and is very popular at the stables. He is owned by Free Rein Volunteer Coordinator Douglas Reinika and Sydney Ellmer. "He is progressing very well," reports Douglas. "We work on taking baby steps. Currently we are in the arena working on the correct lead at the canter."

All six geldings are offspring of wild horses from Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary in South Dakota, run by the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM's acreage has more than 72,000 wild horses – 50,000 too many to maintain.

Have a heart for mustangs and rescued horses? Learn how you can help by visiting freereinfoundation.org.



Maddie Woolbright, masked Free Rein (FR) volunteer, became mom to **Governor** in late July. This FR-rescued and -beloved mustang hails from Modoc National Forest in NE California.

Safe, Sound and Stable

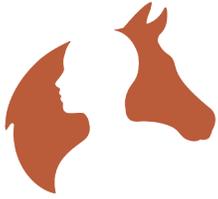
In early March, before COVID-19 caused the country to shut down, Free Rein was humming along with 45 active volunteers. At the end of March, just four remained to provide daily care for the horses. Gradually, volunteers have returned, and a few new ones have been welcomed as well. By the end of July, 33 volunteers are back sharing the load.

Team members are abiding by the necessary protective precautions – masks, hand sanitation, no volunteering if sick or in contact with someone who has covid-19, and trying to maintain a 6-foot distance. Gates and locks are sterilized upon entry and exit.

One of the four skeleton crew volunteers was Bridgette Razai, who stepped up to serve as the pasture manager. She reflects, "Everyone who's back has an even greater appreciation for the tranquility and joy that comes from spending time in the pasture. They've adapted so well and have really pitched in. To limit everyone's exposure, they're doing new tasks like mucking the pasture, which stable hands used to do. They've been so generous with donations – halters, supplements, fly masks, time – you name it."

Free Rein President Justine Makoff adds, "Our horses have not missed a beat in receiving immaculate care from all of our loving volunteers. I'm so grateful for everyone's patience and understanding during this difficult time."





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OUR MISSION:
To heal humans and rescued horses by creating a bond that empowers and nurtures both.

Learn more at freereinfoundation.org

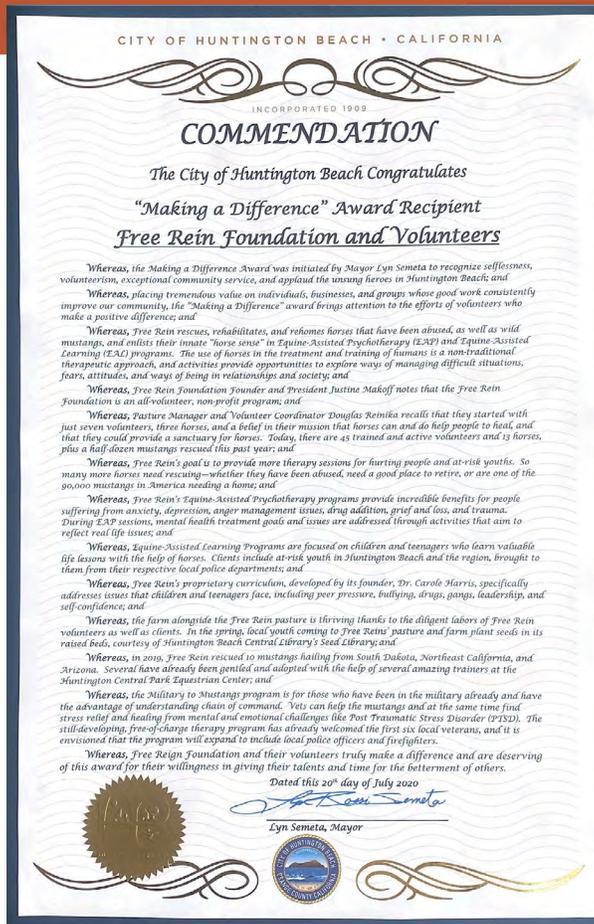
MANE EVENTS

Free Rein Receives Mayor's "Making a Difference" Award

Huntington Beach Mayor Lyn Semeta honored Free Rein Foundation with the "Making a Difference" award for its impact in rescuing humans and horses. Free Rein President Justine Makoff accepted the award on behalf of the entire team at the July 20 City Council meeting.

The prestigious award applauds unsung heroes – individuals, organizations and/or businesses – giving willingly and freely of their time and talents. It recognizes selflessness, voluntarism and exceptional community service in Huntington Beach.

Interested in making a difference as a Free Rein volunteer? Please visit freereinfoundation.org/volunteer.



Stay Tuned for Free Rein Film

Filmmaker Cody Broad is showcasing Free Rein equine therapy on NBCLX, a new digital channel tailored to Millennials and Gen Zers. Cody booked two hours for the shoot, but soon realized there was more to the story. He stayed for six hours, filming kids who went through the program, sharing their stories of healing and growing; officers, who were our biggest skeptics and became advocates; and volunteers who give hundreds of hours and dollars to ensure the rescues' care. V (Virginie), head mustang trainer, shared the patience and skilled hands needed to train a wild horse, and the Eagala method facilitating therapy with horses. The 10-minute film first airs on August 6 on lx.com.