

Horse Corral

Welcome, Sophie – A “luxury” Dutch Harness Horse

By Alex Valverde, Equine Advocates Communications Manager

With thousands of rescues over the last few decades and more than 80 equines currently living at our sanctuary, it's rare for us to come across a breed we've never met in person or even heard of. Sophie, who arrived at Equine Advocates in April, is unlike any horse under our care. Sophie is a striking Bay Mare born in 2008. She is a Dutch Harness Horse, or Tuigpaard, a Warmblood breed originating in the Netherlands and bred for driving. The breed was first developed at the end of World War II and is based on the native Groningen and Gelderland horses, which were used in agriculture and transportation services. During the late 19th century and early 20th century, these animals were known as “luxury horses,” as they were elegant carriage horses who could also work on farms. Only in recent years, some Dutch Harness Horses have come to North America, where they are used as sport horses and saddle seat horses. Many are shown in driving competitions and exhibitions and are known to perform well in combined driving. The Dutch Harness Horse is often crossed with the American Saddlebred to develop the American version of the Dutch breed, called the American Dutch Harness Horse.

According to the KWPN, or the Koninklijk Warmbloed Paardenstamboek Nederland (Royal Warmblood Horse Studbook of the Netherlands), Dutch Harness Horses are known for their proud bearing and spectacular movement, which comes from a long moment of suspension in the trot, big striding front legs with high knee action, and hind legs that step powerfully under the body. The breed also has a cooperative temperament, intelligence, and the will to perform. They go through strict selection procedures for conformation, movement, and temperament, which means the breed is reasonably uniform.

Despite her refined breeding, Sophie's life was hardly glamorous. For years, she was used and driven hard by the Amish as a Buggy Horse. By the time she was fourteen, she had sustained several serious injuries including bowed tendons in both front legs. As she was no longer able to work, she was dumped at a low-end Pennsylvania meat auction and sold for slaughter. While she was in a kill pen scheduled to be loaded onto a trailer to a Mexican slaughterhouse, Sophie was rescued by Gerda Silver of Gerda's Equine Rescue. Gerda sent Sophie to Horses With Hope, an organization that helps to train rescued equines for riding. However, x-rays showed that Sophie had a spinal deformity and other physical problems that prevented her from having a rider on her back.

Sophie needed to be retired at a sanctuary and she arrived at Equine Advocates in April. She was introduced to Randy, an equine veteran who was retired here from the U.S. Army after serving as a Military Working Horse with the Caïsson Platoon. After being introduced, they bonded almost immediately and now enjoy spending their days together out in their field. Sophie also likes greeting her equine neighbors over the fence. It's our great pleasure to provide this wonderful mare with a permanent and loving home here at Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary.



Photo of Sophie, a Dutch Harness Horse arrived in April.



**EQUINE
ADVOCATES**

Equine Advocates Rescue & Sanctuary
3212 State Route 66, Chatham, NY

2024 OPEN DAY SCHEDULE

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday, May 5

Saturday, June 8

Saturday, July 13

Saturday, August 17

Saturday, September 14

Saturday, October 12

Sunday, November 3



Come spend a few hours walking around and meeting our horses, ponies, donkeys and more, meet all others who rescued from abuse, neglect and/or neglect. Also, you will have the opportunity to meet our six retired reserve military horses from the Caïsson Platoon at Arlington National Cemetery. All are happy to explain their life back at the sanctuary.

We have graphics posted at each postcard so you can learn about where each animal came from and why they needed to be rescued. This helps make your visit a much more personal and educational experience!

Please feel free to visit at any point and enjoy one of the most beautiful and serene spots here at the sanctuary.



Please note that all visitors will need to sign a release form upon arrival. Every 15th year, please contact us for a release form, but we will ask you please consider making a donation to the sanctuary. Also, as your visit here at the Equine Advocates and Horses With Hope.

Equine Advocates has a special 100th Anniversary celebration in 2024. Our Mission Statement is "To rescue, protect and provide the ability of equine through education, rehabilitation, rescue operations, the education of children in the public and the operation of a horse sanctuary for adoption, rescue, and other equine-related activities." Please contact us at 413-447-7878 for more information.

Berkshire Humane Society
214 Barker Rd., Pittsfield, MA 01201
Phone: (413) 447-7878, Berkshirehumane.org



Guinea pigs looking for love! We'd love to introduce you to **Carl and Charlie**, a pair of adult male guinea pigs who were abandoned in a box at a local state park. Luckily, this dynamic duo was found by a good Samaritan and brought to Berkshire Humane Society so they could have the opportunity to find a new, loving, lasting home. They are understandably incredibly shy, so the volunteers and staff at Berkshire Humane have been diligently working with them on being handled, so they understand life is A-OK with humans. As guinea are animals who are easily startled this is a work in progress, but with time, patience and love these boys can thrive in a home with the proper care they deserve. Once they learn this, they will be great companions to their new people and will become excited to see and interact with their adoptive family. Interested in learning more about Carl and Charlie? Please reach out to the Berkshire Humane Society small animal staff at 413-447-7878 ext. 124 for more information.