

Horse Corral

From Racetrack to Rescue – Darlene Joins the Equine Advocates Family

By Alex Valverde, Equine Advocates Communications Manager

While fans cheer on horses from the stands during racing season, we know the sad reality many racehorses face when their careers end. Thankfully, after an emergency rescue operation in November, one more horse will never know that cruel fate - A registered Standardbred now named "Darlene Love."



"Darlene" was born in upstate New York in May of 2002 and once raced under the name "Lil Miss Attitude." Once she couldn't race though, she ended up working as a buggy horse and broodmare on an Amish farm.

"It is a sad fact that every year, Standardbreds no longer able to race are cruelly and thoughtlessly sold to Amish and Mennonite farmers to be used as buggy horses," said Equine Advocates President Susan Wagner. "Many of them end up being sold for slaughter when they outlive their usefulness."

Sadly, that happened to Darlene once she became too old and arthritic to be of use to the Amish farmer who owned her. Lynn Cross of Little Brook Farm alerted us of the situation and asked if we could come to her rescue and admit her into our sanctuary. We worked quickly with Cross and others to perform an emergency rescue operation. We sent Darlene to Cornell University Hospital for Animals for an extensive health exam. That's when the health impacts of her working career came to light.

During her stay at Cornell, Darlene was diagnosed with asthma, a severe Vitamin E deficiency, and lameness in her left forelimb. She was also extremely underweight, which was partly attributed to the extremely poor condition of her teeth due to years of neglect. They were floated (filed) at the hospital to remove the painful sharp points and hooks in her mouth, after which time she was better able to chew.

"She began to gain weight," said Wagner. "The other good news was that her examining veterinarian felt she was pasture-sound and could be safely turned out with other horses."

Darlene arrived at our sanctuary on November 24, 2024. She was named in honor of Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee Darlene Love, who was the highlight of our 23rd Annual Gala last fall.

This shy Standardbred's story is sadly not unique and is proof that there needs to change within the horse racing industry.

"While many organizations and individuals work hard to save as many Standardbreds as possible, we feel the industry needs to do much more to prevent these horses from ending up with farmers and others who do this to their horses," said Wagner. "Over the years, we at Equine Advocates have rescued numerous Amish buggy horses, workhorses, and work mules, most of whom had been slaughter-bound and/or badly neglected and abused."

As for Darlene, we were so happy to help with the rescue operation that made it possible for her to escape the horrific fate for which she was destined. She is a lovely and sweet-tempered mare who will live out the rest of her life receiving the love and care she always de

← *Darlene is a registered Standardbred who once raced and then became an Amish buggy horse and broodmare.*

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



Do you know what a group of ferrets is called? A business!

Coco is a 6-year-old spayed female sable ferret who was surrendered to Berkshire Humane Society in a business of nine ferrets because their person lost their pet-friendly housing.

All nine were well cared for, socialized and friendly. Coco is a lovable girl who is very sweet and social. She must be adopted with her housemate Nibbler, a 7-year-old neutered grey and white male.

They're looking for a "retirement home" where they can enjoy the rest of their lives. Because Nibbler is 7 years old, the pair qualifies for a waiver of their adoption fees to celebrate Adopt a Senior Pet Month.

If you're looking for a lovely pair of ferrets please fill out a small animal adoption application and speak directly to the small animal staff at Berkshire Humane Society (413)-447-7878 ext. 124.